

# Cicely Haughton

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	30/06/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	David Morgan
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Social Care Inspection

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<b>Registered person</b>	Cicely Haughton
<b>Head/ Principal</b>	N Philips
<b>Nominated person</b>	N Philips
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	29/09/2010

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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 in two flats.

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

The boarding provision mainly operates between Monday and Wednesday during school term-time. Flexible boarding arrangements are encouraged usually including one or two nights per week, and extended days are also available. There are 32 residential pupils and a further 19 day pupils.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This announced full inspection finds that the overall quality rating remains outstanding. All areas of care are considered. There are no areas of significant weakness and the school continues to strive for better outcomes for children. Strengths lie in all areas. However, extensive monitoring ensures the quality of the service is maintained and improved. There is substantial investment in staff training. Additional funding means that substantial improvements have been possible both inside and outside. Children enjoy attending the residential flats and would like to attend more often. Parents are full of praise for the residential care too and appreciate how programmes are adapted to meet their individual children's needs. Evidence shows that the residential service has a substantial and beneficial impact on the social and educational outcomes for children.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

No recommendations were made last time.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The good health of children is addressed particularly well. There are thorough arrangements in place to address any individual health issues. Training is arranged for any new conditions that arise amongst the children and appropriate cover-arrangements are made for new staff who have not yet received all the training. High levels of consultation occur with children and their parents. This is evident regarding meals and menu planning. The catering is excellent with a wide choice of healthy, home-cooked meals that children enjoy. This is supplemented by healthy snacks and close attention to any children who may not have breakfast at home or who bring less nutritious packed lunches. Children learn to eat fresh produce regularly and are exposed to different types of food and styles of preparation. Eating arrangements are set up so that they contribute to children's behavioural learning too, for example, regarding their social skills. There are particularly high standards of integrated practice between staff so that children's individual needs are addressed successfully and new technology is utilised to ensure menu-plans are suitable.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Strong systems are in place to help children and their families make representations when children are unhappy with some aspect of their care. Staff usually anticipate and avoid conflicts arising but, in addition, there are many opportunities for children to express any concerns, including weekly reviews of their residential stays. Children also understand how to have action taken about minor niggles, such as playground arguments, that they interpret as bullying. Their comments afterwards show they have confidence in the procedure. This represents a high level of consultation and children are well-versed in the various ways they can complain formally. As a result both parents and children feel the service is particularly good with hardly any concerns being raised.

Children are protected from abuse by especially effective and thorough systems and they feel safe in school. A high standard of staff recruitment is maintained. Staff at all levels fully understand the safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. Bullying is largely prevented from occurring and children are regularly reminded and helped to support each other. No children have been absent without consent and this reflects well on the procedures that staff implement. Safety is also ensured by close attention to all health and safety procedures across the extensive site. Each aspect of health and safety, including fire, water and electrical items, is monitored at the required intervals either by staff or contractors.

Children benefit from a clear, whole school focus on rewarding and encouraging positive behaviour rather than punishing shortfalls. To this end there are a wide range of rewards, such as, certificates in assembly; a 'sweet treat'; resident of the week award, and, ongoing praise. High levels of effectiveness in this area are

demonstrated by the pleasant atmosphere in the school and the relaxed manner of children. Relationships between staff and between staff and children are extremely positive. All types of staff are taught to treat children in this way and it is evident throughout the school. Individual attention is given to those children who require it and alterations are made to help address any sources of tension, such as the extent or timing of their residential programme. High levels of training and monitoring ensure that children perceive the school as treating them fairly, saying, for instance, 'it's cool!'

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The school's residential provision makes a substantial contribution to children's educational attainments and personal achievements. A large majority of pupils have experienced extended days and/or overnight stays. Statistical analysis of the progress made by pupils puts the school in the top five percent nationally, which is a substantial achievement. It is clear that the residential experience is given an extremely high status by the way it is fully integrated into the whole school, the resources it attracts and the equal status afforded residential and ancillary staff. In addition, residential staff provide direct support with home-work and are trained in certain techniques used in class. Residential staff support a 24-hour timetable to promote personalised learning and provide flexible residential programmes accordingly.

Staff ensure there is a thorough programme of events during the evenings with an emphasis on children having a choice. Activities may be on or off site; on-site facilities include extensive all-weather play areas and many acres of woodlands for adventures. External funding has been obtained to improve outdoor facilities and this has made a significant impact. Such opportunities are used to teach personal skills as well as practical skills, whether in sports, such as cycling, or arts and crafts. Cultural events in other countries are acknowledged in education and concurrently in the catering and the residential services, so the impact on children is maximised.

