



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

Annual monitoring inspection report on
Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School
Golfa Hall
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 9AF

Date of inspection: July 2017

by

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

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Context

Amberleigh School is an independent special school situated close to the market town of Welshpool, Powys. The school provides education, care and therapy for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

All pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales and England. The school currently has 11 pupils on roll, all of whom are boys who live in the children's home which shares the school's site. Seven pupils have statements of special educational needs.

All of the pupils are from predominately English-speaking backgrounds.

The head of education was appointed in March 2016.

Main findings

Strengths

The school provides a calm and nurturing learning environment where pupils are treated with respect. As a result, there are positive working relationships between the pupils and the staff.

Pupils make effective use of the structured therapeutic support at the school. As a result, over time they improve their behaviour, self-esteem and confidence. There are regular opportunities for pupils to raise issues that concern them.

The school has a comprehensive programme of personal and social education that is delivered jointly by teachers, therapists and care staff. This includes support and guidance on important areas such as sex and relationships education, online safety, and the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils and promotes the values of the school well. This includes a range of classroom-based lessons, outdoor activities and therapeutic input. Older pupils benefit from work experience placements and courses provided at a local college of further education. Pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills well in English and mathematics lessons.

Senior leaders communicate a clear vision for the school that focuses on providing an integrated approach to meeting pupils' needs. Education, care and therapy staff know and support the vision well.

Areas for development

The school has valuable processes for identifying the academic, social and emotional needs of pupils. This information is recorded on planning documents for each area of provision. However, the school has not drawn this information together into one coherent plan for each pupil. As a result, the use of this information to set specific individual targets for pupils in important areas of learning, such as literacy and communication, is underdeveloped.

Procedures for staff to evaluate the quality of teaching, moderate teacher assessment and share best practice in the subject areas that they responsible for are in the early stages of development.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that individual education plans identify the specific needs of pupils and provide clear targets to address these needs
- R2 Strengthen procedures for staff to evaluate the quality of provision and share best practice in the subjects they are responsible for

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Introduce a clear and coherent system for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils' additional learning needs

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has suitable arrangements in place to identify pupils' additional learning needs. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development and ensure that programmes of learning are matched appropriately to pupils' needs and abilities.

The school is developing an online system to monitor the achievement of pupils' learning objectives. However, systems to track the progress that pupils make in addressing their broader additional needs remain underdeveloped. Pupils' individual education plans do not provide enough information about pupils' specific needs. Staff do not use this information to set targets that address pupils' additional learning needs clearly enough.

Recommendation 2: Plan effectively for the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Leaders have strengthened the school's provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Staff have received training in implementing the literacy and numeracy framework and have a better understanding of how literacy and numeracy can be promoted across all lessons and other activities. Teachers use a new format for planning that identifies opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Staff with responsibility for leading the development of literacy and numeracy have introduced new baseline assessments with a sharper focus on identifying pupils' strengths and areas for improvement. They use this information well to plan interventions that match closely the literacy skills and numeracy needs of individual pupils. All staff have received appropriate training to deliver these interventions. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of the interventions on pupils' standards.

Arrangements to quality assure the effectiveness of teachers' planning and the quality of literacy and numeracy interventions, and to moderate teacher assessment of pupils' skills, are in an early stage of development.

Recommendation 3: Improve self-evaluation to have a sharper focus on the standards that pupils achieve

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school's self-evaluation report contains an appropriate evaluation of important pupil outcomes such as examination performance and leavers' destinations. Leaders have strengthened arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. As a result staff have a better understanding of the rate of individual pupil progress in developing these skills.

Leaders have established valuable strategic partnerships with other schools to identify and learn from good practice. This has helped leaders to evaluate pupils' standards of academic progress and social skills development in relation to those achieved by pupils in similar schools.

There is an appropriate focus on pupils' standards in staff meetings and lesson observations.

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

Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 4.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

Recommendation regarding registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales 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 annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School
School number	6666042
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	10/07/2017
Proprietor	Kevin Gallagher
Staff	1 head of education, 1 education manager, 6 teachers, 1 administrative assistant
Number of pupils	11 pupils
Provision	Day provision for pupils resident in the organisation's children's home
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
Last Section 163 inspection	22/11/2016
Last annual monitoring inspection	05/05/2015
Last CSSIW inspection	February 2016

Team information

Mr Anthony Mulcahy	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Mark Tither	Team Inspector