A report on

**Bridgend Pupil Referral Unit
Heol Persondy
Aberkenfig
Bridgend
CF32 9RF**

Date of inspection: November 2011

by

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Under Contract for

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Context

Bridgend Pupil Referral Unit is a local authority maintained provision for pupils experiencing difficulties in behaviour, and or attendance issues as well as for pupils with emotional difficulties at key stages 3 and 4.

Since September 2011, all key stage 3 and 4 pupils are educated at the Aberkenfig site, with Kenfig Pyle Cornelly Youth Centre utilised three days per week as a base to deliver ASDAN and Open College Network courses. The Aberkenfig site is also used as a part time base by the local authority's behaviour support service.

Key stage 4 pupils have a more focused academic curriculum enabling increased opportunity to access courses and qualifications.

There are 29 pupils on roll. All pupils have special educational needs with 10% having statements of special educational needs. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. All pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language and 34% of all pupils have free school meals. Thirty one per cent of pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority.

The current head of the Pupil Referral Unit was appointed in January 2005 and the Unit was last inspected in November 2005.

Since the last inspection the school has appointed a deputy headteacher and two leaders of learning for key stages 3 and 4 respectively.

The Unit's aims and objectives are to meet the needs of the pupils and ensure that they all reach their full potential before leaving the school.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The Bridgend Pupil Referral Unit is a good school because:-

- standards of achievement are good and pupils make good progress in learning and wellbeing;
- pupils use and apply basic and key skills effectively in a range of activities;
- experiences are well matched to the learning and social needs of the pupils;
- the school works effectively with a range of external specialist services and a variety of other providers; and
- the staff have a good understanding on how to meet the varying needs of the pupils.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are judged as good because:

- leaders have a clear vision for the school which is shared by all staff;
- staff work effectively as a team and have high expectations of the pupils;
- the culture of self-evaluation leads to improved outcomes for pupils;
- the school provides good quality care, support and guidance to the pupils; and
- the school makes effective use of assessment procedures to identify priorities and secure improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:-

R1 improve pupils skills in information and communications technology;

R2 further improve pupils' attendance and also reduce the rate of exclusions; and

R3 work with the local authority to widen the expertise and representation on the management committee*.

* This recommendation is already included in the school's improvement plan.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good

Standards: Good

Many pupils entering the school have basic skills below that expected for their chronological age, however most of them, including those from different groups and those pupils who are looked after by a local authority, make good progress in learning and in managing their behaviour. Most pupils achieve the learning targets set for them in their individual education plans.

Most pupils develop effective communication skills as they reflect on their behaviour and show increasing confidence when expressing their emotions.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the pupils' learning needs.

All pupils, make good progress compared with their previous attainments, before enrolling at the school and girls achieve as well as boys. Most show good recall of previous learning, understand how to apply their improved skills to various activities and know what they need to do to improve.

Most pupils in key stage 3 show continuous improvement in their literacy and numeracy skills while most pupils in key stage 4 attain a range of accredited qualifications. Many pupils successfully follow courses of study well matched to their individual needs.

In 2010, most pupils left with at least one national qualification, whilst a minority left with at least six national qualifications and many left with at least three nationally recognised qualifications. These achievements along with work experience placements support pupils well towards a successful transition into future provision or employment opportunities. In the summer of 2011 the vast majority of pupils moved into appropriate education, employment or training.

Most pupils make good progress in their basic skills. They are developing a good range of vocabulary related to specific topics, listen attentively and are eager to participate in discussions.

Most pupils make good and continuous progress in their reading skills. They show good understanding of a range of different texts and read aloud confidently using good intonation and taking due notice of punctuation.

Many younger pupils are still developing their writing skills and the more able apply these skills effectively to activities such as evaluating their work or writing questions that might help them find relevant information about specific topics. The older pupils use literacy skills effectively when following work related activities in key stage 4.

