

Cicely Haughton

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Staffordshire County Council, Cicely Haughton Special School, Westwood Manor, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-trent, ST9 0BX
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Registered person	Cicely Haughton
Head/ Principal	N Philips
Nominated person	N Philips
Date of last inspection	11/11/2009

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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

Cicely Haughton is a Staffordshire Local Authority school offering day and residential places to girls and boys age five to 11 years who have a range of social, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.

The school is an extended and modernised Victorian manor house standing in approximately 20 acres of parkland. It is located in a rural area between Cheadle and Leek. The classrooms, main staff office plus laundry and catering facilities are located on the ground floor of the building. The residential accommodation is located on the first floor.

The grounds contain a football pitch, softball area, an adventure playground and a BMX track. There is also a tarmac playground with floodlights, an outdoor pursuits room and woodwork and craft rooms.

The boarding provision operates on a Monday to Friday basis during school term-time. Flexible boarding arrangements are encouraged, according to individual children's needs and circumstances, ranging from one night up to four nights per week. There are 21 residential pupils and a further 24 day pupils.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a key announced inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to meet the statutory requirement of one announced inspection visit each year. All key standards were inspected and standards 9, 11, 13, 24, 29 were also inspected. All outcomes are judged as outstanding with the exception of achieving economic well-being which is judged as good.

This is an outstanding service where children make significant progress during their time at the school, not just academically but socially and emotionally as well. The majority of children move back into mainstream schools and this can be attributed to the highly skilled staff team where all disciplines within the team are totally dedicated to improving children's lives. Empowerment of children, praise and recognition of achievement, no matter how small, is at forefront of practice. As a result children are able to learn and reach their full potential in a safe, caring, nurturing and fun environment. The culture of respect, sharing and helping each other is embedded in practice which helps create a happy environment. Children feel safe and are able to raise any concerns they may have due to excellent relationships with staff and easily accessible systems. The management of children's behaviour is very good, as is the management of health and safety. Excellent partnerships exist between staff and

parents and carers. The care and education children receive and the progress they make while at the school is recognised and very much appreciated by parents and carers and children themselves. A sample of comments received from parents and carers include: 'It is a fantastic experience for children and I don't think it is possible to improve it' and 'The school is the best place my son could be. I know he is well looked after in all his needs. I am very grateful to the school for their caring.'

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children live with their parents or carers, who have overall responsibility for their child's health needs. However, the promotion of healthy lifestyles is clearly embedded in the school's ethos and practice. All staff are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle which involves working closely with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure health needs are met. Parents are confident that staff are competent in meeting the needs of their children and confirm that staff work closely with them. Staff receive a variety of training which enables them to meet the health and cultural needs of children. Training for staff includes basic first aid, food hygiene, dealing with children who self-harm and the administration of medication.

Children enjoy an excellent range of healthy meals and snacks based on children's likes and dislikes and specific dietary needs. This is as a result of: excellent consultation with children and their parents and carers; the tireless efforts of the catering staff and regular monitoring within the school. Menus for lunchtime include choices of two main meals, sandwiches and a salad bar and include different cultural meals. Children who bring their own lunch into school are able to have a meal, pudding or snack if they want to. Catering staff ensure that the menus for the school lunches and teatime meals in residence are not the same and based on the likes and needs of the children staying in residence at the time. Mealtimes are lively but relaxed with good interaction between children and staff. Children have excellent manners and are helpful to each other. Children also learn about meals from different countries and engage, through the school curriculum, in producing wall displays.

Staff work in a respectful and sensitive manner when supporting children with their health needs. The physical, emotional and health needs of each child are clearly identified and recorded in children's care records. Care records are of a good standard and are regularly reviewed.

Robust procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard young people's welfare. Records of medication administered

and disposed of are kept. Practices and records are checked regularly by staff and the head of care which helps to safeguard young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Safeguarding children is at the forefront of the school's philosophy and practice. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment, by a highly skilled and experienced staff team; this helps to promote and protect the well-being of children. At the same time, staff are totally committed to enabling children develop the necessary skills to keep themselves safe and to take responsibility for their actions in preparation for their adult lives. This is borne out by comments received from children and their parents and carers. For example, one parent commented, 'My son quotes to us all about any dangers that are to be avoided and I know this is because he is learning it at Cicely Haughton'. Children feel safe at the school and are confident staff are there to help them. Children reported that they learn about 'stranger danger'.

Staff work with children in a sensitive manner ensuring privacy and dignity is maintained. Staff present as positive role models and respecting each other underpins practice throughout the school. Staff understand the need for confidentiality and records are kept securely.

