

Cloughwood Special School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Michelle Moss
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 62 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 students, 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

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

The vast majority of national minimum standards are being met and in some cases the school is exceeding them. Students are supported by dedicated and stable staff, who put them first. Students report feeling safe at school and well supported by both care and teaching staff. The school provides students with a wide range of opportunities over a 24-hour curriculum to study, play sports and engage in other constructive activities.

The school has taken action to address previous recommendations, which has improved practice and care, in particular safeguarding students. However, there are still some emerging shortfalls that relate to care planning and the school's internal quality assurance system. Nevertheless, these shortfalls do not outweigh the strengths of the school, in particular areas of enjoyment and achievement which are excellent.

Improvements since the last inspection

There has been good progress made since the last visit. The headteacher and head of care have worked effectively to address previous recommendations and as a consequence, students safety and welfare is better protected. Work has commenced in developing the school's safeguarding procedures including the school forging

stronger links with local authority designated safeguarding officer. The school has assessed times, places and circumstances where the risk of bullying is greatest and also enhanced the countering bullying policy. Students' welfare has been enhanced by the school's increased familiarity with recruitment procedures that meet the national minimum standards. Students' involvement in their care plans remains limited, although they are regularly consulted over matters that directly affect them and are increasingly encouraged to contribute to setting personal targets.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Students experience a genuinely caring, consistent, stable and secure relationship with care staff who are committed, trained, experienced and supportive. The student health plan provides staff with a holistic view of their health and well-being needs. Students have a good understanding about matters relating to their health. However, they are not fully influencing the development of their health plan through active participation. Nevertheless, students benefit from excellent access to a range of appropriate services designed to meet their emotional, mental and physical needs. The students use these services highly effectively to gain the advice and guidance they need to stay healthy.

Students are encouraged to have healthy and active lifestyles while attending the school. Medication is tightly managed to ensure students receive their prescribed medicines in accordance with their prescribing doctor's instructions. Medicines are securely kept and there is a complete audit trail of medicines into and out of the school. Students are fully consulted over meal planning and actively encouraged to develop their independence by getting involved in making their own meals. The meals offered are varied and reflect students' food preferences. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award in recognition of the steps taken to develop healthy lifestyles for students.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are sensitive to students' needs and promote their privacy and dignity. The staff are equally good at sustaining the appropriate levels of confidentiality for all information held about students. The school operates a robust system for the vetting of visitors and has enhanced their recruitment and vetting procedure to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with vulnerable students.

Staff appreciate the serious implications of bullying and its potential harm to students welfare. There is a commitment by staff to tackle all types of bullying through initiatives and strategies that improve behaviour and increase awareness. There is good co-operation and collaboration between the school, local authority designated safeguarding officer and police in areas of child protection. This joint working ensures students safety is at the heart of care. However, policies that relate to the

safeguarding of students are not fully implemented or being regularly reviewed to ensure they are specific to the school and hold the required information.

Students are given user-friendly information and forms about how to make complaints. These enable them to understand the school's complaints procedure and to be confident to use it if necessary. There are clear procedures in place for safeguarding students that are at risk of going missing. The action taken by the school helps to ensure students stay safe and appropriately protected.

Students are supported to recognise personal trigger points that can cause their behaviour to escalate. Care staff are highly effective in using de-escalation and diversion strategies to pre-empt or limit problematic behaviour. There is a clear threshold for when physical intervention is used which is established on the assessment of risk. There is also a clear hierarchy of techniques for physical intervention which takes into account the age of the student and the seriousness of the situation at any given point. The staff team understand their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and recognise the importance of maintaining vigilance.

