



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**  
**Options Kinsale School**

**Kinsale Hall  
Lanerch-Y-Mor  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 9DX**

**Date of inspection: January 2023**

**by**

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

## **About Options Kinsale School**

Options Kinsale School is part of the Outcomes First group, which seeks to provide integrated education and residential services for young people and adults with autistic spectrum condition (ASC), moderate and severe learning difficulties, and social and emotional difficulties.

The school offers residential education and care for up to 30 pupils aged between 8 and 19 years who have complex needs and a diagnosis of ASC. Local authorities in Wales and England place pupils at the school and there are currently 22 pupils on roll. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP). A majority of pupils are children who are looked after, and a majority of these reside in the company's children's homes. A minority of pupils attending the school are day pupils. Many pupils are from English-speaking backgrounds.

The principal has been in post since November 2019. An education team that consists of six class teachers, four higher level teaching assistants and fifteen teaching assistants supports the principal.

Inspectors last visited the school for a monitoring visit in November 2021. At this inspection, the school did not meet the Independent School Standards. The last core inspection was in September 2018.

## Main findings

### Strengths

Options Kinsale provides a welcoming and nurturing environment for its pupils. Staff develop positive and trusting relationships with pupils based on a secure knowledge of their needs and interests. This is a strength of the school.

Teachers plan lessons carefully to include relevant and engaging learning activities. These focus well on targets in individual education plans (IEPs) and assessment information. As a result, pupils make sound progress during their time at the school.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at the school and participate positively in learning activities. Pupils are beginning to develop important social skills through their interactions with their peers. For example, in the weekly communication café, pupils interact with staff and their peers with increasing confidence whilst selecting from a range of snacks.

Leaders have made strong progress in improving practice at the school. Leaders at the school provide assured support and a clear vision for the strategic direction and day-to-day management of the school. They set high expectations for staff, pupils and themselves. This approach is enabling them to continue to develop an effective, engaged team of teachers and support staff. However, many of these changes have been made recently and it is too early to fully evaluate their impact.

### Areas for development

Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened its approach for supporting the communication needs of pupils. However, the use of signing across the school is inconsistent.

The school provides staff with regular, suitably focused training, which links appropriately to school development priorities. However, staff at the school do not have opportunities to learn from the good practice of others.

## Recommendations

### **The school should:**

- R1 Embed quality assurance processes to continue to support effective strategic planning and improvement.
- R2 Ensure the consistent use of signing across the school.
- R3 Strengthen the opportunities for staff to learn from the identified good practice of others both internally and externally.

## **Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report**

### **R1. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003**

Since the last monitoring visit in November 2021, the school has made sound progress in meeting this recommendation.

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and new schemes of work have been produced, which support teachers' planning to ensure that there is an appropriate focus on relevant learning objectives. Strengthened quality assurance processes include learning walks, planning scrutiny and lesson observations. These activities have an appropriate focus on ensuring that lessons are well planned, teaching methods effective and learning activities are suitable.

Further, the school has strengthened its procedures for target-setting and monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. A valuable range of performance data is collected within progress trackers and used suitably to monitor pupil progress. As a result, teaching staff now show a good understanding of the prior attainment, aptitudes and needs of the pupils. Teaching staff ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. This work is ongoing.

As a result, the school is now compliant with Regulation 1(3) of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

### **R2. Ensure that the work of the clinical team better informs the support that teaching staff provide for pupils so that all pupils engage more consistently with learning**

Since the last visit, the clinical team has been extended and now offers speech and language, occupational therapy, well-being, psychotherapy and art therapy. In addition, there is a therapy assistant. The clinical team delivers a range of worthwhile training to the education team to support them to better meet the needs of pupils, for example recent training on a total communication approach.

The clinical team has developed a range of beneficial activities for pupils, for example, the weekly 'communication café'. These changes are new and it too soon to fully evaluate their impact.

Educational staff have improved their use of information from the clinical team to inform planning. As a result, at the time of the monitoring visit, most pupils engaged positively with learning.

### **R3. Ensure that all policies and procedures reflect the specific context of the school and make suitable reference to Welsh Government guidance**

Overall, leaders have made appropriate changes to policies to ensure that they appropriately reference relevant Welsh Government legislation and guidance.

Although many policies remain corporate in nature, they reflect suitably the local procedures and the specific context of the school and its pupils.

## **Compliance with the standards for registration**

### **Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school**

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, and cultural development of pupils**

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 3.

### **Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff**

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Standard 5: Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 5.

### **Standard 6: The provision of information**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

### **Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

## **Recommendation regarding continued registration**

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Inspectors' judgements on this limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.



## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:  
<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>

**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**