

Cloughwood Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Elizabeth Taylor
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Cloughwood Residential School is a purpose built special school, located within extensive grounds on the Mid Cheshire Campus in Hartford. It is run by Cheshire County Council educational services. The school provides special education for thirty-nine boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties or related needs. The school caters for boys only who are aged between 6 and sixteen years of age. The majority of young people are day pupils but there is provision for a total of seventeen residential places in four separate, living units. Each unit has its own lounge and dining area, kitchenette and single occupancy bedrooms with en-suite facilities for all the young people. Currently, two residential units are operating and seven pupils reside in the school. The residential provision is open from Monday to Friday each week during term time.

Summary

The annual key inspection was announced and took place over two days. All aspects of the school's residential provision were examined, covering all relevant National Minimum Standards. Cloughwood school offers a good standard of care to the young people who reside there during weekdays. The young people say they feel safe and they enjoy positive relationships with staff. Young people are particularly appreciative of the range of activities offered to them and say this is one of the best things about the school. Clear leadership is provided by the Head of Care and Head teacher. The school continues to develop a child centred approach to ensure young people are actively involved in decision making about their care and future plans.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Eight recommendations were made following the previous inspection. Action has been taken to address them all although some remain work in progress. For example, information about the complaints procedure is included in the new school prospectus which is being printed at the present time and also produced in CD form. All parents will receive an updated version in the near future. Records are now completed appropriately and signed. There is evidence of regular communication between staff and parents which assists in ensuring young people's needs are identified and addressed. However, the school continues to develop a system for actively involving parents in the planning process for their child and to ensure parents' views are sought about the running of the school. Fire drills take place on a regular basis and risk assessments are routinely reviewed. This promotes young people's safety. A new system for the management of young people's behaviour has been implemented. Young people were involved in the development of the system and are positive about its application. This supports the emotional well-being of the young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health care needs are identified and assessed at an early stage. Information is gained from parents, carers, social workers and other interested parties to ensure both general and specific health needs of the young people are assessed. Parental consent is gained for all young people to Individual health care targets are specified within various documents on young

people's files but these are not drawn together to form a coherent health care plan. Young people have access to specialist advisors. The school has established good links with a range of health care professionals and agencies who provide additional support to address young people's particular health needs. The implementation of a student service within the school which focuses on supporting pupil's emotional well-being is a valuable resource. The student services work closely with the Head of Care to support pupils in this area of care. Staff help young people to take an interest in looking after their health and healthy ways of living. Young people have access to, and information about, health and social issues. The school operates an effective medication policy and procedure. The Head of Care has appropriate training in the safe administration of medication and has produced a practice guide for senior staff who are responsible for administering medication. Staff are aware of the importance of medication records and these are maintained up to date. The school has a record of full compliance with the administration, safekeeping and disposal of controlled drugs. All daytime care staff are trained in emergency first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff maintain a balance between respecting young people's need for privacy with adequate supervision. Confidentiality is upheld at all times. A complaints log is maintained. Appropriate information is recorded in the log to demonstrate the nature of the complaint, action taken to address the matter and the outcome. The complainant is kept informed at all times. Information about the complaints procedure is available to young people in their handbook. All young people receive a copy of the handbook when they have a residential placement in the school. Young people are aware of the complaints process but say they prefer to tell staff about any concerns. They say staff listen to their complaints, take them seriously and take action to address them. The schools' child protection policy and procedure is approved by the head of the local safeguarding children's board. Records show referrals are made appropriately to the safeguarding board. This ensures young peoples' safety is promoted. Designated persons responsible for child protection matters in the school have up to date training in accordance with their role and responsibilities. Other staff receive basic child protection training which is renewed on a regular basis. Staff are aware of their responsibility to report any suspicions or concerns they may have about young people's safety and young people confirm that staff take action to keep them safe. Young people say there are occasional incidents of bullying in the school though these do not occur on the residential units; they happen during the school day. Young people are aware of the schools' anti-bullying policy. They say they feel able to tell staff about any incidents and are confident that action is taken to address the matter. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans on young people are in place and are regularly reviewed. This enables staff to identify and respond to any behaviours which may place young people or others at risk of harm. Procedures are in place to report young people being absent without authority to appropriate persons and authorities. Staff sometimes go out to look for young people and ensure they are well received on their return to school. Individual risk assessments on young people are in place but these do not always reflect specific arrangements based on their age and level of vulnerability. Staff view the young people positively and encourage acceptable behaviours. The schools' behaviour management programme is based upon a 'points' system which is clearly understood by young people of all ages. Points are awarded for achievement of targets, or good effort, throughout the school day and the residential provision. Young people say staff are fair in implementing the points system. Sanctions and rewards are not recorded in a central log but are maintained on young people's

