

Adventure Care Ltd

Hilltop Cottage, Quarnford, Buxton, SK17 0TJ

Inspection dates	23–24 June 2015	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- Good leadership, including from the proprietors, provides a nurturing learning environment that improves students' personal development and behaviour.
- Work from therapists helps students through times of crisis. Therapies and subjects are matched to students' stage of development.
- The provision for outdoor pursuits is good. The activities build students' confidence and contribute to their enjoyment of education.
- Students' understanding of democracy is promoted well. Their awareness of democracy, liberty and British law is good.
- Opportunities are provided for meditation and deep thinking.
- Behaviour at times is challenging, but measured from students' starting points on entry to the school, it is good.
- Every effort is made to keep students safe.
- Teaching is flexible. Overall, teaching meets students' needs well. The leadership and management of teaching is good.
- Students make good progress in English, mathematics and other subjects.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, students are not sufficiently well challenged in lessons.
- The marking of students' work does not always provide clear pointers for improvement.
- Outdoor education leaders do not always maintain efficient records of what they have done during the day.
- The school staff have not received training on identifying radicalisation and female genital mutilation.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons and spoke with the equine therapist about the equine assisted personal, social and education programme.
- Students' work was examined and the inspector listened to students read in lessons.
- Meetings were held with one of the proprietors, the headteacher and the class teachers. In addition, the inspector spoke by telephone with the school's art therapist. Discussions took place with students, often in informal sessions such as over lunch.
- A range of inspection activities was carried out to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Before the inspection started, the inspector checked policies on the school's website and during the inspection evaluated safeguarding policies. When at the school, documents relating to students' academic and social progress, together with the school's self-evaluation and development plan, were reviewed. The inspector also looked at curriculum and assessment policies, records of teaching and a wide range of other policies relating to the students.
- There were too few students on roll to look at responses to Parent View (from Ofsted). No Ofsted questionnaires were returned by staff.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Adventure Care Independent School is a small school that provides education for students aged nine to 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some have extremely challenging behaviours. A few have moderate learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, pathological demand avoidance and attachment disorder.
- Currently there are no primary aged pupils on roll, although there is planning for them, should any arrive at short notice. The boys and girls on roll are in Year 9 and Year 10.
- Two students have statements of special educational needs and these are currently being converted into education, health and care plans.
- Since opening, the school has taken students from the following local authorities: Doncaster, Liverpool, Newham, Nottingham, Rotherham, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside and Wolverhampton.
- The school is located in a converted garage but it has been refurbished well.
- Three quarters of the students are from white British backgrounds. Very few students come from families where English is spoken as an additional language.
- All students currently on roll are looked after by their local authorities.
- There is a holistic approach to learning. In addition to the input of academic teaching staff, support is given by the core team of care staff, qualified therapists and outdoor educators. Students can choose their key worker, who then acts as a learning mentor, assists with homework and liaises regularly with the class teacher, the headteacher and the social worker.
- There have been a significant number of changes since the last Ofsted inspection:
 - the school is now in a purpose-built building
 - new resources and furnishings have been purchased
 - the school has registered for Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Courses
 - equine therapy has been added to the curriculum
 - a purpose-built 'chill out' room has been provided.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding in all subjects, so as to raise achievement, by ensuring that:
 - students are sufficiently challenged in lessons
 - students' work is marked, with clear areas identified for improvement
 - outdoor education leaders consistently maintain records of what they have done with students during the day to enhance their learning.
- Ensure that staff receive training on radicalisation and female genital mutilation, and that the school's child protection policy in respect of these issues is updated to provide additional information about these aspects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision to create a mentoring culture enables students to overcome anxiety about learning, so that they achieve well in a supportive environment. All staff share this vision.
- Therapists contribute to students' emotional stability and provide them with coping strategies so that they become more ready to learn. There is no discrimination and all students have a chance to succeed, supported by key workers who they choose.
- The headteacher looks carefully at the impact of teaching on students' learning. She recognises that the marking of students' work needs to be improved and that there could sometimes be more challenge in students' work. She supports teachers in improving their practice and helps them with their planning.
- The headteacher monitors attendance and behaviour against targets set. Both are good. Students are often in school for short periods of time. However, from their point of entry to departure their academic progress is tracked well.
- The headteacher and proprietors know the school well. Analysis of what needs improvement is robust. For example, some resources for the curriculum were weak. Decisive action was taken and resources are now significantly better, but there is a need for a suitable art area with a sink. The proprietors have a plan to improve the school accommodation further.
- In this small school, assessment is based on the need of each individual student. There is a dual approach of assessment which is based on behaviour and academic progress.
- The welfare needs of students are met well. The school supports students' social workers in a range of tasks. The school is pro-active in accompanying students to medical appointments and local authority care reviews.
- The curriculum is relevant, broad and balanced. There is planning for Key Stage 2, should any pupil be admitted. Planning meets the needs of Key Stage 3 and 4 students. There is a wide range of subjects, with a sharp focus on English and mathematics. The extensive outdoor programme is a significant strength, with activities ranging from rock climbing, kayaking and a range of other activities. Careers guidance is good and tailored to students' interests, such as fisheries, plumbing and childcare. There is a wide range of visits to museums and a riding stable.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a calm room for reflection and the school is currently creating another area for meditation and thought. Cultural diversity is promoted through enrichment activities, when students explore cookery from around the world and engage in Egyptian art. Students learn about their rights and the law. Through circle time, students develop their self-awareness.
- Students' awareness of the British values of tolerance and liberty are promoted well. Students are taught mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs from themselves. The school's council is founded on democratic principles and students see that their voices are heard and have an impact in school. There are planned sessions to make students aware of the rule of law. All have had experience of role play in a mock court.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet all requirements. Risky behaviours are managed well. Safe recruitment training is up to date. The school is familiar with the safeguarding procedures in all of the local authorities it serves.
- **The governance of the school:**

