

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 36

Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Response from: Individual

Dear Jane

I am a Parent of two children with additional needs who both have statements of additional needs. They both attended the Welsh Medium School, [Ysgol Pen Y Garth](#), which was placed in 'special measures' in January after it's most recent Estyn Inspection.

We as a family moved to Wales from [London in 2015](#) as we wanted our children to be educated through the Medium of Welsh . What we have witnessed here in the [Vale of Glamorgan](#) is a Welsh medium school that is so poor that it has failed [both of](#) our children. I was so relieved in [January 2023](#) to see that Estyn had listened to our concerns and many other parents in their report. It's just a tragedy that both our children and many others experienced so much trauma as a result of this school's incompetence.

Our daughter has a diagnosis of ADHD and dyslexia. Unfortunately this was ignored by [Ysgol Pen y Garth](#) and she was never given any support for her needs. She went through periods of being unable to go to school and eventually had a nervous breakdown at [nine](#) year of age. [Dr Nia John](#), Community Paediatrician wrote to the LEA saying that allowing [Iona](#) to return to [Ysgol Pen y Garth](#) would have a negative impact on her health. [Iona](#) now attends [Eastward House School](#) and is thriving.

[Iona's](#) brother [Twm](#) has had a very unsettled time at [Ysgol Pen y Garth](#). Since [May 2021](#) he has been identified as having additional needs and he has been observed and assessed by a number of professionals. He was placed on a pupil support plan in [2021](#) as he was unable to attend school. This was turned around by two teachers who had a very child centred approach, (who have both since left the school). These two teachers changed the way the school worked with

Twm and last year he was very happy to attend school. Many of the recommendations his teachers put in place were based on the advice of the many professionals involved. In August 2022 Twm was given a statement of additional needs.

Unfortunately Mrs Nia Cule, a temporary part time Head ran the school from May to December 2022. Mrs Cule is also the Head of a school in Barry.

Mrs Cule refused to observe what was listed in Twm's statement of additional needs. In July 2022 the Engagement team recommended Mrs Cule met with us as parents to plan his transition, but Mrs Cule refused to meet with us and sent an email copying this in to Nerys Williams of the engagement team to confirm this. On September 26th Twm was very unsettled but Mrs Cule refused to send Twm home. At the end of the day Twm had a very high temperature. We took him to the Gp the following day and he was prescribed antibiotics as his throat was so sore it was bleeding. Since then Twm has been unable to return to school apart from with me present. In the autumn term we have had regular two weekly meetings with Mrs Cule at the school and engagement team officer, Mrs Nerys Williams. It transpired in these meetings that under Mrs Cule's leadership Twm was:

- Placed in a class away from his peers due to another parent requesting Twm be moved away from her son, who the other parent believed wasn't getting as much support as her son and felt it would be beneficial for her son if both children were kept apart.
- Given an LSA who is agency staff and wasn't the member of staff originally agreed on with Twm in the Summer term
- Class teacher is absent on a weekly basis due to meetings with no regular cover plan in place
- All of this is contrary to advice in his statement.

We as parents tried daily to get Twm to school in the Autumn term and every attempt failed. In most cases, since September support or intervention for Twm has had to be organised by us as his parents. During Mrs Cule's leadership we did not witness any evidence or communication that the school delivered on anything physically within the statement - from basic equipment such as orthopaedic cutlery to practical help such as use of the disabled toilet, to more specialist support such as speech and language referral- which we ended up having pay privately for and self refer to under the NHS. We feel this is due to the lack of leadership given by the temporary Head, Mrs Cule and Deputy, Mrs Sara Ryall. No indication has been given to us as parents that Mrs Cule's actions have been investigated by the LEA. This in itself is very concerning. I was a senior

leadership teacher in London and a teacher acting so inappropriately, who has received formal complaints from Parents, would always be suspended pending investigation by the LEA. I am surprised this has not taken place here.

We were given less than six days notice for an emergency review to take place on Monday 19th December at 9.30am despite having requested the review in writing two months beforehand and not having heard anything from the LEA or the School. No paperwork to communicate the voice of the child or parental opinion was sent in advance. So we completed the forms that our daughters SEN school provided us for her Annual review.

We were shocked to hear in the review meeting that out of 36 points on his statement, Jen Dunston of the LEA confirmed that 36 points were failed by the school - all under Mrs Cules leadership. In some instances, recommendations that go back as far as May 2021 (Ep report recommended referral to speech therapy) had not been acted upon. Ysgol Pen y Garth were clearly not meeting our son's needs. Therefore there is little surprise that he feels 'unsafe' visiting the school or that it is now a school in Special Measures.

The LEA organised another statement review on 7th June. Again no papers were requested in advance to gauge Twm's opinion. During the meeting the professionals involved all agreed that his statement would be ignored. He would be placed at a Unit at Jenner Park and he would be pulled off roll from pen Y garth by 28th June. The LEA suggested they would not re assess his statement despite the fact there is substantial new evidence to support a new statement or a new IDP. In the past few months he has had a ASD diagnosis, he has been assessed by SALt and Educational psychology. We as his parents would like this new evidence to be considered before placing Twm in a new school.

The Unit suggested is for children with an IQ under 50. Twm has a spiky profile, but he is able in some areas. He is socially adept. Recently he auditioned for an aledaing part in a play with extensive line to learn and he gained a part and is regularly attending rehearsals. A child who has a IQ under 50 couldn't achieve this. We have visited the Jenner Park unit with Twm on six occasions. We are concerned that none of the other children are cognitively able to communicate with him and he is worried about how he will settle there.

Since 13th of January, I have written to the LEA many times requesting that Twm's statement is re assessed so we can consider different provision. However the LEA have never responded to my requests.

We as a family have been through enough already, having had to fight to get the support for our daughter, after **Ysgol Pen y Garth** failed her.

As a result of the second review meeting we would like to consider other placement options and formally re assess Twm's statement as is the legal procedure. If the Lea are unwilling to re assess we would appreciate formal written confirmation of this so that we can lodge an appeal as is our legal right to do so.

It is with great sadness that there is no Welsh medium school **in the Vale** or In **Cardiff** that can support **Twm's** needs.

I spoke publicly about our situation on the **BBC Radio Cymru News** on several occasions. The new ALN bill was meant to stop Parents with ALN children from having to fight for support. But from what I have experienced this year, this is certainly not the case with the **Vale of Glamorgan Council**.

It's very disappointing after all the support that **Twm** has had, **Ysgol Pen y Garth** has failed **Twm** like it has so many others. I work in many schools in other parts of Wales and witness children with many different needs thriving in the mainstream. Why is it that the **Vale of Glamorgan Council** cannot deliver on basic education to suit every child through the medium of Welsh?

I kindly request that that you help us by requesting that:

- **Ensure the **Vale of Glamorgan** LEA considers change of placement in part 3 of **Twm's** statement or issue an LEA maintained IDP as a matter of urgency.**

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Twm needs to be in school, he has already missed so much of his education. The LEA need to make him a priority.

During July '23 the LEA issued a new statement of educational needs for my son without our consultation. It was sent to an old email address, so we did not see the email immediately. When we complained to a member of the assembly they retracted the statement- which named a school we did not agree with. They have now provided us with 15 days to suggest a named school for the new statement and give reasons why we disagree with some suggestions in the statement- such as deleting his full time 121 support. We have asked why he is being issued a statement and not an idp. We have not had a response to this. We believe it might be because with the new IDP system the child/ parent has more choice with the placement.