There is a regular health and safety audit taking place. This extends to all aspects of fire safety including staff training, regular testing and practice drills. Risk assessments are also completed which take into account students' behaviour and demonstrates how aspects of de-escalation are actively promoted to enhance students' welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students are afforded excellent opportunities to promote their social inclusion through various activities with other schools and attending clubs within the community. The care staff ensure that every student receives individualised support and care, personal to their needs and situation. All students have the opportunity to make choices, form friendships and enhance independence to maximise their health and well-being. Care staff treat students with courtesy and respect. There is also a wonderful rapport between students and staff, which is enabling students to build up confidence. This established relationship enables care staff to help students reach their potential, support attainment and celebrate achievements. The care staff work closely with teaching staff and professionals to ensure the quality of opportunity for students continues to improve. There are wonderful examples of where staff have supported a student to a level where their confidence has significantly grown.

This school offers an exceptional range of activities that cater for all students' needs. Very well-targeted support for all students has enabled them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. There are striking examples of where the school has helped particular students overcome significant barriers to their education associated with their behaviour and by securing structured support, the students confidence and progress has excelled.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The rapport and effective communication between staff and students is built on trust and equal respect. Admissions to the residential provision are planned and tailored to reflect students' individual needs. For example, students can choose the nights they stay and if they prefer to do an extended day.

The care planning demonstrates how the staff endeavour to meet the needs of students. However, ensuring the plan is kept under review and updated to reflect change is less secure. In addition, students' understanding and contribution to their placement plan continues to be limited to the setting of short-term targets. More positively, students are encouraged to be actively involved in their individual education plan and to contribute to their annual statement of special educational need meetings.

Staff recognise the importance of family links and offer the required level of support that reflects individual student's circumstances. The rapport between staff and students is particularly well established and helps to secure meaningful consultation which is an integral part of care practices.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The residential accommodation is an integral part of the building and helps to strengthen the school's ethos of a holistic approach to the provision of a 24- hour curriculum. Students are able to personalise their bedrooms to increase their comfort and sustain their identity during their stays. Students are provided with sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs, to be able to socialise and to enable them to have private time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Students are supported by competent care staff that are responsive to their individual needs and preferences. The residential provision is well managed and care staff are confident to approach senior managers for help and guidance as required. The head of care is supported by the headteacher and the board of governors, who all contribute to the development of the residential provision. However, the excellent practices within the school are not well evidenced through formal self-evaluation to meet the requirements of national minimum standards, including carrying out required visits and undertaking checks at regular intervals. The absence of these audits means the school is not always able to formally demonstrate it is identifying all potential trends and patterns and evidencing what action is taken in the interest of

students. Also, the representative of the governing body is not routinely during their visits securing the views and opinions of students and staff and then using this information to help inform a judgement on the quality of provision by those most affected. In addition, the school's Statement of Purpose is not being annually reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure all intended readers are able to access current information on the school's residential provision. More positively, the care staff confirmed excellent communication exists throughout the school, including having regular training and weekly staff meetings. The care staff and senior management use these resources as a way of auditing students progress and address areas of need.

Staffing levels are sufficient to meet the individual needs of the students. The care staff are highly committed to the students and are supportive of the school's management and ethos. The care staff are clear that the school has full respect for equal opportunities and that no discriminatory attitudes or practices exist within the school. However, policies accessible to staff are not routinely reviewed to ensure they hold all the correct information.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Care is based on students' individual needs, including taking into account their age, culture and personal circumstances. The staff team form a diverse team in respect of age, gender and experience. The school has a genuine commitment towards anti-oppressive practices. This includes having a strong commitment towards appreciating and celebrating differences.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure the Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated at least annually (NMS 1.8)
- ensure half termly monitoring takes place to help identify any patterns or issues requiring action (NMS 32.2)
- ensure a representative for the governing body conducts a visit each half term. These visits should provide students and staff with the opportunities to meet and speak with the visitor (NMS 33.2 and 3)
- ensure the placement plan including any health needs is up to date and shows it is monitoring progress. Also, where feasible, students have agreed with the plan and know the contents (NMS 17.1,2,7)
- ensure staff are accessing procedures and policies that are kept up to date and hold all relevant information. (NMS 30.7)