

Tumblewood Community School

The Laurels, 4 Hawkeridge Road, Heywood, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 4LF

Inspection dates

3–5 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor has ensured that the independent schools standards are met. Leaders are reflective and respond well to improve outcomes for pupils.
- The therapeutic care provided to pupils, which includes the involvement of parents and carers, is a strength of the school. Education, therapy and care teams work well together to support pupils to develop their social skills and to learn to manage their behaviour. This, in turn, helps pupils to prepare for their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Staff are skilled at understanding pupils' emotional and social challenges. They work as a team to adapt pupils' timetables throughout each day, aiming to ensure that pupils achieve success in their learning.
- Maintaining pupils' safety, for example to keep themselves safe while using social media, is a high priority. Relationships between staff are positive and secure.
- Leaders have a thorough approach to checking the quality of teaching and learning. Systematic observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' workbooks are in place. These activities are used appropriately to develop teaching and provide helpful professional development.
- The curriculum includes a broad range of subjects and experiences. Staff plan a range of activities that match pupils' learning needs and engage their interest. As a result, most pupils make good progress.
- Staff use the school's assessment system well. They ensure that pupils have the right support to close gaps in their understanding and to ensure that activities are suitable challenging. However, pupils' books show that there are some inconsistencies, particularly in the quality of pupils' writing across subjects.
- Leaders are in the early stages of analysing pupils' achievements over time in order to evaluate strategies that are working well and those that are less successful.

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.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - expectations are consistently high across subjects, particularly in pupils' writing across the curriculum
 - academic progress is tracked over time from pupils' starting points to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and support in addressing any dips in pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A drive from leaders to develop the partnership working between the education, therapy and care teams has had a positive impact. A strong sense of teamwork and respect permeates the school. Staff across different teams work together and offer support in any way they can to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning and achievement.
- The atmosphere around the school is a productive one. Staff value pupils' opinions and take time to listen to pupils' hopes and dreams. They respond when things do not go well; for example, if pupils express concerns, they receive a written letter from the headteacher explaining how the concerns will be looked at and acted upon.
- The headteacher, supported by the proprietors, ensures that staff have the resources that they need to provide a good standard of education for pupils. Staff appreciate the feedback and professional development activities they receive, which helps them to improve their work.
- The wide curriculum helps to engage pupils. The music and art sessions are popular. The outside space is pleasant and well maintained and allows pupils to socialise as well as take part in physical activities such as basketball. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum provides several sessions each week in which pupils discuss themes such as keeping safe, respecting different cultures and beliefs, and the reasons for laws.
- In addition, a weekly 'news round' provides time to explore current events around the world, within Britain and in the local news. Consequently, pupils become curious about events and want to get involved in supporting charities. Many are taking part in Race for Life. These activities help to develop pupils' understanding of how they can help others within their communities.
- The school development plan supports and drives improvement. It clearly sets out the priorities for the future and includes details of how actions are checked to ensure that they are making the intended difference. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- There is a consistent assessment framework in place. This supports staff to plan lessons that match pupils' learning needs. Leaders gather the information each term to check on the progress that pupils make. Leaders have started to analyse this information to identify progress over time and make appropriate changes when dips occur.

Governance

- The governing body maintains oversight of the school and has an accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for development. Governors ensure that they provide robust scrutiny of the school's effectiveness and compliance with the independent school standards. Each governor takes an area of responsibility and this helps to provide a focus for meetings with leaders. Governors review policies, such as the health and safety policy, and check that they are implemented.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. The outcomes of safeguarding concerns and actions taken by staff are clearly recorded in child protection records. Leaders and managers act to support pupils and refer child protection concerns to the appropriate agency.
- A careful watch on safeguarding training ensures that all staff have up-to-date information. Daily briefings help staff to understand any current additional risks that pupils may be facing.
- There is a safeguarding policy published on the school's website which meets current government requirements. It describes the commitment the school has to safeguarding and to promoting the welfare of all residential and day pupils. It provides detailed and clear guidance about how to notice possible signs of abuse or concern and covers aspects such as peer-on-peer abuse and how to respond when children are missing.
- Governors are well informed about changes to safeguarding guidance. They ensure that recruitment processes are robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. Staff successfully use their subject knowledge and skills to help pupils develop their knowledge and skills. Teaching assistants use their skills effectively to support learning and provide a flexible approach to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.
- Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum to make learning more interesting and relevant. A series of lessons in science about why human beings need sleep helped pupils who came into school tired each day to understand why sleep is important for health.
- Each pupil has an individually designed timetable. Staff provide positive recognition to pupils as they tackle tasks and this encourages them to try hard at their lessons. As a result, pupils gain confidence and, over time, develop their English and mathematical skills.
- Staff encourage pupils well to develop skills and knowledge across a broad range of subjects. Examples of high-quality artwork using different techniques, tools and materials are on display in the art room. In the music room, pupils confidently rehearse songs to be ready for the end-of-year celebration event. Pupils proudly share the healthy smoothies made in their food technology class with staff. Other pupils explain to visitors about the charity they are supporting while completing the Race for Life event.
- Staff focus on providing pupils with the time, space and the choices they need to enable them to settle to learning. There is an expectation that work will be completed to a high standard. However, this is not as evident in pupils' writing presentation across different subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff manage challenging behaviours well and work together successfully to help pupils to develop positive attitudes towards their learning and towards one another.
- Pupils learn about and develop an appreciation of different cultures and different ways of living. Pupils are encouraged to develop a pride in themselves, in their work and in the school. Pupils are excited about preparing for the end-of-year celebration event. Activities such as these help pupils to appreciate how to support each other.
- Staff continually assess pupils' emotional needs. Therapeutic support is assigned as appropriate. At times, this may be intensive therapy to support a pupil through a particularly challenging time. For others, it can be a lighter touch approach. When particular strategies are agreed to support pupils' emotional development, staff are made aware of these and work together well to provide a consistent approach that benefits pupils.
- Staff are also quick to notice unkindness between pupils and to act quickly when this happens. These approaches are helpful as they support pupils' sense of well-being and feelings of security.