Open and positive relationships enable children to raise any concerns they may have with staff. Surveys received from children showed that all children named at least one staff member in the school they could go to if they are unhappy or concerned about something. In addition to this, there are a number of excellent systems which enable children to express their views, including any worries and concerns. For example, the 'Listen up and have your say' cards which are in a format that children can understand. Children were able to tell the inspector about the independent visitors to the school whose contact details are on display in residence. Details of different organisations who children can contact are on display throughout the school including: ChildLine; NSPCC; Ofsted and the names and contact details of the independent advocates. Children in residence have a phone booth which they can use to make and receive calls. The helpline details are posted on the wall. Records support the view that concerns are listened to and dealt with promptly.

Children are protected from the risk of harm or abuse as a result of: clear policies and procedures, well trained and competent staff who are very clear about their responsibilities in safeguarding children and reporting any concerns they may have. Parents and carers are also given copies of the school's child protection procedures which ensures they are clear about the school's duty of care. All staff at the school including ancillary, catering and administrative staff receive regular child protection training and are clear about procedures to follow. Where there are concerns about a child's welfare and safety, prompt referrals are made to the local safeguarding team and clear records are made.

The culture of respecting each other and accepting difference at the school helps to reduce the risk of bullying. Children learn about bullying, what it means and how it feels to be bullied and are actively involved in anti-bullying strategies. There are a lot of posters throughout the school, including in residence, about bullying and displays are produced by the children about anti-bullying. Children have also produced T-shirts with anti-bullying slogans on. Children say that if there is any bullying staff do sort it out.

There are clear procedures to follow in the event of a child going missing. However, this is a very rare occurrence.

The management of children's behaviour is excellent which is due to a well trained, highly skilled and committed staff team. The emphasis is on praise, rewards, and recognising children's achievements no matter how small. As a result, children's confidence increases and their self-esteem improves. Furthermore, children are able to change their behaviours in a safe and nurturing environment which enables them to develop socially acceptable behaviours. This is due to the tenacity of staff and their calm and consistent approach to children. Children have individual behaviour management plans which give clear details of behaviours displayed, known triggers and strategies to manage and help children change the behaviour. Sanctions are rarely used and restraint is only ever used as a last resort. Clear records of sanctions imposed and restraints used are kept which confirm that actions taken by staff are appropriate and help to safeguard children and others.

The management of health and safety is very good. This is another area where the whole school staff team work closely together to ensure a safe and secure environment for children and staff. This can be clearly attributed to the provision of a range of health and safety training for staff; the implementation of effective policies and procedures; the whole staff team taking on responsibility for health and safety; regular servicing and maintenance of equipment; detailed risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed, and robust and effective monitoring systems. Fire safety procedures are good and include regular testing of the fire alarm systems and fire drills being held as required. Children know what to do when the fire alarm goes off.

Safe and effective recruitment practices and the vetting of visitors help to protect children from the risk of harm and abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children make real progress during their time at the school and this is further enhanced by children's experiences in the residential provision. The residential provision is an extension of the 24-hour curriculum. Children receive an excellent level of care based on their individual needs which compliment their educational needs. All disciplines including care, education, ancillary, catering and administrative staff within the school work as one, creating a seamless service which enables children to learn, achieve their potential in a fun and supportive environment.

Communication between the different disciplines in the school is very good. Children in residence are supported to do their homework and they know that on homework nights they must complete their homework before they have their free time. Staff recognise the importance of working closely with parents and carers to ensure children are kept safe, that their holistic needs are met and that they are able to reach their potential. Staff provide support to parents and carers which helps to ensure children have consistent guidance and boundaries within the school and home environment. Parents and carers really appreciate the support they receive from the school. Comments received from parents and carers were full of praise for all staff at the school and commented on the progress their children have made. Comments from parents and carers referring to their child include: 'My granddaughter has come on in leaps and bounds, she is happy to be at the school'; 'My son has made huge progress since attending Cicely Haughton from age 5. The staff have encouraged him to achieve in all areas.'

Relationships between children and staff are excellent. The staff team work tenaciously to ensure children get the best possible chances to maximise their potential for achieving in and enjoying life. All comments received from parents and carers were very positive about the staff and their commitment to the children.

Leisure activities are seen as a way of children having fun while at the same time learning and developing social and independence skills. Children are consulted about what they want to do and are supported to pursue their particular interests and hobbies. They are also provided with new and different experiences which helps children to build up their self-confidence. A wide range of activities, both within the school and externally, are available. Many of the children are part of the school's sports teams and play in the local school leagues which they enjoy. This ensures that children are part of the local community. Learning about and accepting difference is also part of children's leisure activities. Children engage in activities which help them develop an awareness of different cultures and celebrate different religious festivals. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and are reviewed when necessary.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent systems exist to enable children to make positive contributions to their lives. Staff work tirelessly to ensure children are given real choices, have their say, are listened to and their views and suggestions acted upon where appropriate. This helps children to feel valued and increases their self-esteem. 'Listen Up & Have your Say' cards, which are easily accessible, are used for children to express their opinions, make suggestions and raise any concerns if they are unhappy. Staff deal with any cards received swiftly and take prompt action where needed. Residential forum meetings also take place regularly during which standard agenda items are discussed including: menu suggestions and favourite foods; compliments, complaints and 'listen up systems'; leisure and recreational suggestions; routines and expectations and any other business. Children's knowledge and understanding of

