

Amberleigh Therapeutic School

The Oaks, Redhill, Telford, Shropshire TF2 9NZ

Inspection dates

18 October 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c) 3(d) 3(g)

- The requirements of this independent school standard were not met at the standard inspection in October 2017. This was because pupils were not making good enough progress, teachers did not plan lessons well enough and leaders did not ensure assessment was effective.
- There have been significant and marked improvements in teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' progress during this year.
- All pupils have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and most have education, health and care (EHC) plans. Pupils now make good progress over time in a range of subjects across the curriculum, including English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that lessons are challenging and are planned, making use of accurate knowledge of pupils' starting points.
- Leaders have improved the way that they assess pupils' ability. Staff use demanding reading and numeracy tests when pupils arrive at the school. They have reassessed those who have been with them for some time. This has led, for example, to reading materials being closely matched to pupils' ability. As a result, pupils have made marked improvements in their progress in subjects where literacy is important, such as English, humanities and the new religious education curriculum. A scrutiny of pupils' folders, covering their work over the previous eighteen months, shows effective progress in, for example, spelling, the acquisition of new vocabulary and research skills.
- Leaders have given effective training to staff responsible for pupils' assessment information. Staff successfully use information received from pupils' previous schools. This has led to more effective challenge for pupils. Pupils learn new knowledge and use it well. In science, for example, pupils have a good understanding of the ways in which skeletal structures work. They use that information securely in their writing about the health benefits of regular exercise.
- Staff make precise links between their learning plans and pupils' EHC plans. As a result, pupils' annual and interim reviews are effective. Staff set pupils clear and appropriately challenging learning targets. These targets are well used as part of the planning process.

They are regularly reviewed, and pupils use them to understand what they need to learn next.

- Staff have successfully developed the broad and balanced curriculum. It allows pupils to work towards high-quality qualifications. There are also rich opportunities for pupils to develop their independent living skills. For example, staff take pupils to bookshops, to the Good Food Show, Haughmond Hill and Bala Waters. These events have helped improve pupils' teamwork, self-esteem and confidence.
- At the previous inspection, there were weaknesses in lesson planning and the use of lesson time. This has now changed for the better. Staff ensure that their lessons are well linked to challenging learning objectives. Resources are used effectively, and pupils make good use of time. Most-able pupils are set demanding and interesting work and they make good progress. For example, in an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, pupils used computers to learn code and then applied it to game making, reviewing and making improvements when necessary.
- Leaders have an effective system for observing teachers' lessons and, if needed, recommending sharply focused improvements and seeing these through to having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- At the previous inspection, there was an ineffective framework for assessing pupils' work regularly. Leaders and staff now frequently and accurately assess pupils' work. They standardise and moderate their assessments with other schools. They scrutinise each other's assessments closely by bringing all the books of individual pupils to quality-assurance meetings. Staff discuss the ways in which progress has been made and what can be done to improve this still further. As a result, in books and folders seen during the inspection, pupils were making good progress and there was consistent use of the school's assessment policy.
- At the previous inspection, pupils' progress was impeded by incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders have addressed this effectively. For example, they help pupils see a clear link between behaviour and sanctions. Pupils say that they think the school is a fair and safe place. Pupils' therapeutic support is good. The staff work well with the school's psychotherapist, local authority agencies and families to plan clear steps for each pupils' improvement in behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour have markedly declined over the past two years.
- Leaders have put into place a new and effective rewards system. Pupils are given points for positive behaviour throughout the day, and they respect this process, knowing that it leads to privileges that they value.
- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in these paragraphs, this standard is now met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraphs 5, 5(b), 5(b)(v)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not done enough to ensure that pupils knew about different cultural traditions.
- Pupils now have a good understanding and appreciation of a range of faith traditions. They spoke enthusiastically of the trips that they have been on to places of worship.

