

Cloughwood Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Michelle Moss
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Date of last inspection	6 February 2008

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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 39 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties or related needs. The school caters for boys only who are aged between six and 16 years of age. The majority of young people are day pupils, but there is provision for a total of 17 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.

The residential provision is open from Monday to Friday each week during term time.

Summary

This was a full inspection which was conducted announced. All key standards were assessed to help form a judgement on the provision of care.

Outcomes for pupils are overall enhanced in nearly all aspects of their care. The majority of key standards are met extremely well. Through the effectiveness of management, pupils receive consistently high quality care, especially through areas of enjoyment. However, there are some minor shortfalls. These include having all the right documentation for auditing behaviour management, and having more detailed placement plans that capture the health and care needs of pupils. Also, there are shortfalls in the care of medicines and in ensuring the frequency in staff supervisions meets the National Minimum Standards.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There is increased consultation with pupils. This includes the school sharing with pupils records made by staff on their stays. This helps pupils to reflect on matters affecting their daily lives and self evaluate their own progress. The school have produced two versions of the pupils handbook. This provides increased accessible information that is reflective of the diversity within the school community.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The promotion of pupils health is overall good. This includes having a well established system for receiving medicines into the school. However, the recording of medicines administered by staff is not always sufficiently detailed to provide validation of what is administered. For example, recording sheets that miss out the name of a medicine that is required to be administered. Furthermore, pupils who are self administering their medicines are not assessed to evaluate their level of responsibility in self care. However, more positively, care staff are trained in first aid and the care of medicines. This enables every shift to have staff on duty that are appropriately qualified to provide emergency first aid and administer medicines safely.

Staff encourage good hygiene standards to reflect the individual needs of pupils. Areas of sustaining personal identity are actively encouraged through the varied meals served. This includes, pupils being involved in the planning, shopping and preparing of their meals. The level of satisfaction is reflective through the positive dialogue shared between pupils and staff over the meal times. The selection of meals takes into account the promotion of healthy eating by having plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables available. This results in pupils receiving nutritious and balanced diets that are reflective of personal preferences and diverse needs.

Part of the school's admission procedures involves obtaining details about the health needs of pupils. This includes consent for any treatment or health care needs. However, the depth of recording is not always capturing the details that inform on how health needs are to be met inclusive of any required monitoring by staff. This hinders ensuring all relevant information that helps to secure the well-being of pupils is always available to staff directly supporting them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school has a comprehensive framework for helping pupils to feel and stay safe. This is steered from the leadership and cascaded throughout the whole school. Various assessments are undertaken that allow for early intervention to manage aspects of safeguarding. These include behaviour management, self harming and bullying.

Staff work with pupils in a sensitive manner which ensures pupils' privacy and dignity is maintained. Each pupil's bedroom has an en-suite facility which promotes their privacy and dignity. Staff understand the need for confidentiality and uphold this at all times. This is inclusive of how they store confidential records.

There is a written complaints procedure and a central log kept to record concerns or complaints. Pupils are aware of the complaints procedure, but feel confident in their engagement with staff to be able to raise a worry with the knowledge this will be addressed.

Clear child protection policies and procedures are in place. The head teacher and head of care are responsible for monitoring child protection matters, and both have received appropriate training in safeguarding children. Links have been established with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, and staff have received refresher training in safeguarding children. Staff are clear about their responsibilities to report any concerns about pupils' welfare. Effective communication takes place with parents and other relevant professionals to discuss any concerns, even those which do not directly constitute a child protection referral. Detailed records of these communications are kept which help to monitor pupil's well-being.

The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and this is implemented through various avenues of supporting pupils. Through early interventions, effective management is applied to counteract bullying at a low threshold.

The school has a policy on unauthorised absences by pupils. A distinction is made between pupils who fail to attend school and those who walk off the premises. Records show both forms of absence are dealt with appropriately in accordance with agreed protocols with the local police. The school takes timely and effective action to safeguard pupils.

Staff receive behaviour management training which focuses on effective communication with pupils and de-escalation techniques. Staff are successful in implementing these techniques, which results in physical intervention being seen as a last resort. When physical intervention is necessary a record is made that provides a detailed accounts of the incident and the type of restraint applied. However, these records do not always concisely detail the duration of physical restraint or encourage pupils to record their views. This limits pupils opportunities to express their feelings about imposed control measures. Furthermore, the school do not have a bound recording book for sanctions which contains a list of permitted sanctions.