some of the systems is checked out during these meetings by asking children to explain systems. For example in one meeting, one of the children explained the 'Listen up' system to the group. Children also complete weekly feedback sheets which again gives them the opportunity to make their views known and this helps staff to monitor if children are happy, feel safe and are getting what they need. In addition to their work of empowering children, staff also take on the role of advocate for children which they take very seriously and liaise with parents, carers and other professionals whenever necessary.

Children experience well planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes. Placements at the school are decided by the area resource panel which comprises of a multi-disciplinary team based on a holistic assessment of need. The school works closely with the child, their parents and carers and other relevant professionals to ensure the admission process is a positive experience for children. There is a clear admission criteria for accessing the residential provision which is detailed in the school prospectus and the Statement of Purpose. Children's introduction to the residential provision is based on their individual needs and at their own pace. Close working with parents and carers takes place during this introductory period to ensure children are comfortable, feel safe and are not unhappy. Children are encouraged to bring in their own favourite toys and other items which are important to them. The school works closely with all future schools to ensure a smooth transition period for the child.

Care records are of a very good standard and fully inform staff about the child's needs and how to meet them. Each child has a detailed care plan and other relevant care records such as behaviour plans and risk assessments. These records are reviewed as and when needed. Children are supported to have contact with family and friends and this is given a high priority by staff to ensure children feel settled at the school. The school prospectus refers to the importance of working in partnership with parents. This is embedded in the practice of the school. There is excellent communication between staff and parents and carers. Staff actively support children and their families not only in the school environment but in their home. Comments received from parents and carers demonstrate their appreciation of the work the staff do not only for their children but also for their families.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The head teacher and head of care recognise the limitations of the building in trying to make the residential provision homely. There is an ongoing refurbishment programme and every effort is made by staff to ensure children stay in a safe, secure and comfortable environment. Communal areas are comfortable and homely. There are lots of photographs displayed in the residence of activities that children have taken part in. Every effort has been made to make the bedrooms child focussed. Most children share bedrooms and these are arranged so privacy and dignity can be maintained. The bedrooms are decorated in themes chosen by the children which

reflect their interests. Children are encouraged to bring their personal items, including their favourite toys, with them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

This is an outstanding school where children make significant progress both academically and socially during their time at the school. The strong ethos of the school of empowering children and enabling them to achieve their full potential is embedded in the practice. This is championed by a dedicated management team who provide clear leadership and direction to the whole staff team. All staff are totally committed to improving children's lives and give over and above what is expected of them. This view is supported by comments received from parents and carers. One parent stated, 'They go out of their way over and above their role to help promote the life skills of pupils.' The staff are highly skilled, competent and work effectively as a team. They take personal responsibility for their actions. Staff from all disciplines within the school feel valued and are included in the running and development of the school. Staff are well supported by the management team and by each other which promotes the philosophy of caring about each other and sharing. This in turn provides good role models for children. Staff receive regular supervision and regular staff meetings take place which helps staff discuss and monitor children's well-being.

There is a clear commitment to staff training and development at the school. Delegation of duties to all the staff team, dependent on their experience, and skills and staff training is seen as a vital part of staff's individual professional development. In addition to mandatory training courses, staff training needs are identified through their individual supervisions and appraisals. All established care staff have the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff who have recently been appointed are working through the Children's Workforce Development Council induction and on completion of this will enrol on the NVQ level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staffing levels, based on the needs of children, provide appropriate levels of supervision for children to ensure they are safe and that their needs are met.

The school has a clear Statement of Purpose which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for children and how they will meet the needs of the children. The children's guide gives all required information to children and their families on the services available.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The ethos of the school is based on mutual respect and accepting difference and this is part of every day practice. Children receive care and education based on their individual identified needs. They are provided with various opportunities to experience and learn about other people's differences in terms of race, religion, culture, sex, age and disabilities. Children are actively engaged in the local communities.

Staff are constantly striving to improve the lives of children to ensure they have every available opportunity to lead a fulfilling, enjoyable life in a safe and nurturing environment. This can be partly attributed to the excellent quality assurance systems within the school and the residence where all staff take responsibility for making sure children are getting what they need. Monitoring systems are robust and effective and help to: ensure children's needs are being met; identify any shortfalls in practice; identify any patterns which may emerge and help to look at ways of improving services. The school's internal quality assurance systems are complimented by monthly visits undertaken by a representative from the local authority and reports from these visits are produced.