individual files. The individual records show young people strive to meet their targets and few sanctions are given. All staff are trained in physical intervention techniques. The central log shows there is a low level of use of restraint on young people. The log contains appropriate information but entries since September, 2007 had not been countersigned by a senior as evidence of a monitoring system. The school has risk assessments for most aspects of safety, covering the premises and grounds including fire and young people's recreational activities. (Risk assessments on young people though are not always updated to reflect incidents or changes in their behaviour). Records show fire safety equipment and systems are tested on a regular basis. Fire drills and evacuations also take place routinely. The fire risk assessment is up to date and there are no matters requiring attention. The systems in place promote the safety of young people residing in the school during weekdays. Visitors to the school are appropriately vetted by staff, both during the school day and during the evening. A visitors log is maintained. Staff files are maintained in good order. The recruitment and selection process is comprehensive and thorough. All required checks are completed prior to staff starting work in the school. The schools' vetting process for visitors and staff safeguards young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The residential contribution to education is established. There is good liaison between care and teaching staff about day to day matters. Staff meetings take place on a regular basis to discuss individual young people's welfare and educational attainment. The routine after school includes time for young people to complete their homework. Staff ensure young people receive practical help and support with completing any homework; each young person has a desk and chair in their bedroom and both units have a wide range of reference and reading books. Young people are actively encouraged to pursue their individual interests and hobbies, both within the school and in the community. Staff share their own interests with the young people and support them to try new activities. Young people say they are involved in choosing and planning activities and enjoy them. The individual needs of the young people are assessed and identified on admission. The school has links with a range of helping agencies and professionals and staff take action to ensure young people receive the support they need.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's views and suggestions are sought about a range of matters affecting both their welfare and the running of the school. The schools' council was viewed positively by young people as a way of influencing decision making. An example given by young people was the schools' behaviour management system. All the young people said they had been involved in developing and agreeing the system. They clearly understood the system and said it was fair. Young people say their opinions are sought about residential matters but they are less clear about how this impact on decision making. Staff provide clear boundaries for young people whilst maintaining a good relationship between themselves and the young people. Young people say they feel liked by staff and appreciate the work done by staff on their behalf. Young people particularly appreciate the range of activities which staff support them to participate in. Staff encourage young people to make decisions for themselves and to consider the consequences of their actions. Each young person has a placement plan, comprised of various documents which cover all areas of need. The plans contain a number of clear objectives and, mostly, measurable targets. There is no evidence to show key family members have been

involved in drawing up the plan although social workers involvement is recorded in some. Unfortunately, the majority of the young people are unable to recall the contents of their plan or the targets. The school has a system for reviewing the placement plans. However, there is little evidence that young people are encouraged to participate in the reviews, are assisted to put forward their views or are told the outcome of any review. The views of parents and carers are sought during their child's annual review meeting though these are not yet collectively considered as part of a quality assurance system. Contact arrangements are clearly detailed in young people's records. The home facilitates and promotes all aspects of contact with families and those significant to young people. Staff are in regular contact with families to discuss progress of young people in their care and similarly any issues that need to be addressed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school prospectus has been updated to reflect changes in some policies and procedures. The document is available in written and CD form and includes details about how the school will care for the young people. Whilst parents have not routinely been issued with the document in the past, they will receive a copy of the new prospectus. The young people's handbook is attractively set out with some colourful drawings to accompany written information. However, the format does not take account of young people's differing levels of reading ability. Staff either hold appropriate qualifications to care for children and young people or are working towards a qualification. Staff also participate in regular joint training with teaching staff and are able to access other training relevant to their own role and responsibilities. Staff are sufficient in number to provide continuity in care for young people. Staff know who they are accountable to. They receive one to one supervision in accordance with required timescales set out in the national minimum standards. There is a handover of information about young people between teaching and care staff at the start and end of each school day. Care staff have weekly meetings when individual young people are discussed in addition to routine care matters. The Head of Care is professionally qualified. Clear leadership is provided by both the Head of Care and Headteacher who work closely to improve the service offered to young people. All required records are maintained. The school has a quality monitoring system but this is being developed to centre around the experience of young people and whether the school is effectively meeting their needs. Regular audits of the residential provision are undertaken by a representative of the local authority and the governing body. Copies of their reports, and the response to items raised, are available in the school.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure young people have a clear, written health plan or similar document which addresses all areas of need (NMS 14.6)
- ensure records demonstrate what health care checks remain the responsibility of parents and which they delegate to the school (NMS 14.5)
- ensure young people know the content of their plans and contribute to the reviewing process (NMS 17.7)
- consider developing a handbook for young people in different formats to take account of their differing levels of ability (NMS 1.4)

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for residential special school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.