



Report summary for parents and carers on Amberleigh Therapeutic School

Date of inspection: September 2024

by Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Summary

Nearly all pupils at Amberleigh Therapeutic School respond well to the nurturing and supportive environment it provides. Over time, most of pupils make sound progress from their initial starting points in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are well supported to build their interpersonal skills including listening, empathy and reflection and make extremely effective progress in developing social and communication skills. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their digital and ICT skills.

Teaching staff are highly committed, know the pupils well and develop good working relationships with them. Where planning, assessment and feedback are effective, both staff and pupils have a good understanding of progress and how to move learning forward. However, teachers' planning does not always link to pupil additional learning needs (ALN) and focus on individual targets identified in pupils' individual development plans (IDPs) or equivalent well enough.

The school supports the pupils very well to develop 'career action plans' and experience the best possible opportunities within work experience programmes. Staff plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to improve their understanding of the world of work and potential future careers. In addition, the 'Golfa Produce' enterprise helps pupils to gain valuable skills for the workplace. This is a particularly strong feature of the school.

All pupils have one-to-one therapeutic sessions through the opportunity to work individually as part of a nurture session, and attend valuable group meetings where they can raise issues that are important to them. As a result, pupils' interactions with each other and staff are positive and respectful.

Pupils have a strong voice across Amberleigh and help influence the work of the school. They are confident that staff listen and act on their views. In addition, across the school, pupils develop valuable leadership skills, for example as part of regular community meetings.

Leaders, education staff and staff from the wider team hold regular meetings, which provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss operational matters and share practice in areas such as safeguarding, planning, and assessment. However leaders do not extract and analyse information well enough to identify patterns and trends effectively.

Leaders use the information from their self-evaluation activities well to agree school priorities for improvement. They have a good track record of improvement and have successfully addressed the recommendation from the monitoring visit in 2023. They evaluate progress and feedback regularly and are not afraid to amend their approaches or change direction if something is not working. However, many of these changes, such as the necessary improvements to professional learning, are in the very early stages of development due to recent changes in leadership and have not yet started to have an impact.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made four recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Consolidate essential information to enable leaders to more effectively evaluate the impact of school initiatives**
- R2 Ensure that staff use information regarding pupils' ALN when planning lessons and learning activities**
- R3 Further develop professional learning to focus more sharply on teaching and learning and strategies to support pupils with ALN**
- R4 Strengthen the curriculum to provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their digital skills and an awareness of UNCRC**

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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