Most pupils show well developed key skills such as problem solving or decision-making skills. They use these particularly effectively to increase their independence in cookery lessons or when working with others on work related experiences. Most

pupils use numeracy skills effectively in practical activities and in the work related experiences.

Most pupils show adequate skills in using information and communication technology but the range of their achievements is limited.

Pupils use numeracy skills effectively through gathering and interpreting data in a range of activities and apply these skills well in work related experiences.

Pupils who successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools showed increased confidence towards learning and showed improved standards particularly in literacy and communication skills.

Nearly all pupils make appropriate progress in the development of their Welsh language skills.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and have positive attitudes towards physical exercise and improving their diet. Good levels of participation are evident in fitness, sporting and related extra-curricular activities.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and show a positive attitude towards learning. Most pupils understand what they need to do to improve and recognise the ways they learn effectively. They show good behaviour towards each other, staff and visitors and engaged well in activities.

Pupils' attendance levels are adequate; however pupils' attendance levels are significantly higher than they were when they attended mainstream schools. The total number of days lost by pupils who have been excluded have been reduced as has the total number of pupils it affects; however the total number of days lost and the number of pupils it affects still needs to be further reduced.

The school's involvement with the community is strong. The pupils' enthusiastic participation in work-related activities helps them to plan effectively for life and work outside school. Many pupils play a positive role in a wide range of activities in the local community and beyond.

To best suit the nature of the school and to encourage all pupils to contribute to decisions about its life, the notion of a school council has been adapted into class councils. Pupils contribute confidently to discussions within their class environment. Views of pupils on the school's provision are sought three times a year through formal questionnaires.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good

Learning experiences: Good

Pupils benefit from a wide curriculum and opportunities that build upon pupil's experiences within and beyond the school. There are effective opportunities for pupils to enhance their understanding of the world of work through extensive links

with local employers. Learning experiences are adapted well to meet the varying needs of the pupils and allows them to identify suitable learning pathways.

The school ensures that pupils develop key skills such as literacy and numeracy effectively. However, provision for the development of pupils' skills in information and communications technology is insufficiently included across areas of learning at both key stages.

The school makes good provision to develop pupils thinking skills and to promote independence. The school enables pupils to use the skills they develop in key stage 4 to progress successfully to employment, training or college placements.

Provision for Welsh language development and the Welsh dimension enables pupils to make appropriate progress.

The school provides a good range of opportunities within and beyond the classroom for pupils to develop their understanding of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good and teachers hold high expectations of the pupils. They share clear learning objectives and use a wide range of resources and activities that are well matched to pupils' ability levels.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand how to adapt lessons to meet the varying needs of the pupils. They show good continuity and progression in their lesson planning and delivery. However, in very few lessons, the variety of activities is limited and lesson objectives are not made clear.

Teachers and support staff work well together and create a positive learning environment. Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively, ensuring that they engage well in their activities and remain focused on tasks.

Effective assessment of pupils on entry to the school identifies clear priorities to meet and plan for individual needs. Regular assessment procedures enable staff and pupils to set and review targets for improvement in learning. Oral feedback to pupils is good but the way to move forward is not always identified when marking their work.

Parents and carers are well informed of their child's progress through a variety of communication methods and most contribute to individual plans and reviews.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care, support and guidance is good.

There are clear policies in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing and these are implemented effectively through a wide range of activities.

Staff successfully develop strategies that enhance pupils' self esteem and self confidence and these contribute greatly towards improving their emotional wellbeing.

The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and there are good opportunities for personal reflection.

The school makes very effective use of multi-agency and specialist services. These have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, confidence and self esteem. Pupils receive good guidance from learning coaches and pastoral staff who work effectively with them to develop their personal skills and support their individual pathways to further learning.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Pupils with additional learning needs are fully included in all activities. Their individual education plans are specific and contribute positively towards learning.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community where pupils treat their peers, staff and visitors with respect.

All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to recognise and value diversity in society. The school provides a caring and welcoming ethos and a supportive learning environment for pupils.

