

# Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School

The Oaks, Redhill, Telford, TF2 9NZ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is adequate because

- Pupils make good progress in all their subjects, including in English and mathematics, because of good teaching and the use of an effective curriculum.
- Pupils who start at the school late in their educational career, following a disrupted experience of education, make up lost ground rapidly.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils work hard to behave well in school and their attendance and punctuality to lessons school is very good.
- Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is adequate. It is not good because, although the school makes suitable provision to promote the wellbeing of pupils, some elements of staff training need to be brought fully up to date.
- Leadership and management are adequate. The school's leaders enable pupils to make good progress but have only provided adequate provision for their welfare, health and safety and one of the regulations for independent schools are not met.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff members support pupils well. They promote a positive environment for learning, based on mutual respect and endeavour, which pupils appreciate and from which they benefit.
- The therapeutic programmes offered to pupils provide them with effective opportunities to overcome their difficulties and to make the most of their abilities to learn and make progress.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice.
- The inspector observed six lessons taught by two different teachers. He looked at pupils' work and held meetings with the headteacher, representatives of the proprietor, staff members and pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, monitoring reports of teaching and learning, records of lesson observations, and staff training records.

## Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School is a small special school that provides full-time education for girls aged between 11 and 18 years. All of the pupils reside in residential accommodation provided by the proprietor. The school opened in October 2012 and this is its first inspection.
- All but one of the pupils currently on the school's roll has a statement of special educational needs. The pupils experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and all are looked after.
- Alternative provision is not used by the school.
- The school explains its purpose as being to provide gender responsive specialist care and education to vulnerable young women and to equip them to establish a safe and meaningful lifestyle leading to a successful transition to independent living.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
  - The following information must be made available to parents of pupils, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate:
    - particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions
    - particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language
    - particulars of the curriculum policy of the school as required under part 1, paragraph 2
    - particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving as required under part 3, paragraph 9
    - particulars of the arrangements for tackling bullying, and for promoting pupils' health and safety on the school premises and on educational visits as required under part 3 paragraphs 10 and 11
    - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations
    - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
- Improve the provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils so that every possible effort is made to protect them by ensuring that all staff training is completed and up to date.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that teachers have the best possible opportunities to help all pupils achieve at their personal best by:
  - supporting teachers to develop their practice so that all teachers' lessons are as effective as the best
  - enhancing the level of detail of targets for literacy and numeracy in pupils' individual education plans so that pupils can make even more rapid progress

- improving arrangements to identify and track details of pupils progress so that all possible opportunities are taken to enable them to improve.
- Improve the anti-bullying strategy by extending pupils’ opportunities to learn about, and build resilience against, the dangers associated with the misuse of social media and text messaging.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Pupils' achievements are good. They make good progress in all subjects, including English and mathematics. The pupils have only been at the school for less than a year and all experienced disrupted education prior to starting due to their learning or behavioural difficulties. They re-engage quickly with education and make up lost ground well as a result of good teaching and an effective curriculum.

With careful and well-prepared support from teachers, almost all pupils take part actively in their lessons and most enjoy their learning. They take pride in their work, which is well presented in their books and effectively displayed in classrooms and around the school. One student commented that the work she was doing in the school provided her with 'life changing opportunities'. All pupils learn to use information and communication technology (ICT), which is used effectively throughout the school to extend learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are working towards GCSEs or Entry Level Functional Skills Awards and they achieve well in all their subjects.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Pupils' behaviour is good, reflecting the improvement pupils make from when they join the school. Although some of the pupils continue to struggle to control outbursts of frustration and anger, they are supported well by the staff. Overall, the school provides a business-like learning environment where pupils have good opportunities to learn and make progress. Staff are knowledgeable about pupils' difficulties and are very good at supporting them and helping them to manage their behaviour better.

Pupils say that they enjoy school and almost all attend well and are punctual to their lessons. Staff are consistent in their use of agreed approaches to supporting pupils' behaviour. For example, lessons regularly conclude with an opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own learning and behaviour targets. This enables pupils to take an increasing level of responsibility for their own actions. Pupils respond well to this and to the school's incentive scheme and enjoy the positive response to their efforts.

The school makes particularly good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All staff promote an ethos of understanding and mutual respect very well and this helps the pupils to become more self-confident. Through their personal, social and health education (PSHE) and through the weekly cultural study, pupils gain a good awareness of other cultures, hearing stories from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. For instance, pupils have recently celebrated the cuisine and cultural heritage of France and Italy at the start of a series of lessons that are providing a cultural world tour. These activities, and the enjoyable cooking that the pupils undertake in connection with them, promote their awareness of other cultures and help them to develop an attitude of understanding and tolerance.

Pupils learn about British institutions and services through citizenship lessons as well as through visits from the community police liaison officer. Pupils take the role of chair in the daily community meeting and routinely take the minutes. This, along with involvement in the school council, helps them to develop the attitudes and skills they need to take an active part in democratic society. Pupils also develop very good relations with the local community where they make a contribution through taking part in cadets' activities and carrying out voluntary work in charity shops. The school ensures that whenever political issues are discussed, balanced views are promoted.

**Quality of teaching****Good**

The quality of teaching is good and it has enabled pupils to make good progress in their academic subjects during their time at the school. The best teaching combines high expectations and very effective methods to inspire pupils to achieve very well. In a drama lesson, for example, pupils made good progress learning and practising improvisation skills. The teacher's expertise helped them to use these skills well in a series of role-plays about bullying in the work place. This enabled them to demonstrate both empathy and understanding. A mathematics lesson about the measurement of area used a good range of ICT and other activities to help pupils grasp new concepts as well as practise and extend those they already knew. Most teaching is successful in helping pupils to make the most of their abilities, especially in literacy and numeracy. In some lessons, however, teachers spend too much time giving information without ensuring that pupils have really understood what is being presented. As a consequence, pupils do not participate as well as they could and make slower progress.

