

Capenhurst Grange School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 111517 |
| Local authority | Cheshire West and Chester |
| Inspection number | 378313 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 January 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Jim Alexander |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 48 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Alexander Lamb |
| Headteacher | Samantha Myers-Whittaker |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 October 2008 |
| School address | Chester Road Great Sutton Ellesmere Port CH66 2NA |
| Telephone number | 0151 338 2141 |
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| Email address | head@capenhurstgrange.cheshire.sch.uk |

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| Boarding provision | Capenhurst Grange Special School |
| Social care Unique Reference Number | SC006621 |
| Social care inspector | Chris Scully Her Majesty's Inspector |



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Introduction

Inspection team

Jim Alexander
Drew Crawshaw

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed nine lessons taught by nine teachers, listened to individual students read and visited provision for students on work placement. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, looked at documents relating to safeguarding, students' progress and attainment and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to consider when planning the inspection. The inspectors scrutinised the views of staff and pupils and analysed nine questionnaires from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size special school, which provides for students with extreme behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Around three quarters of students also have other special educational needs and/or disabilities, including attention deficit and hearing impairment. The proportion of students with complex needs has increased since the time of the last inspection, including those with additional mental health issues. All students have a statement of special educational needs. The large majority of students are boys and almost all are from a White British background and few with a minority ethnic heritage. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is four times higher than the national average. Sixteen percent of students are children looked after by the local authority. The school has a flexible programme of residential provision four nights per week. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy School status, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark Gold, Every Child Matters Quality Mark, Sportsmark, Inclusion Quality Mark and investors in people. The school has faced a number of significant staffing issues since the time of the previous inspection. A number of new appointments have been also been made including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of English. Five new members of the governing body have also been elected and a new Chair of the Governing Body appointed.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

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|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall Effectiveness | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Since the last inspection the school has faced a number of difficult staffing issues, which have now been resolved. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said their children feel safe in school and make good progress. The vast majority of students who spoke with inspectors agreed with this view. The strong emphasis on students' personal development also ensures that behaviour is good. Behaviour of residential students is also good as they benefit from the care they receive.
- Achievement is good and students, including those who are residential, make good progress from their generally low starting points. A growing number of students gain A* to G grade GCSE in a range of subjects. Many students also undertake vocational training courses, for example, in car mechanics.
- Teaching is usually good and students say teachers 'go the extra mile' for them. The majority of lessons are characterised by good relationships, carefully designed activities pitched at the right level for individual students and well-deployed support staff. This helps build students' self-confidence. However, this good practice is not consistent in all lessons and on occasions the pace of learning is satisfactory.
- Leaders, including the governing body, know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have effectively used performance management and agreed procedures to improve the quality of teaching. They have also taken strong action to successfully reduce exclusions and to raise attendance. A number of new systems and procedures have been introduced to assess students' attainment and measure their progress. These show positive impact but remain at a very early stage of development.
- The overall effectiveness of the residential experience is good. The leadership is effective and provides a safe and welcoming environment where young people can reach their full potential. There are a small number of National Minimum Standards that must also be met.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve consistency in the quality of teaching to match that of the best by:
 - providing learning activities that are suitably demanding for all students in every class
 - ensure all marking and guidance offered to students enables them to understand how to improve the quality of their work and then provide opportunities to practice these skills
 - ensure all support staff are effectively deployed so individualised learning programmes have the greatest impact.

- Monitor carefully the new systems to both assess students' attainment and to set challenging targets, so as to ensure the successful impact on students' progress continues.

- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards currently not met, as detailed in the residential provision section of this report.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of lessons observed during the inspection were good and students were well-motivated and keen to learn. This was best illustrated in a Year 8 lesson where students were enjoying the language of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

All students in school have experienced significant difficulties in mainstream schools and many were excluded. The school's focus on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as effective partnerships with feeder schools, enables students to settle quickly. Students, including residential young people, generally make good progress as they move through school. All parents and carers, who responded to the questionnaire, said that their children make good progress. A growing number of students gain A* to G GCSE grades in English literature, English language, mathematics, science, art and design, as well as in performing arts. However, attainment is higher in mathematics and science than it is in English. The school also have systems to measure students' emotional well being. These records show that students make equally good progress in this area of their development. A small proportion of students are girls and the school has carefully considered the curriculum provided for them. There is an emphasis on strong role-models and the development of a positive self-image. These are significant factors enabling girls to make equally good progress as boys across the school.

