



**Annual monitoring inspection report on
Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School**

Date of inspection: May 2015

by

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

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Context

Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School is an independent special school situated close to the market town of Welshpool, Powys. The school provides education, care and therapy for boys aged 11 to 18 years who have with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and other additional learning needs. These include speech and language difficulties, and communication difficulties.

The school currently educates nine pupils, all of whom are boys who live in the children's home that shares the school's site. Two pupils are post-16. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs.

Since the last visit, three teachers have left the school. All three teachers have been replaced.

The school is currently carrying out building work to create a base for the special educational needs co-ordinator and add an additional classroom.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- Education, care and therapy staff work very effectively together
- Relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to gain in confidence and self-esteem and to make progress
- Pupils respond well to the routines of the school and care setting
- They behave well and engage well in learning
- They develop very good social skills and are polite when welcoming visitors to the school
- The Head of Education has a good understanding of areas for development at the school and the school development plan identifies suitable areas for improvement
- The accommodation provides an appropriate environment that helps pupils to learn

Areas for development

The school's areas for development are that:

- Most of the staff have had limited teaching experience before coming to the school
- Not all staff have a good enough understanding of individual subject areas to ensure that pupils make progress
- Although pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) include appropriate literacy and numeracy targets, planning for the development of literacy and numeracy

skills across the curriculum is at an early stage

- Staff do not have enough opportunities to observe good practice in other settings
- Opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and the work of others are underdeveloped

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Plan effectively for the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- R2 Ensure that all teachers have a robust knowledge and understanding of relevant subject areas so that they can plan effectively for progression
- R3 Develop opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers
- R4 Provide opportunities for staff to observe good practice in other appropriate settings

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

Recommendation 1: Make sure that, where teaching is good or better, teachers share this good practice across the school

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has introduced regular peer observations. All teachers are involved in the process. Teachers receive verbal and written feedback. The Head of Education collates the information on a termly basis and identifies good practice and areas for development across the school. Teachers discuss this information during staff meetings. As a result of this practice, teachers have taken on board specific areas for development, for example the use of rewards and seating plans.

New staff have the opportunity to teach alongside the Head of Education. This helps them to become more confident in using different teaching methods.

Recommendation 2: Make sure that pupils are given detailed written feedback on what they need to do to improve their work

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has updated its marking policy. Teachers provide helpful verbal and written comments, with a focus on positive reinforcement. Pupils feel that these encouraging comments help them to gain in confidence and to do their best. However, the policy is not specific enough to ensure that marking is consistent across the school. Marking does not tell pupils consistently what they need to do to improve.

The education manager carries out a monthly audit of the marking of pupils' work and provides comments to the teachers on their marking during line management meetings. However, this process does not give staff enough guidance on how marking should help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Recommendation 3: Make sure that pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) include specific learning targets showing small steps of progress that can be reviewed effectively across the school

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Individual education plans include targets that are specific and measurable, with an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. The school reviews the IEPs every two months. Pupils are involved in the process.

The school has introduced a 'Help to Learn' sheet for pupils to complete. This encourages pupils to identify where they need extra support and helps inform IEP targets. All staff and pupils have copies of the IEPs so they can be referred to in all lessons.

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

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

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

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

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	666/6042
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	05/05/2015
Proprietor	Amberleigh Care
Staff	Head of Education, education manager and 5 full-time teaching staff 2 therapists Care staff
Number of pupils	9
Provision	52 week residential
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, mild to moderate learning difficulties
Last Section 163 inspection	01/03/2011
Last annual monitoring inspection	02/04/2014
Last CSSIW inspection	01/03/2015

Team information

Mrs Caroline Rees	Reporting Inspector
Mr Huw Davies	Team Inspector