One parent said, 'He really enjoys sleeping at school and always has something positive to say about it; I have noticed a big change in him.' This reflects the pleasure that individual children gain from attending the extended day and the overnight services. This success is also attributable to the individual attention received by each child, primarily regarding their emotional and behavioural needs. This is a substantial contribution to their education generally and the future re-integration into mainstream schools of a significant proportion of them.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

There is excellent provision for consulting children and their families about decisions. The philosophy of the school is to make consultation and partnership the most

important feature and it is remarkably evident in the responses of children and parents. This leads to particularly effective results by children because the efforts of the adults around them are so well coordinated. Apart from ongoing informal opportunities to contribute, children have monthly forums to discuss issues such as food and leisure activities. They are also consulted at the end of every week's residential period as well as by their key workers as part of the care planning process. Parents and carers feel fully involved in decisions at all stages and raise no concerns at all about the level of consultation undertaken by staff. Of particular significance is that both children and parents know that their views make a difference.

The written care plans are of a high standard and are currently under review to make them more targeted, where necessary. This is further evidence of the high standard of practice in so much as management endeavour to make good systems even better if they feel it is justified. Children have a direct input to their reviews, which is clearly evidenced by their comments, and are aware of the targets that are agreed. Parents are helped to apply similar targets at home. Staff have regular contact with parents and children have easy access to a private phone. Throughout their stays, children are helped to retain their focus on what happens next, in particular their moves to other educational settings. Staff are particularly sensitive at this time of year to the needs of those children who are leaving. Transition planning is given a high priority at all levels, including at the level of inter-school sports events when children can meet others from their new schools. Individual targets and behaviour plans sensitively take into account the way individual children react to such a major change. Significant success in this regard has led to the school taking a leading role in the county-wide transition agenda.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The children's accommodation has benefitted from substantial investment in the past few months. It is now particularly well decorated, with fine furnishings, including leather suites; it is well maintained and provides this sized group of children with an excellent amount of space. Bedrooms and bathing areas are similarly improved. All areas are presented in a modern, colourful and attractive style. The improvements also compliment the age of the building and incorporate the views of children. Children benefit from the school's facilities in the evenings, including the extensive grounds and outdoor play equipment.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a clear and integrated emphasis on addressing individual children's needs. This means they achieve similar opportunities to their peers, for example, by resuming attendance at mainstream schools and learning appropriate emotional and behavioural strategies.

There is also a strong, whole school drive to positively represent other cultures and religions. This is demonstrated by arts and crafts presentations and displays, the themes for which are replicated through thematic meals and through residential activities. Children are given responsibilities for themselves and others through which they learn tolerance and understanding.

Children and adults have access to an up-to-date Statement of Purpose and children's guide that describe how the service operates. The statement reflects the current team and their procedures. The staff team structure has been improved to provide a senior care worker, who supports the manager. The senior management team is also enlarged. This investment also shows in the extensive training that staff undertake, including the training of some residential workers as teaching assistants, and in the additional courses that staff elect to undertake. Staff have individual development plans so that they are encouraged to improve their skills. They display high levels of skills and competence both in terms of technical issues and individual children. Nearly all staff have a professional qualification, which is an important contribution to the high standard of care and service. Training is also provided regarding service-specific matters such as dyslexia and attachment. Staff who lead outdoor activities are also appropriately trained. This provides a range of safe and exciting opportunities to children.

Children are looked after by staff who receive frequent guidance through meetings, one-to-one supervision and appraisals. Staff of all types consider that they receive excellent and well-informed support and that they are an important part of the whole team. This is a key part of the application of the school's inclusive philosophy. In addition, it is recognised that staff require time to reflect and to plan, and this too is built into schedules. Staff are encouraged to spend time considering different ways of working with children to achieve the best results. Support is increased for new staff until they are fully integrated. There are favourable numbers of staff on all shifts and, importantly, a balance of genders is maintained. This means that children benefit from appropriate role models.

Monitoring is particularly extensive and is a major contribution to the high standards of care. This occurs at all levels and benefits from substantial input from the local authority and from governors. Thorough consideration is given to care in a variety of ways, including the outcomes for children; to certain themes, and to specific inputs to the service that children receive. Records also show that close attention is paid to details, such as minor gaps in records, which is why overall standards are so high. Investment is ongoing in the building and in the systems that are applied, such as the organisation of managerial staff. This means that the leadership team is looking ahead and striving to strengthen the service to children and families.