

Consultant visit report



Visit date : 01/10/15

School details

Name and qualifications of Head/Principal, with title used:

Mr Gerrard has been in post for just over a year. He regards the work carried out by staff in the dyslexia provision and the ALN department as key areas in the success of the school.

Name and qualifications of Head of Specialist provision or Senior SpLD teacher:

Mrs Samuel has been the specialist teacher and coordinator for Conwy's dyslexia provision since it was established in 1997. She has excellent qualifications and is well regarded by her colleagues and the students she supports.

Background and general information

School roll

The number of pupils on roll is similar to when the last CReSTeD report took place

Class sizes - mainstream

Classes containing a number of pupils with special needs are usually smaller than the average sized teaching group. Dyslexic students in higher sets are often supported by one of the well-qualified teaching assistants.

Class sizes – learning support

The class sizes allow effective teaching to take place.

Documentation – prospectus, Estyn reports

The prospectus, along with the school website, are excellently presented and informative documents.

The latest Estyn report, in 2012, found the school to have outstanding supportive strategies providing very good guidance and personal mentoring. These strengths contribute significantly to improving achievement, confidence and relationships.

Policy and philosophy with regard to SpLD pupils

Aims and philosophy of whole school

The aims and philosophy of the school gives students with additional learning needs the opportunity to thrive in the caring and supportive environment present in the school.

Policies

All school policies are clear, comprehensive and up to date. The identification and assessment of children with special educational needs is carried out through a thorough process used throughout the education authority.

Whole school response to SpLD

The school carries out thorough diagnostic testing which is in addition to the assessments carried out by the LA throughout KS 1 and 2. The school's register of pupils with special educational needs contains 124 names of students with a range of difficulties. This is approximately 15% of the school population. The Year 7 register identifies 25 pupils with a literacy difficulty. Staff in the ABCD and ALN provision ensures all staff are aware of the special needs of each pupil. The advice provided gives a thorough understanding of the arrangements necessary for effective teaching to take place.

Number of statemented students

The LA may issue a Scholl action Plus Contract instead of a Statement of Additional Learning Needs. This will involve detailed individual assessment followed by a carefully planned Individual Literacy Programme delivered by a Specialist Dyslexia teacher. Ysgol Aberconwy has staff with many years of experience in meeting the needs of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs.

Identification and assessment

Identifying pupils in school who are at risk of SpLD and when this takes place in the transition process

The LA and the school work closely to identify children with special educational needs and the 124 pupils having an Individual education Plan reflects the thoroughness of this process. A wide range of individual tests are used to identify the specific difficulties of each child following the whole school screening.

Details of actions taken when children are identified as being at risk of SpLD

A range of additional teaching arrangements are available for pupils with an identified special need.

Details of how children in school can access a full assessment for SpLD

The LA works closely with its schools to provide full assessments when needed.

Teaching and Learning

How is the week organised?

The school day appears to work well for students with specific learning difficulties.

Details of arrangements for SpLD pupils, including prep/homework

The Accelerated Reading programme along with regular catch-up teaching are two effective strategies to develop the skills of pupils with learning difficulties. Regular testing ensures that if pupils are not making progress, more intensive teaching can be introduced. Ysgol Aberconwy recognises the importance of school and home working together. The excellent lines of communication and the sharing of teaching resources, including computer programmes, is a valuable arrangement.

Lesson preparation and delivery to meet the needs of SpLD pupils for Curriculum subjects and literacy support

All lessons observed were well planned and differentiated with a good range of teaching resources including information technology. Individual support was given to pupils requiring it with teachers and teaching assistants showing a clear understanding of the needs of each student. Pupils were fully engaged in all lessons.

Use of provision maps/IEPs

The IEPs provide excellent information for subject teachers and support staff. They have clear targets, strategies and resources to be used.

Records and record keeping

Very thorough record keeping is maintained for pupils supported by both provisions. Detailed monitoring of all pupils is used by teaching staff and is used to plan changes to the intervention and support required.

Impact of provision

The latest GCSE results have 58% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at 'C' or above including English and Maths. This is the highest ever result and reflects an upward trend in Ysgol Conwy's examination results. The FFT shows results achieved by pupils at School Action and School Action Plus over a three year period is a stronger area of the school.

Facilities and Equipment for Access to Teaching of SpLD Pupils

General resources for teaching SpLD pupils

A good range of appropriate teaching programmes. IT and other resources is available in all teaching areas used for individual and small group tuition.

ICT

The school has a wealth of ICT and this is widely used by pupils with special educational needs.

Details of access (special examination) arrangements requested and made for SpLD pupils

All necessary access arrangements are obtained following detailed assessment of the student's needs and the collection of supporting information from appropriate area of the curriculum.

Library

The attractive, well-used and resourced library contains a wide range of books suitable for all ages and abilities.

Details of Learning Support Provision

Role of the Learning Support Department in school

The ALN and the ABCD provision have a robust system to provide support for all pupils with special educational needs. The specialist staff provide valuable support to pupils, parents and colleagues.

Organisation of the Learning Centre or equivalent

The ALNCo is able to spend time in departments in order to give advice and suggest possible strategies to develop knowledge and understanding relating to pupils with special needs.

Does the Head of Unit have Head of Department status and input into curriculum design and delivery?

Aberconwy has clear lines of communication, ensuring all areas of the school are represented when policy and planning is discussed.

Staffing and Staff development

Qualifications of all learning support staff

All staff are well qualified, experienced and have up to date knowledge of issues relating to dyslexia and related difficulties

Staff development and in-service training of learning support staff within the last 18 months

Relevant training is provided to special needs staff from outside organisations when this is appropriate.

Whole school staff development in relation to Dyslexia Awareness and inclusion strategies e.g. IDP (Inclusion Development Plan)

ABCD and ALN staff use effective systems and strategies to keep all teachers and support staff up to date about the needs of specific pupils as well as general information about special educational needs.

The experience of parents and pupils regarding the school, in particular, response to SpLD pupils

Parents

The parents spoken to were very happy with the education provided by Ysgol Aberconwy. They all felt their children had made good progress, benefitting considerably from the teaching and support given to them by the ALN provision and the ABCD resource. They also felt that the staff in the school were aware of the child's difficulties and adjusted their teaching to meet individual needs. The school kept parents well informed about their child's progress and well-being. Three parents talked about how seriously and promptly the staff deal with issues that have arisen and the broad range of effective support given to their child. All parents said they would recommend the school to other parents.

SpLD pupils' responses regarding their experience of the school and teachers

A discussion with six pupils from different cohorts took place for approximately 30 minutes. All pupils were polite, articulate and spoke highly of their school. They appreciated the teaching and support given by Mr Parker (ALN) and Mrs Samuel's (ABCD) provision and felt that they were making good progress with literacy, numeracy and other areas they found difficult. They all had areas of the curriculum they did well in and were happy that they were given opportunities to develop their abilities in a range of subjects and extra-curricular activities.

Report Summary

The Additional Needs and the ABCD staff work closely to provide a good education for pupils with specific learning difficulties. Parents and pupil spoken to, along with evidence from Estyn and other outside agencies, confirm children with special needs, including dyslexia, make good progress at Ysgol Aberconwy. The staff show a good understanding of the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties and provide appropriate teaching and support to help them to overcome their difficulties and reach their potential.

The school meet the criteria for inclusion in the Maintained Schools category of the CReSTeD register and this is recommended.