Pupils' abilities are assessed when they start at the school and regularly thereafter. Teachers almost always use these assessments well and develop a good knowledge of what the pupils need to do to make progress. Teachers usually make good use of their subject knowledge, and their understanding of challenging and complex learning needs, to enthuse and inspire pupils. Across the school, teachers regularly make use of ICT to stimulate learning. Arrangements to identify and track details of pupils' progress in their various subjects are satisfactory but in the early stages of development. The school has recently invested in a new software programme to bring additional rigour to this work, but its effectiveness has not yet been seen. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and well, praising pupils' efforts and helping them to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Very good tutorial arrangements mean pupils are aware of their progress and behaviour in all their lessons as well as their success, or lack of it, with homework tasks. These arrangements motivate and encourage pupils well to improve their performance and their behaviour in school.

**Quality of curriculum****Good**

The school has developed a good curriculum which enables pupils to progress well. It is based on the National Curriculum subjects and has a focus on enabling pupils to achieve qualifications. Pupils are currently preparing for GCSEs or Entry level awards in English, mathematics, science, sociology, art, performing art and religious studies. Some pupils are from Wales and their language skills are promoted with regular Welsh lessons. The curriculum makes good use of schemes of work for these subjects as well as for PSHE, citizenship and religious education.

Careful attention is paid to meeting the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs. Individual education plans are prepared for all pupils outlining targets in academic subjects and for personal development. The plans help all who work with the pupils have a clear view of where they need to make progress. However, there is room for improvement in the detail provided in targets for literacy and numeracy. This would enable teachers to direct pupils' work better so that they make even more progress. Targeted therapeutic interventions, developed on advice of therapists and psychologists, help pupils make sense of difficult experiences. Visits from the safe neighbourhood police team supplement the pupils' PHSE work. During the inspection a very successful session helped the pupils understand the impact and dangers of alcohol and drugs.

Physical education takes place in the school and is supplemented by the regular activity sessions that take place as part of the pupils' residential placement. These include walking in the countryside, ice-skating, boxing and visiting the gym. The provision has a good impact on improving individuals' health and fitness. Regular outings, such as to museums and local places of interest, extend the pupils' knowledge and interest in their locality and in the world at large.

The regular use of cross-curricular links support learning well and make the pupils' experience

more meaningful. For example, during the inspection written and verbal literacy skills were consistently reinforced in all activities. Pupils are developing their ideas about future college placements and receive valuable advice about future options through lessons, the review process and visits from advisers.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Adequate**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate and all independent school regulations for this standard are met. Provision is not good because, although all staff have completed child protection training, some aspects of staff training have not yet been fully completed by all staff. However, the school provides a safe and nurturing learning environment, which the pupils enjoy and appreciate.

The provision is characterised by a high level of commitment to pupils' well-being and care. A range of suitable policies has been produced and they are implemented consistently for the benefit of the pupils' welfare. Management of behaviour is a very high priority in view of the emotional and social difficulties pupils experience in their lives and the school is successful in encouraging a sense of self-worth and in promoting self-discipline. This helps pupils to become aware of the impact of their behaviours on themselves and on others. Together with the effective support and guidance provided by the staff, this results in appropriate behaviour being the norm in school and bullying being rare. The impact of bullying is considered in many contexts throughout the school including the school council and the school's own PHSE programme called 'Because we're worth it'. Most pupils say that they do not experience bullying and that they are aware of what action to take if they do. Pupils learn about the dangers associated with the bullying that takes place on social network sites and the inappropriate use of text messages. However, the school is aware that it needs to do more to help them to learn how to avoid these dangers and to build resilience against them.

Staff recruitment is carried out in a thorough and careful manner, and all the required checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of staff to work with young people. The required single central register is maintained correctly. All staff are trained in fire safety as well as first aid. Fire drills are routinely carried out in school and fire-fighting equipment is subject to regular inspection.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that they receive good support and guidance, which they value. Supervision in school is provided in a good-humoured manner, which pupils appreciate. Risk assessments, including those for visits outside school, promote pupils' safety well.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Adequate**

The leadership and management of the school are adequate. They are not good or better because the school's leaders have not ensured that all staff have fully completed their training. In addition, one of the regulations for independent schools are not met. This is because the information provided for parents, carers and others does not provide all the details required for independent schools.

The school's therapeutic approach to learning and personal development is strongly promoted by the school's leaders and is shared and understood throughout the school community. This has a positive impact on pupils' development and on their achievements. Suitable self-evaluation and the management of staff performance, in particular through effective observation of teaching and learning, contribute well to helping teachers to improve pupils' learning and achievement. Nevertheless, leaders and managers are aware of the need to help some teachers improve their lessons so that pupils have every opportunity to make the most of their abilities.

All pupils, including those who are looked after by the local authority, benefit from very effective

meetings involving both school and residential staff together with local authorities, parents and carers, and other relevant agencies where issues concerning their progress and well-being are carefully considered. The meetings are productive and beneficial.

The proprietor has provided the school with suitable learning facilities including classrooms that are light and airy, and well resourced. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a good standard. Inspiring examples of pupils' work contribute to providing an attractive and stimulating learning environment.

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements and is correctly implemented. All but two of the regulations for independent schools are met.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138875
<b>Inspection number</b>	422834
<b>DfE registration number</b>	893/6030

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	3
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Amberleigh Care Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	John Lenkiewicz
<b>Headteacher</b>	Perdita Mousley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	First inspection

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