The management of health and safety is comprehensive and helps to protect pupils and staff. Equipment is serviced as required. Regular fire safety tests and drills are carried out. Good attention is given to recording accidents and these are monitored to highlight any patterns. Individual risk assessments on pupils ensure appropriate action is taken to reduce the risk of harm or injury. There is a clear procedure for the recruitment of staff, which is led by the management to secure the safety of pupils.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is a terrific engagement between pupils and staff of which pupil advocate through their positive comments about school life. There is excellent communication between school and the residential provision which enables the 24 hour curriculum to be integrated positively into the pupils day to day life at the school. Equal consultation is established with pupils, whereby their views count on decisions that effect them. For example, the behaviour management star grading system.

The excellent relationships between staff and pupils encourages pupils to aim high in their aspirations. This extends to helping with homework and offering older pupils time to talk and explore future avenues of learning and careers.

More pupils are having opportunities to experience the residential provision through a pilot scheme to offer extended days. The pupils enthusiasm of these opportunities reflects their enjoyment of spending time with their friends.

The pupils have a broad range of activities available on and off site that enables them to acquire skills, and pursue hobbies that positively challenge personal growth and development. These include encouraging personal interests and meeting religious and cultural needs. Pupils relish these opportunities and staff are highly effective in their support to help pupils succeed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Pupils are consulted about matters affecting their daily lives and the running of the school. Pupils experience well planned admission and leaving processes. This extends to older pupils being assisted in their preparation of transition to further education or employment. This preparation includes having effective liaison with other agencies such as Connexions and colleges.

Each pupil has a care and placement plan which includes headings covering all areas of their needs. However, the plans are limited in their detail and do not provide a comprehensive and

coherent record of how individual pupils are cared for and supported. For example, they do not cover in any detail the health needs and health promotion. Residential pupils are able to maintain contact with their family and friends. This helps them sustain social networks.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to provide a homely and pleasant environment for pupils to live in. The residential accommodation provides opportunities for pupils to gain and develop independence skills. The accommodation is welcoming in appearance. Pupils have ample space to socialise and relax. Each unit is well equipped and has domestic style furniture and furnishings. Pupils have open access to the kitchens on each unit to make themselves drinks and snacks. A kitchen sited close to the residential units also provides pupils with an opportunity to cook on a larger scale. Staff make good use of other facilities and rooms in the main school building to offer a range of activities that match the diverse needs of the school population.

Pupils have their own bedroom which they are encouraged to decorate and personalise. Each of the bedrooms has an en-suite facility which promotes their dignity and privacy. The external parts of the school also offers pupils ample space to engage in outdoor activities inclusive a football pitch.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management is outstanding. There is highly effective self-evaluation and external assessment that contributes to the monitoring of the school's effectiveness to meet pupils learning and welfare needs. This provides pupils with a stable and well run school. Staff training is well structured to provide varied opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills. The majority of care staff hold National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, and the remaining members are in the process of completing this award. This means pupils are cared for by staff assessed to be competent to discharge their duties. There is a strong confidence within the pupils over the school's leadership that help them feel safe and well supported.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is close liaison with pupil's parents or carers to help in identifying individual needs. The school positively promotes diverse beliefs and cultures through the 24 hour curriculum. This can be seen through practice in areas, such as menu planning, personalisation of pupil's bedrooms, access to activities and the school council. Children's rights are respected and promoted and pupils benefit from a service that is able to meet their diverse needs.

The staff are very knowledgeable about individual pupils. This helps pupils feel safe and valued. Newly appointed staff complement existing skills in the team and there is effective team work. The composition of the team offers a good gender balance. However, there is a slight shortfall in the frequency of supervisions for new staff, although the supervision it self is highly effective in providing feedback to staff on their performance as well as receiving guidance on practices. This detailed supervision plays a critical role in the maintenance of high standards of pupils care.

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 a bound and numbered book for sanctions is operational and contains all point listed under the National Minimum Standards. Also, encourage pupils to write or have their views recorded and sign their names against the records made by staff (NMS 10.9)
- develop the placement plan by including more details in areas health needs and health promotion. This includes having clear instructions on the administration of any medication and assessment of needs. (NMS 17.5)
- make sure pupils are given as far as is practicable the opportunity to contribute to any written plan. Also, that the plan identifies any specific needs and record how these are to be met on a day to day basis (NMS 17.1,2)
- make sure pupils that are administering their own medicines are assessed by the staff as sufficiently responsible to do so (NMS 14.9)
- provide all staff with supervision that is reflective of their length of service (NMS 30.2).