

# Appletree School

Natland, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7QS

## Inspection dates

7 May 2014

## Context of the inspection

This progress monitoring inspection took place following a request by the Department of Education. The inspector was asked to evaluate the progress made by the school in relation to the recommendations made at the emergency inspection in November 2013. These recommendations related specifically to the school's failure to meet the regulation requiring the school to promote good behaviour among pupils effectively. School leaders produced an action plan in order to tackle the recommendations. The action plan was approved by the Department for Education in February 2014. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors was in school for one day in order to conduct the monitoring inspection. The inspector had a background in education including the education of children with special education needs in both day and residential special schools.

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

**Good progress**

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The inspection of November 2013 found that the school's leaders did not always respond appropriately to potentially serious incidents, to consider what lessons should be learnt for the future and, where necessary, to change practice. Inspectors judged that regulation 9 of the independent schools standards regulations was not met as the school did not always implement its behaviour policy effectively to prevent pupils being put at risk of significant harm, or harming others. In their action plan, leaders indicated that they would review the behaviour management policy along with associated documents including the 'missing or running away from home or care' policy and the physical intervention policy. Leaders also said that they would act on the recommendations of independent reviews of both site security, related to reducing the opportunities for pupils to leave the school grounds without permission, and of the practice of dealing with and reporting of serious incidents. Furthermore leaders said that they would analyse systematically the information collected about serious incidents so that their findings could be used to inform improvements in the behaviour management practices of staff and therefore the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

As a result of implementing the action plan, the school has developed comprehensive policy statements concerning behaviour management, pupils missing or running away from home or care, and physical intervention. Each of these policies describes, in detail, what is expected of staff and the actions they should take in the particular circumstances. The information gathered following the recording of incidents related to these policies is used effectively to underpin the school's strategies and practices to keep pupils safe. Information is analysed by leaders and the findings are shared with both school and care staff with changes made to pupils' behaviour support plans when required. Staff receive

updates about the behaviour of pupils on a daily basis. Where necessary, changes are made to pupils' risk assessments and shared immediately with all staff. Consequently, data collected by the school shows that the number of serious incidents, including the use of physical intervention and the incidences of children running away from the school, has reduced markedly over the past three months when compared to the previous six months.

Data about the management of pupils' behaviour by staff is used systematically by leaders to improve the practice of staff. For example, following the analysis of data about injuries related to physical interventions, a programme of retraining for staff in the use of restraint was implemented. This has resulted in a reduction in recorded injuries to both staff and pupils since the training.

The school commissioned independent reviews of both site safety and practices relating to the management of serious incidents. Leaders have acted swiftly to implement the recommendations effectively following these reviews. Where possible, the perimeter fence has been increased in height and changes have been made to the risk assessments of those pupils who have been identified as likely to put themselves in danger by running away from school. Leaders have devised a comprehensive strategy to deal with and manage a situation which involves a pupil missing from school. The strategy has been tested by leaders and staff in a 'dry run' situation but its effectiveness cannot be fully evaluated as no pupils have run away from the school since the inspection. The reporting of serious incidents to the relevant appropriate authorities is sufficiently detailed and accurate. Leaders, though, plan to introduce an additional level of monitoring of these reports in order to strengthen further the safeguarding procedures.

The written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils has been reviewed and improved and is now being implemented effectively, consequently the requirement is met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements**

## Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Information about this school

Appletree is an independent special school registered for 14 boys and girls aged six to thirteen years old who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school opened in 1995. The premises are located on the outskirts of a small village. The school has additional premises 'Next Steps', located one mile away in the town centre, for older pupils who follow a vocational programme of education.

There are currently 12 pupils on roll, one of whom attends 'Next Steps'. The current pupils at the Appletree site are aged from eight to thirteen. All but one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school admits pupils from a number of different local authorities and all pupils are in the care of a local authority.

The school aims to support pupils to grow emotionally and socially, to learn to cope with school and to return to families and day schools. The previous inspection of the education provision was in November 2011. An emergency inspection, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools, took place in November 2013.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130367
<b>Inspection number</b>	444815
<b>DfE registration number</b>	909/6048
This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.	
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	14
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Appletree Treatment Centre Ltd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£77,640
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 560253
<b>Fax number</b>	01539 561301
<b>Email address</b>	admin@appletreeschool.co.uk

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