There is no governing body. The proprietors, who are directors of the company, ensure that statutory requirements are met, which includes the independent school standards. The directors have a good

set of skills. They ask the headteacher questions about students' progress. Through appraisal, the headteacher and teachers are set targets and these are monitored carefully. They also set behavioural and attendance targets. They are closely involved in planning the wide range of outdoor pursuits. Social workers in the placing local authorities get a weekly report and very careful attention is paid to students' welfare. Risk assessments, like the fire risk assessment and checks on the temperature of the water, have an action plan to address any deficiencies found. The complaints procedure is compliant. Since the last inspection, the accommodation has been significantly improved. The proprietors have implemented a clear system for tracking students' progress. They monitor the budget very carefully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Despite the fact that when students start at this school, they are often anxious and present very challenging behaviours. In addition, some have not attended school for a long time.
- Therapeutic support enables students to manage their feelings of anger and adopt coping strategies to calm down. Art therapy is used most effectively in enabling students to express their feelings of deep hurt.
- Overall, students have positive attitudes to learning and want to concentrate on doing well. There are crisis moments, but these are managed superbly by staff.
- Most of the time, the school is calm and students are orderly. They look after the classroom. Displays and resources are cared for and valued. Not once during the inspection did a student swear.
- Students value the rewards for behaving well. A few say sorry when they do wrong; others find this hard, but go about making amends in a range of ways. For example, following a recent tantrum when a student broke pencils, he came back into the classroom the next day with pencils he had purchased using his pocket money to replace those damaged.
- Students' attendance is above average. There are no racist incidents or exclusions recorded.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Risky behaviours are meticulously assessed and, as appropriate, students have a high level of staffing support. Students who absconded and showed aggression before coming to this school no longer continue to do so.
- All welfare, health and safety requirements are met. All staff are rigorously checked before taking up their appointments. Visitors to school are carefully checked before being allowed in. Outdoor pursuits are checked against risk factors to ensure safety of students.
- The premises are kept safe, with all of the appropriate fire, water and electrical checks in place. Students experience a range of cultures and customs that are different, but equally valuable.
- Bullying incidents are exceptionally rare. Pupils say that they feel safe at school.
- Students are aware of the hazards to be watchful for in the workplace and have experience, for example, of working in the fishing trade.

The quality of teaching

is good

The impact of teaching on students' progress over the short time they have been in school is good. The

teaching of English, mathematics and other subjects is good. However, a few students are at the stage of going through therapy to become ready to learn.

- Teaching outside the classroom, through a wide range of outdoor pursuits, is equally as good. It is innovative and relevant but, occasionally, outdoor education leaders do not maintain efficient records of the day.
- Teachers know and understand the anxieties, emotional needs and, as appropriate, the special educational needs of students. Based on good relationships, teachers use this knowledge to plan and effectively motivate students' learning. Capitalising on students' interests, such as Egyptian art and a focus on discrimination, teaching focuses well on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills through these topics.
- Teaching focuses on developing life skills such as cooking, managing money and equipping students for life beyond school. As some students improve, they get opportunities to learn through the community, such as working with customers, practising their numeracy and literacy skills, and sharing knowledge of the fish trade.
- Questioning is skilful and enables students to work out problems, such as finding an example of alliteration in a report. Teachers' subject knowledge impacts on students' learning, moving them forward step by step.
- Assessments of what students know and can do are mostly used to provide them with new and challenging work. Occasionally, this is not consistently the case. There are examples of students spending too much time on a task in some lessons, even though they have mastered it and are ready to be moved on to more challenging work.
- Marking gives much encouragement and it is frequent. However, it does not always give students clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment reflects the wide range of gaps they bring with them as they enter this school. Some may have been out of education for two years and many have special educational needs. Measured from their individual starting points, students make good progress in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Students make good progress in prospective career routes, such as fisheries and the skills required for going into the army. They make good progress in the literacy and numeracy skills required for these professions, largely because they become motivated to learn.
- Students make good progress in writing and reading. However, progress varies across different aspects because of individual gaps in prior knowledge and skills. For example, one student may make good progress in the use of vowels, past tenses and silent letters, while another may have already grasped what is needed to write a book review or construct a newspaper report. This is because the basics have been mastered before arriving at the school. All students have reading targets, but some lack confidence because of bad experiences they have had with their reading in the past.
- Progress in mathematics is good. Most students make up lost ground before moving forward well. For example, some develop their understanding of using decimal points in size order while others solve problems using angle facts or using equivalent fractions. However, occasionally students spend too much time mastering a goal without being challenged to move on more quickly.
- Progress in a wide range of outdoor pursuits is good. Students' engage with equine therapy well and this is enjoyed; it contributes to students' sense of calm. Equally, students' physical development is good, with opportunities to participate in rock climbing and kayaking, and provision for individuals to pursue interests in sports like rugby. These activities make a valuable contribution to students' personal, social and health

education.

- The most-able students' progress is really based on individual flare. One may express an aptitude for street art while others focus on a piece of high quality work about discrimination. Staff respond well to these interests and help students to pursue them successfully.
- There is no difference in the rate of progress between girls and boys. Students often take time to settle but they make good progress when they do.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	136705
Inspection number	462942
DfE registration number	830/6041

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 status	Special school for students with emotional and behaviour difficulties
Age range of pupils	9–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Proprietor	Gary Codman
Headteacher	Jill Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,000 - £190,000
Telephone number	01298 767555
Email address	jferguson@adventurecare.co.uk

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