Pupils have developed an interest in what other people believe, and they respect the differences between them. Pupils' workbooks show that they understand the dangers of intolerance and discrimination and what people should do to oppose prejudice.

- Leaders have put in place a challenging and well-planned religious education curriculum. Leaders have chosen GCSE examination modules to design their teaching materials. It has led to pupils learning systematically about a wide range of religious traditions, including Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.
- Pupils show respect for places of faith and wrote about how important such places are to others, and they recognise how people use them to develop personally. Pupils understand that faith centres are given high value in modern British society.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is strong and links closely to the school's effective personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. There is a school council that promotes the acceptance of different viewpoints. For example, pupils debate the usefulness of school rewards and the difference that uniform makes to the school ethos. Pupils say that they find this helpful and that they feel listened to.
- Pupils get involved in improving the ethos of the school. For example, they conduct surveys with staff and among themselves to discover the different values people hold. Pupils said that this helped them appreciate points of view different to their own. Pupils complete what the school calls 'feelings checks' that encourage pupils to be thoughtful about and to respect each other's emotions. Pupils learn well about keeping themselves healthy through sensible nutrition.
- As a result of leaders' actions, this standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b) and 15

- The previous inspection found that the admissions and registration process was not effective. This was because the school did not list pupils who had been on the school's roll when the school changed its name. This was immediately rectified. The admissions register now lists all the pupils who have been on roll since the school's first registration with the Department for Education.
- The attendance register now complies with the standard. All pupils' attendance is registered twice daily.
- The headteacher and the proprietor monitor the admissions and register process closely and, as a result, staff keep relevant documents accurately.
- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph, this standard is now met.
- When the school was last inspected, arrangements for safeguarding were found to be effective. Leaders have continued to ensure that pupils are safe, and that their welfare is well managed. The school's safeguarding policy is fit for purpose and easily accessible on the school's website. Leaders and staff are acutely aware of the many complex risks to which pupils are exposed. Leaders and staff work well together to prevent harm and encourage protective behaviours. Pupils learn well how to stay safe online, and when using mobile phones and other electronic communication devices. Pupils learn effectively how to behave appropriately with others.

- Leaders and staff work closely with local authority partners to plan and monitor pupils' welfare and safety. The school's proprietor is knowledgeable about safeguarding and makes sure leaders and staff are well trained. As a result, from policy documentation to impact, leaders have developed a strong safeguarding culture. The school's PSHE education curriculum helps pupils learn effectively about, for example, developing appropriate relationships, being safe in public spaces and making healthy choices about exercise.
- This standard continues to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 20(1), 20(2), 20(3), 20(3)(a), 20(3)(a)(i), 20(3)(a)(ii), 20(3)(b), 20(3)(b)(i), 20(3)(b)(ii), 20(3)(b)(iii), 20(4), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(a)(iii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c)

- These standards were not met at the previous inspection because leaders had not ensured the proprietor's pre-employment checks had been appropriately recorded in its central record.
- The checks required by the standards have all been completed successfully and accurately recorded in the single central record.
- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph, this standard is now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(b)