The school has an increasing number of students with more complex special educational needs and disabilities, including those with hearing impairment, speech and language difficulties, attention deficit, and with autism spectrum disorder. These students are supported to make particularly good progress. The majority of students in Key Stage 4 also benefit from attending well-planned work placement schemes

and other vocational training activities. Residential students are also given the opportunity to complete an external residential course to improve their career prospects and confidence. A typical comment made by one student on work experience was that 'teachers don't try to make you do it; they encourage you to believe you can do it'.

Quality of teaching

A wide range of evidence, including observed lessons, assessment records, students' work in books and coursework portfolios, demonstrates that the quality of teaching is typically good and has improved in recent years. All parents and carers, who responded to the questionnaire, support the view that their children are taught well. There remains, however, some small variation in the quality of teaching across the school.

In the best lessons, teachers make good use of the time available. They plan activities that interest and engage students of all abilities, developing their knowledge and enabling them to apply the skills they have learnt in a relevant way. Teaching assistants are directed to support specific students with carefully planned individualised work. Relationships are positive and behaviour managed well. As a result, these lessons move on at a fast pace and much is achieved. However, in other lessons teaching assistants are not so effectively deployed, the level of challenge is pitched at one level and consequently some students find the work too easy. A small number of students confirm this saying 'some lessons could be more challenging'.

The quality of marking also varies across the school. In some subjects, there are examples where students' good work is not only recognised but constructive suggestions are made on how the work can be improved. In other classes marking, whilst celebratory, does not always guide the students as to what they should do to improve. When students are given guidance about how to improve their work they are then not always provided with sufficient opportunity to practice or improve these skills.

The school places a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strong relationships with students ensure that teachers and support staff develop a 'can do' attitude to the majority of lessons and activities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A friendly welcome awaits students as they arrive in the morning and effective procedures ensure that each day gets off to a positive start. In school the majority of students behave well and are respectful towards one another and their teachers. This supports the good progress they make in their lessons. Behaviour in the residence is also good and young people show maturity when out on activities. This is due to the positive relationships developed with staff, who provide a consistent approach. The number of physical interventions has reduced since the time of the last inspection and none have been required within the last year. The school has also very successfully reduced the number of exclusions, which were once very high but

now are rare. Students' attendance has also improved considerably since the last inspection and, while it remains below average, it meets all targets set.

All students, parents and carers say that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly by the school. A number also explain that occasionally behaviour 'is not always as good as it could be'. The vast majority of behaviour in lessons is good but when it falls below that which is typical, swift action by staff and positive affirmation ensure that self-esteem is maintained and students quickly focus once again on their work. The school has individual risk assessments for the small minority of students who display extreme forms of challenging behaviour. On such occasions, parents and carers are informed and outside agencies involved. Students are tolerant of the behaviour of others and lessons are rarely interrupted by unacceptable behaviour.

Leadership and management

Leaders have successfully used performance management procedures to address a number of difficult staffing issues since the time of the last inspection. New appointments have now been made to the senior leadership team and governing body. A number of new teachers have also been appointed. Senior leaders have ensured that there is a shared vision and strong determination within the staff to further improve. All staff agree that the school is well led and managed. They recognise the positive impact had by the new leadership team. Students also appreciate that the headteacher is 'always available to have a chat with'.

Self-evaluation is based on a wide range of monitoring arrangements and is accurate. The experience that the senior leadership team brings ensures that they know what is working well and what still needs to improve. They have made significant impact in reducing the number of exclusion, raising attainment and eradicating the deficit budget. These very positive examples demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further. New arrangements have been developed and currently being implemented to make baseline assessments and then set targets for students to attain. It is too soon, however, to judge its effectiveness and the arrangements will require carefully monitoring by senior leaders to ensure they have the desired impact on raising attainment still further.

