Appletree School Ofsted Report

10 to 12 July 2024

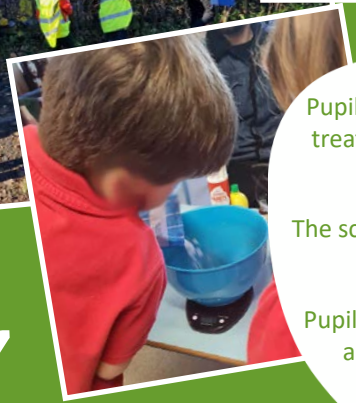
Pupils are very happy at Appletree School. They thrive in this welcoming and friendly environment. They have strong relationships with staff, and feel cared for and safe.

Pupils benefit greatly from the highly effective support that staff provide. This helps pupils to learn how to manage their emotions and behaviour successfully over time. Pupils take great pride in their achievements and are committed to their learning.

Staff have a deep understanding of the challenges that pupils have previously encountered. The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Staff are skilled at adapting their delivery of the curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils. This means that pupils get the help and support that they need to learn the curriculum well.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and high aspirations. Pupils, most of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and an education, health and care (EHC) plan, achieve well.

The school has designed an exceptional personal development programme. It includes a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships curriculum. It fully reflects the school's ethos and values



Pupils behave exceptionally well. They treat each other and adults with high levels of respect.

The school has fostered a love of reading among pupils.

Pupils benefit significantly from a wide and plentiful set of experiences beyond the academic curriculum.

Appletree Treatment Centre

growing & learning together

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Appletree Treatment Centre, Natland, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7QS

Inspection of Appletree School

Natland, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7QS

Inspection dates:	10 to 12 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	**Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at Appletree School. They thrive in this welcoming and friendly environment. They have strong relationships with staff, and feel cared for and safe. Pupils know that staff will help them if they are upset or anxious. This helps to reassure them and eases their worries.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They treat each other and adults with high levels of respect. Pupils warmly support the well-being of one another. They treat each other with great empathy and kindness.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and high aspirations. Pupils, most of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and an education, health and care (EHC) plan, achieve well.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school and to the wider community. For example, the school council has been proactive in developing the outdoor area with a multi-use games area and playground markings. Pupils are immersed in the community. For example, they participate in the village lantern festival and county shows. They have close links to the village church, schools and with the local Member of Parliament. Pupils enjoy visiting nearby farms, zoos and nature reserves.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed a broad and rich curriculum. It has identified the important knowledge for pupils to learn. Its curriculum plans and schemes of work order pupils' learning logically over time.

Staff have a deep understanding of the challenges that pupils have previously encountered. The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Staff are skilled at adapting their delivery of the curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils. This means that pupils get the help and support that they need to learn the curriculum well.

Teachers have the expertise that they need to help pupils to build knowledge securely over time. They check what pupils know and can remember and use this information to shape future learning.

However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not provided sufficient subject-specific support for staff to help them to implement the curriculum as intended. This means that, in a very few subjects, some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge they need to be fully prepared for new learning.

The school has fostered a love of reading among pupils. It has ensured that books are of a high quality and match pupils' interests. Pupils read a wide range of books

and poems with great enthusiasm, both in and out of school. The school has established an effective phonics programme. However, the programme is not taught as intended. This means that some pupils do not gain the phonics knowledge and skills they need quickly enough to become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils benefit greatly from the highly effective support that staff provide. This helps pupils to learn how to manage their emotions and behaviour successfully over time. Pupils take great pride in their achievements and are committed to their learning.

Pupils have high attendance. The school has a clear understanding of the causes of some pupils' previously high levels of absence. Actions to improve the attendance of pupils have brought about significant and sustained improvement in how well pupils attend.

The school has designed an exceptional personal development programme. It includes a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships curriculum. It fully reflects the school's ethos and values and pays particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for people who have beliefs and views that are different to their own. For example, they especially enjoyed a visit to a Buddhist temple. They have also developed close links with a school in Zambia.

Pupils benefit significantly from a wide and plentiful set of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they participate in a range of physical activities including long-distance running events, wheelchair basketball, horse-riding and outdoor activities at the outdoor classroom. Additionally, pupils enjoy cooking, learning how to play a musical instrument, singing and completing an arts award. These rich experiences help pupils to develop much confidence and resilience.

The proprietor and the school have ensured that the education which the school provides has a positive impact on pupils, including those with SEND. The school has a good understanding and knowledge of the independent school standards ('the standards') and has ensured that these are consistently met. The school has also ensured compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act.

Governors provide effective support and challenge. They hold the school to account for the quality of education that it provides. The school has taken effective steps to reduce staff's workload. For example, staff are given time to focus on their teaching. The school engages positively with parents and carers to further support pupils' education.

The school meets the health and safety and premises requirements. The building is maintained to a high standard and classrooms and other spaces are bright, clean and well resourced. There is an extensive, safe and well-equipped outdoor area that pupils can spend time in at breaktimes and where they can participate in physical education and activities.

Policies, including an effective safeguarding policy that meets the current government requirements, are made available to parents on request.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, including reading, the school has not ensured that the curriculum is taught as intended. This means that some pupils do not learn all that they should to be sufficiently prepared for their next stage of education. The school should ensure that staff have the subject-specific knowledge and support that they need to implement the intended curriculum consistently well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	130367
DfE registration number	943/6048
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10322491
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	6 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Appletree Treatment Centre Ltd
Chair	Amanda Turnbull (known as Amanda Irwin)
Principal	Rowan Knapton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£73,996
Telephone number	01539 560253
Website	www.appletreetreatmentcentre.co.uk
Email address	admin@appletreetc.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 to 5 December 2019

Information about this school

- The school is located at Natland, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7QS.
- The proprietor is Appletree Treatment Centre Ltd. The school is registered to admit up to 18 pupils.
- All pupils who attend the school reside in two of the children's homes that are managed by the same proprietor.
- The school caters for pupils who have emotional, social, behavioural and mental health needs. Most of those on roll have an EHC plan.
- The previous standard inspection took place from 3 to 5 December 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with the proprietor and a governor. Inspectors also spoke with the principal, assistant headteacher and other school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including those relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and PSHE education. They met leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons.

Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas and looked at examples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises to check the suitability of the premises and accommodation against the relevant standards.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cleo Cunningham	Ofsted Inspector

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We aim to help our children establish a secure safe base in the world, by helping them to:

Feel valued, feel good, feel loved and deserving of a safe, warm, caring place to live and learn.

Feel a sense of belonging, where they can feel valued and loved regardless of what they may do.

Build secure, healthy attachments with dedicated, dependable adults.

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In our caring safe space we support our children to:

Explore, understand and manage thoughts and feelings.

Discover the joy of learning and believe they can achieve.

Engage in therapy, helping them to make sense of what has happened in the past.

Care about and help others.

Gain self-confidence, build their own Bands of Resilience to help them cope with future challenges.

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