Although the school's accommodation does not enable all pupils to be educated on site at the same time, the off-site provision is carefully timetabled to ensure that the school's teaching accommodation is effectively used.

Resources are generally well matched to pupils' learning needs and displays in corridors and classrooms support learning and celebrate achievement.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good

Leadership: Good

The head and deputy provide very good leadership and strategic direction. They have developed a strong sense of teamwork within the senior management team and across the staff as a whole.

The senior management team communicate high expectations across the school. A culture of continuous improvement is in place where planning and developments take account of national and local priorities.

The impact of leadership has developed a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils and in maintaining wellbeing as an important feature of the school's work.

Leaders use the full range of monitoring, support and intervention strategies effectively to challenge and improve performance and actively address issues of underperformance where appropriate.

Performance management systems are closely linked to training and development and targets set are clearly linked to priorities identified in the school improvement plan These priorities are communicated clearly across the school and leaders work well with relevant local authority officers and Management Committee members who have a shared responsibility in terms of governance.

Management Committee members perform their roles well, with enthusiasm and take a positive interest in the work of the school. However, not all stakeholders and partners are appropriately represented within this forum.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need development.

Self-evaluation processes are well established across the school and staff at all levels are actively engaged and involved.

There is a strong ethos of continuous improvement in place across the school and good team work, within an agreed and shared understanding, is evident.

There are rigorous and robust systems in place to collect, analyse and evaluate information from a wide range of appropriate sources. Data is used effectively to inform planning and to assess the impact for pupils. The school continually reflects on these procedures in order to refine and improve the process.

There is a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils through a systematic review and self-evaluation process that engages all staff and partners appropriately and takes account of pupil and parental views.

The school has made good progress over time on improving provision and practices and can demonstrate that pupil outcomes have improved as a result.

Self-evaluation processes have developed a common understanding for improvement priorities with a shared responsibility across the school in place to improve pupils' standards.

Staff are actively engaged in a range of networks of professional practice and this ensures that good practice is shared across the school.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a wide range of strategic partners and stakeholders. Staff make active contributions within the local planning and development forums.

Strong links exist with school staff and mainstream schools to share information and good practice and to develop expertise within formal and informal professional networks.

Where individual pupil needs are being reviewed and transitional arrangements apply, good communication systems are in place. These help to improve outcomes for pupils and ensure their wellbeing is maintained.

Opportunities and outcomes for older pupils are enhanced through effective partnerships that reduce the number of pupils who leave school, without entering further education, employment or training.

Good community links are in place and the school works hard to engage parents through a number of strategies, such as family learning and coffee morning events.

Staff continually develop strategies to improve communication and engagement with families that are difficult to reach and with those who have demonstrated a reluctance to visit the school.

Resource management: Good

The staffing and financial resources that are made available to the school are managed and used effectively.

A well maintained and pleasant learning environment has been created and is managed well to make best use of space and facilities.

Pupil outcomes show improvement over time as provision and resources are developed and enhanced.

Deployment of teaching, support and ancillary staff is effective in delivering the agreed curriculum and provides pupils with high levels of support to meet their varying levels of need. Staffing skills and expertise are being used to good effect and the school makes effective use of staff skills and expertise.

Teachers effectively use their time for planning, preparation and assessment.

Performance management for teachers and other staff is securely in place and successfully identifies individual and whole school training needs.

Spending is carefully linked to priorities identified in the school improvement plan although the school does not have full control across all budget matters.

The way the school utilises shared resources through effective partnerships and service level agreements provides good value for money as pupils achieve good standards in learning and wellbeing.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Most pupils entering the PRU have basic skills below that expected for their chronological age.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse the performance trends over time due to the nature of pupils' learning needs. However, attainment data and the Unit's internal tracking system shows measurable improvements in literacy across key stages 3 and 4.

Since 2008 the rolling average of 75% of key stage 4 pupils each year have either started college or gained a training placement, 79% have gained employment, training or a college place.