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because the school did not make available on their website their school policy for English as an additional language or arrangements for pupils who have education, health and care plans. The school had not made available a copy of the most recent inspection report on their website. These failings have been rectified.
- Leaders have provided an effective policy for making provision for pupils known to speak English as an additional language. It is fit for purpose. It describes the ways in which pupils are to be assessed, the broad and balanced curriculum available and the additional interventions that the school secures to help pupils and parents. Leaders make sure that all pupils take appropriately demanding high-quality accreditations.
- There are no pupils currently on roll who are known to have English as an additional language.
- The school's policies for pupils who have EHC plans are fit for purpose and provide clear descriptions of the provision that the school makes available for such pupils.
- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in this part, this standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- Leaders have ensured that they understand and meet all the independent school standards.
- Leaders have acted decisively to implement their approved action plan. All the actions they said they would put into place have been successfully accomplished.
- Pupils are making good progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum, including English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is highly effective. She has improved the school considerably since the last inspection. There are high levels of staff morale, constant focus on pupil outcomes and positive relationships with pupils.
- Leaders have improved the assessment framework so that staff have access to accurate information about pupils' progress. They use this information to plan challenging lessons. Pupils are engaged, proud of their work and, no matter what their ability, they make effective progress. Leaders have put in place an effective curriculum. Leaders carefully judge each pupils' ability. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' success.
- Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities monitor the targets in pupils' education, health and care plans effectively. They have regular meetings with staff to review the work of pupils in order to ensure that they are making at least good progress. They carefully monitor the welfare of pupils through, for example, evaluating the success of the school's therapeutic interventions. Leaders have effective relationships with local authorities. Pupils' review documents show frequent sharing of information and adjustment of targets where necessary. Pupils are listened to and their views and preferences acted on.
- Leaders have streamlined the governance of the school. The sole proprietor has oversight of the school's leadership team. He has devolved to school leaders the responsibility to plan school strategy and put in place effective quality assurance.
- The sole proprietor has made sure that leaders are accountable to him. The proprietor has a skilled and effective relationship with his leaders. Leadership minutes, headteacher's reports, leaders' self-evaluation and school improvement planning are clear and linked to pupils' outcomes. Leaders are systematic about the collection of information to enable them to make planning adjustments.
- Leaders have commissioned a well-qualified school improvement partner to assist with its quality assurance. Through working well with their partner school, staff critically analyse their work.
- Leaders place the highest priority on safeguarding. They have strong arrangements for planning pupils' safety, putting care plans into good effect, and liaising well with other agencies, including local authorities, previous schools and families.
- Leaders are well trained to manage pupils' behaviour and, as a result, pupils behave well.
- School leaders have successfully addressed the shortcomings found in this paragraph, and so this standard is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)
- Paragraphs 5, 5(b), 5(b)(v)
- Paragraph 20(1), 20(2), 20(3), 20(3)(a), 20(3)(a)(i), 20(3)(a)(ii), 20(3)(b), 20(3)(b)(i), 20(3)(b)(ii), 20(3)(b)(iii), 20(4), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(a)(iii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c)
- Paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 15
- Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(d), 32(3), 32(3)(b)
- Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

School details

Unique reference number	138875
DfE registration number	893/6030
Inspection number	10070773

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kevin Gallagher
Headteacher	Michelle Maguire
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,481
Telephone number	01952 619 144
Website	www.amberleighcare.co.uk
Email address	michelle.maguire@amberleighcare.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	3–5 October 2017

Information about this school

- Amberleigh Therapeutic School is an independent day school providing full-time education for boys aged 11 to 18.
- The school has notified the DfE of the change of proprietor that took place before the previous inspection.
- The governance structure has changed since the last inspection. It is now the

responsibility of the sole proprietor.

- This school is much smaller than the average for most secondary schools.
- All pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of such pupils is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school does not have a religious character.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to judge how much progress the school had made in meeting unmet standards at the previous standard inspection in October 2017. In addition, the DfE wrote to the school in March 2018 reminding the school that its single central record would be checked.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the previous inspection. It was conducted at no notice.
- The DfE required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. The school did this and submitted it in January 2018. It was evaluated as acceptable in July 2018 and the DfE accepted it without modifications.
- On 19 March 2018 the DfE confirmed the proprietor's suitability. The DfE required the school to update its single central record of recruitment checks appropriately.
- The inspector observed learning in lessons through key stages 3 and 4. There were no pupils on roll in key stage 5. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised by the inspector in each lesson.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, middle leadership staff and the sole proprietor.
- The inspector met with pupils and discussed with them their learning and workbooks.
- The inspector scrutinised the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised a range of records of recruitment, welfare plans, and actions taken to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development planning documents, and policies and documents published on the website and made available during the inspection.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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