



**Annual monitoring inspection report on:**

**Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School**

**Date of inspection: April 2014**

**by**

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

Estyn's annual monitoring visits to independent and independent special schools in Wales are required to report on whether the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) registration standards regulations for independent schools are met and, where they are not met, what they need to do in order to comply.

Further information regarding the regulations governing this monitoring visit can be found in the following documentation:

- Welsh Assembly Government: *Independent Schools Information and Registration Handbook*, April 2004; and
- Welsh Office Circular 37/94: *Independent schools which admit pupils with special educational needs*:
  - paragraphs 1-8: granting/removing approval;
  - paragraph 42: changes in character, management or control of the school; and
  - 37/94 paragraph 43: significant differences from approved number.

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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 pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and other additional learning needs, which include speech and language difficulties and communication difficulties.

The school currently educates 12 pupils, all of whom are boys who live in the children's home that shares the school's site. Eight of the pupils are of secondary school age and four pupils are post-16. All pupils have 'looked-after-child' (LAC) status and nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school has gone through a period of significant staffing change since the appointment of a new head of education in January 2012. These include the appointment of an education manager, a special educational needs co-ordinator and four full-time teachers. All staff are relatively new to the school.

The school opened a new all-weather multi-use games area in November 2012. This facility is used for formal learning and for leisure activities during lunchtime and after school.

## Main findings

### Strengths

#### The school's strengths are that:

- it has fully addressed the recommendations of the previous annual monitoring inspection;
- leaders and managers have created a calm, supportive and caring ethos in which pupils feel safe and happy;
- pupils achieve good progress in their learning;
- pupils make very good progress with their behaviour and social skills, they relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors to the school;
- leaders and managers are realistic and honest about where the school is and what it needs to do to improve; and
- education and care staff work very well as a team.

## Areas for development

### The school's areas for development are that:

- it has introduced termly lesson observations. This enables the head of education to identify good practice. This practice is shared with the staff in weekly meetings. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other's lessons to increase their knowledge and improve their teaching strategies across the school. However, peer observation has not been formalised and it is too early to see its impact on improving teaching and learning;
- teachers give pupils good oral feedback in lessons. They support pupils well in class to assess their own work and the work of their peers. The majority of teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, written feedback does not always give pupils enough information about what they need to do to improve their work; and
- the school has recently introduced a new format for individual education plans (IEPs), which they are in the process of reviewing. The IEPs include literacy and numeracy targets. However, these targets do not always show small steps of progress in learning that can be reviewed effectively across the school. They are not taken into account well enough when planning lessons.

## Recommendations

- R1 Make sure that, where teaching is good or better, teachers share this good practice across the school
- R2 Make sure that pupils are given detailed written feedback on what they need to do to improve their work
- R3 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

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

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure that leaders and managers monitor the standards of teaching and learning rigorously as part of a robust process of self-evaluation to ensure that standards of attainment are raised**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has clear policies and procedures in place to monitor the standards of teaching and learning. The head of education carries out termly lesson observations. These observations link effectively to the school's annual performance management and appraisal system. Teachers are given valuable verbal and written feedback with appropriate targets for improvement. This is impacting positively on raising standards of attainment.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that assessment processes clearly identify the individual learning needs of all pupils and that the data collected is used to inform teachers' planning**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school is using an increasing range of appropriate assessments to identify the individual learning needs of all pupils and to monitor and track pupils' progress. This aids teachers' planning and helps staff to implement appropriate teaching strategies to improve the outcomes for all pupils. The school uses these assessment processes effectively to implement appropriate interventions to improve pupils' reading and numeracy skills.

### **Recommendation 3: Increase opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication and technology (ICT) and numeracy skills across the curriculum**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Teachers' planning is detailed and clearly shows how pupils are given appropriate opportunities to develop their ICT and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Interactive white boards and laptops are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Pupils make effective use of ICT, for example to research the internet to complete course work in history, compose lyrics in music, present their work in English and use digital photography in art. Pupils develop their numeracy skills well. They learn to use these skills appropriately in a variety of activities, for example measuring and weighing in food technology lessons and using data to identify trends and patterns in survey outcomes in sociology. Lower ability pupils apply number skills effectively, for example when budgeting living costs in life skills lessons.

**Recommendation 4: Provide good quality training opportunities to allow staff to further develop their skills in identifying appropriate strategies to meet the individual learning needs of the pupils**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

All teachers are following a learning course to provide them with an introductory teaching certificate. The school has devised a programme of in-house training to improve teachers' understanding of the individual learning needs of the pupils. This includes behaviour management, specific learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. This programme of training is impacting positively on improving teachers' planning. Teachers are able to identify appropriate strategies to meet the individual learning needs of the pupils.

**Recommendation 5: Take steps to comply with Standard 1 of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should ensure that:**

- there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress [1(3g)]

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. Teachers use this information well to plan lessons and pupils are achieving good progress in their learning.

**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 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

<b>School</b>	Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School
<b>School number</b>	666/6402
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	Annual monitoring inspection
<b>Date of visit</b>	2 and 3 April 2014
<b>Proprietor</b>	Amberleigh Care
<b>Staff</b>	1 head of education 1 education manager 5 teachers 1 therapist 1 head of care 14 care staff 4 night staff (on rota shift system)
<b>Number of pupils</b>	12 pupils
<b>Provision</b>	The school offers 26 hours of teaching per week during school terms in line with the local authority. The children's home is registered with CSSIW to accommodate 12 boys aged 11-18 in 52 week residential placements.
<b>Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school</b>	Pupils aged 11-18 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and other additional learning needs which include speech and language difficulties and communication difficulties.
<b>Last Section 163 inspection</b>	March 2011
<b>Last annual monitoring inspection</b>	January 2013
<b>Last CSSIW inspection</b>	March 2014

## Team information

<b>Reporting Inspector</b>	Meinir Rees
<b>Team Inspector</b>	Anthony Mulcahy