At key stage 4 results show pupils are performing best in English and Maths, pupils perform less well in ICT.

At key stage 3:-

- 53% of pupils improved reading age by at least 3 months and 32% increased their reading age by 6 months or more.

- 53% of pupils showing an increase in spelling age, 32% showing an increase of 3 months or more in spelling.

- Extracting those pupils whose reading age was 16+ on entry and those pupils who refused to engage, many improved their reading ages by 3 months or more with over half (53%) improving their reading age by 6 months or more.

At key stage 4:-

- 45% of pupils increased their reading age by at least 3 months, with 42% showing an increase of 6 months or more.

- 39% of pupils demonstrated an increase in their spelling age, 30% increasing their spelling age by at least 3 months.

- Extracting those pupils whose reading age was 16+ on entry and those pupils who refused to engage the majority of pupils improved their reading age by at least 3 months during 2010-11.

- Over the past three years almost all (96%) of key stage 4 pupils left the unit with at least one nationally recognised qualification.

- In 2010 94% of pupils left with at least 1 national qualification, whilst 31% left with at least six national qualifications and 81% left with at least 3 nationally recognised qualifications.

- Over a rolling three year period 79% of pupils moved into appropriate education, employment or training.

- In 2010 / 2011 67% of pupils moved into appropriate education, employment or training.

Of the 2011 key stage 4 leavers, 38 % had progressed directly from key stage 3 to 4 within the PRU. Half of these pupils increased their reading age by more than 6

months and all pupils gained a nationally recognised qualification with the average pupil gaining 4 qualifications.

Since 2008 the average result for boys achievement in Entry Level English is level 2 compared with level 3 for girls

Since 2008 an average 45% of boys obtained at least 1 GCSE with 35% obtaining 2 GCSE's in English and Maths, compared with 50% of girls obtained at least 1 GCSE with 33% obtaining 2 GCSE's in English and Maths. In 2010 / 2011 50% of boys obtained at least 1 GCSE with 33% obtaining 2 GCSE's in English and Maths while 50% of girls obtained at least 1 GCSE in either English or Maths with 33% obtaining 2 GCSE's in English and Maths

Pupils who are 'looked after' by a local authority generally achieve as well as other pupils.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

Of the 24 pupils who responded to the questionnaire, all feel safe in school, that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and take on responsibilities, and that they are doing well at the school. They all also feel that they are given good advice when choosing courses.

Most feel that the school teaches them how to keep fit and healthy and many feel that they get plenty of opportunities to get regular exercise.

Most pupils feel that the school deals well with bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried.

Most feel that teachers help them to learn and make progress, and that they get help if they have problems. They feel that there are enough books and equipment to do their work. They feel that the school helps them to be ready for their next school, college or to start their working life.

They feel that the staff treat them fairly and with respect. They also believe that the staff respect them and their backgrounds and also helps them to understand and respect people from different backgrounds.

Many pupils feel that their homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school, that pupils behave well and that they can get their work done. Many feel that the school listens to their views and make changes as they suggest.

Parent questionnaires

All the 22 questionnaires returned are very positive.

All parents state that they are satisfied with the school, feel that their child is safe, and that their child was helped to settle in well when starting at the school.

They all feel that that teaching is good that there is a good range of activities including trips or visits, and feel that staff expect their child to work hard and do the best they can.

Most parents feel that pupils behave well and that they are encouraged to be healthy and take part in regular exercise.

Most feel that staff treat all pupils fairly, with respect, and that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs they may have.

All parents feel that they are kept well informed of their child's progress. They all state that they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems, and that they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Many state that their child likes the school and is making good progress, and feel that the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school.

Most parents believe that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility, and most feel that their child is prepared well for moving on to their next school, college or work.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Glyn Griffiths	Reporting Inspector
Phil Bowker	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Fiona Simpson	Peer Inspector
John Connolly	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11