Behaviour

- The progress pupils make in developing their behaviour is good. Every pupil has a behaviour plan that outlines their particular needs and strategies that support good behaviour. Pupils learn to understand their emotions and to develop strategies to manage their own behaviour.
- External events sometimes unsettle pupils and as a result, incidents can occur. Staff help pupils to manage these more challenging times and to learn from them.
- Pupils enjoy school and clearly appreciate the support and guidance they receive from staff. For a very small number who do not attend regularly, specific improvement plans are in place that outline actions to be taken by each team to ensure that attendance rapidly improves.
- Some pupils attend work experience or have sessions at an alternative provider. Pupils engage in these activities well. Their personal development is supported by the additional experiences that they offer.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils often arrive at the school with gaps in their learning. This may be because of poor attendance at school or because of the special educational needs and/or disabilities they may have. Staff get to know pupils and develop a personalised learning timetable and work programme that are regularly reviewed to ensure that they make good progress.
- Because of this careful assessment and personalised approach, pupils' books show evidence of good progress. In mathematics books, pupils' work is adapted to ensure that

their individual needs are met. The most able pupils use their knowledge of number to solve problems. Pupils who need more help have visual support or mathematical apparatus.

- In science, workbooks provide many examples of pupils trying out investigations and using research skills to develop their understanding of new scientific concepts, vocabulary and ideas.
- In English, pupils are encouraged to read widely. Pupils in key stage 3 read 'The Diary of a Young Girl' by Anne Frank. They then use their learning from their reading to draft and write a letter. Writing is a challenge for many pupils and books show that in some subjects, pupils do not take as much pride in their writing or make quite as much progress.
- Staff aim to move pupils onto accredited courses such as functional skills or GCSEs as they are ready and able to do so. Some pupils have worked this year towards functional skills at level 2 for English and mathematics.
- Leaders develop partnerships with local colleges and work placement providers. Pupils visit colleges and leaders invite professionals into school to support pupils' aspirations and to provide guidance about career choices. The curriculum revisits themes to do with preparing for future work or training. Wherever possible, real-life work experiences help pupils to aspire to future employment. A pupil who would like to work in a restaurant supports the school's chef in the school kitchen by preparing the food, and the meals on offer are well received by staff and pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	132775
DfE registration number	865/6034
Inspection number	10053776

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Sue Hortop and John Kearney
Headteacher	Jennifer McMillan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£64,350
Telephone number	01373 824466
Website	www.tumblewood.org
Email address	jennifer.mcmillan@tumblewood.org
Date of previous inspection	1–3 December 2015

Information about this school

- Tumblewood Community School is an independent special school and therapeutic community for girls who have severe emotional, social and mental health difficulties.
- The proprietors of the school also own some residential care provision.
- The proprietors have formed a small governing body to oversee the strategic direction of the school and to provide challenge to leaders.
- The previous standard inspection was in 2015. In January 2017, an emergency inspection was undertaken, which found some of the independent school standards to be not met. A monitoring inspection took place in November 2017, which found that all the independent school standards were now met.

- The school uses two alternative providers, Kandu Arts, an arts centre in Chippenham and Larkrise Community Farm in Trowbridge, where pupils attend work experience.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across the school and looked at pupils' work and information about pupils' progress with the headteacher. Informal discussions took place with pupils.
- Meetings took place with the proprietors and a governor. Further meetings took place with staff and with a representative from the therapy team. There were too few responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered, but views were gathered during a discussion with a carer.
- School documents such as those about safeguarding and attendance, as well as the school's development plan and policies, were scrutinised.
- The seven responses from staff to an online survey were taken into account.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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