The impact of the curriculum is good. It has been carefully considered to meet the range of students' needs and interests well. There are effective links with outside providers to further enhance afterschool activities for all students. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the performing arts curriculum provides a good example of how these aspects are enhanced.

The governing body, strengthened by the election of an experienced Chair of the Governing Body, is extremely eager to contribute to the success of the school and recognise the role it plays to both support and challenge leaders. It has ensured that the staffing structure is now much more stable. Together with senior leaders, they have ensured all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. They have engaged well with the local authority during a difficult period in the history of the school, and ensured that students' well-being is paramount. As a result, equality of opportunity is good and students are given every opportunity to succeed in developing skills that will help them in their future education or employment. Leadership and management

of the residential provision are effective. Good communication between care staff and school staff ensure support for students is seamless.

Residential provision

Residential students are kept safe as care staff have a secure understanding of the school's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures. This means they are able to take swift action to keep residential students safe from potential harm. Effective systems are in place to deputise in the absence of the head of care, which means the setting continues to operate seamlessly and promotes positive outcomes for residential students. Clear action has been taken to address the recommendations from the previous inspection. As a result parents and carers and placing authorities are more aware of the type of care and support provided in residence. Medication recording systems have significantly improved and now clearly demonstrate when medication has been administered and the current stocks of medication.

Residential students are very positive about the care and support they receive from staff and enjoy spending time with them. This helps raise their self-esteem and enables them to achieve their personal goals. They enjoy their time in residence. Staff are also proactive in supporting residential students' future careers choices, helping them to source information and application forms. Staff support students' interests well, for example, by taking them on activities at weekends to develop their fitness. Residential students feel included and say they feel at home here.

Records and documentation relating to residential students are generally well maintained. However, on some occasions confidentiality is not maintained as staff include the names of other young people within the records. Residential students' health care needs are very well supported. Staff have a very good understanding of each young persons' individual needs and ensure they receive effective support at the right time. This is enhanced by the good links with external agencies. For example, links with smoking cessation groups means young people are able to make informed choices about their own health needs. However, health care plans do not always contain sufficient information about the young persons' needs.

Residential students' behaviour in residence is very good. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour and the use of sanctions is minimal. However, there is not a clear audit trail for the recording of sanctions. The records do not provide an opportunity for young people to comment upon the sanction. Young people enjoy a warm welcoming homely environment. The residential unit is generally well maintained though there are some signs of wear and tear. Staff are aware that some bathrooms are in need of attention and are in the process of securing funding to resolve these issues.

National Minimum Standards

- Ensure young people's health care plans clearly identify their specific health care needs. (NMS 3.11)
- Ensure sanctions are accurately recorded and young people are provided with the opportunity to have their views recorded within the records. (NMS12.6)
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained within all records. (NMS 13.3)

These are the grades for the residential provision

| | |
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| Overall effectiveness of the residential experience | 2 |
| Outcomes for residential pupils | 2 |
| Quality of residential provision and care | 2 |
| Residential pupils' safety | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the residential provision | 2 |

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Capenhurst Grange School, Ellesmere Port, CH66 2NA

On behalf of the inspection team I am writing to let you know the outcome of the inspection of Capenhurst Grange School. We enjoyed our visit very much. The overall effectiveness of Capenhurst Grange School is good and it has faced significant changes since it was last inspected in October 2008. It provides you with a good education overall, although some lessons are better than others. I have asked the school to make sure all teaching is as good as the best.

Talking to you and reading the comments from the questionnaires you filled in, we can see that you appreciate what the staff are doing for you. Due to the good care and support provided you are growing in confidence and as a result the progress you are making is also good. We were impressed with your behaviour and heard from those who offer you work experience that you are good ambassadors for Capenhurst Grange School.

Senior staff are currently implementing a new system to measure your attainment and track your progress. This is linking to the new English homework you are receiving. I have asked leaders to make sure they keep a careful eye on this new system to ensure any teething problems are quickly sorted out. There is also some paper work that needs to be completed in the residential accommodation.

I can see that your attendance is also improving, although some of you attend better than others; please make the most of the opportunities offered at Capenhurst Grange School, as they will help you a great deal in the future. May I take this opportunity to wish you the very best.

Yours sincerely

Jim Alexander
Lead Inspector

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