

Chaigeley Educational Foundation

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection 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, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Chaigeley School is a non-maintained special school for 75 boys and girls aged 8-16 years, of whom six reside at the school during the week. The residential accommodation is provided in three units, however, only two units were operational. The maximum number of residential beds that can be provided is 24. The school is situated on the outskirts of Warrington and caters for young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in July 2011.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The school provides an outstanding boarding experience for residential pupils, who thrive on the care and high levels of support they receive. Residential pupils are safe, lead healthy lifestyles, enjoy learning, achieve and are prepared for adult life. This is particularly evident with the range of Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) awards that each residential pupil completes. Residential pupils say they feel valued as staff listen to them and act upon their wishes. The boarding house clearly responds to individuals' specific needs.
- Residential pupils benefit from having outstanding relationships with residential staff who provide clear boundaries along with a safe and stimulating environment. The structure and routines established allow new pupils to settle quickly. Pupils trust and respect the small team of staff supporting them. Staff ensure a seamless response is taken during the 24-hour curriculum of care and education and this helps each residential pupil to fulfil their potential. Residential pupils also develop skills through access to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Residential pupils' individual needs are recognised. There is comprehensive, high quality planning and supporting documentation that is coupled with effective strategies and individual risk assessments. A range of therapeutic inputs are provided by qualified professionals as part of the placement arrangements. Residential pupils are proud that they are now able to manage specific behaviours such as anger and offending behaviour and believe that their maturity, and decision-making skills, grow from the experiences they gain at the school.
- The provision for safeguarding residential pupils' welfare is outstanding. Effective de-escalation techniques employed by staff means there is minimal use of

restraint or the need to impose sanctions. Residential pupils say bullying is not an issue of concern to them. Boarding pupils value difference and support each other very well. Effective systems are in place to manage complaints.

- Residential pupils' healthcare needs are exceptionally well met. Residential pupils have a secure understanding of their own health needs. Staff are proactive in ensuring residential pupils receive the right healthcare support, for example, securing appointments with healthcare professionals, including the child and adolescent mental health service and counsellors. Effective systems are established to administer and record medicines.
- Accommodation and facilities available are to a good standard and provide an environment designed to meet the needs of residential pupils. Records are well maintained and allow the uniqueness of each individual to shine. Records are held securely within both the residential provision and school, which effectively supports residential pupils' confidentiality and privacy.
- A highly motivated, skilled and well-qualified staff team are competent to deliver the school ethos, aims and working practices, and continually develop the boarding experience. Staff are supported and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff rotas are designed to promote consistency for residential pupils. This works exceptionally well and residential pupils are very clear on who is caring for them at all times.
- The management and organisation of the school's residential provision are outstanding. Managers, school governors and staff have a strong commitment to constantly review, evaluate and improve all areas of the residential provision with the aim of improving outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and head of care consult with residential pupils, parents and staff to help analyse the care provided and to enable them to help drive forward improvements. The school development plan and a detailed self-evaluation of services against the new inspection framework provide the focus for the school improvement agenda.
- The national minimum standards are met with no weaknesses identified which have a direct impact upon the outcomes for residential pupils. There are three areas for improvement. These relate to residential staff enhancing their awareness of the new inspection framework, improving the clarity within management records to show the levels of support being provided, and the need to implement plans to improve the appearance of the whole school environment.
- Equality and diversity, including fairness and opportunities for all are clearly reflected within the staff's high quality practice. There is a clear focus on providing the best possible experiences for every pupil. Pupils' needs are consistently met in this caring, supportive and encouraging environment and this allows lots of opportunities for them to make progress.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Residential pupils are achieving outstanding outcomes in all areas of their development. The boarding experience provided is highly specialised, and plans and targets are specific to each young person's presenting needs. Staff are fully aware of the arrangements in place for each residential pupil, and their practice clearly demonstrates that they can meet pupils' needs. Plans are implemented very well and at a pace suited to the individual pupil. Residential pupils grow substantially from their starting point at the school and develop their skills continuously. They receive excellent levels of support that allow them to prosper socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. Each residential pupil completes AQA awards and they are proud to show off their achievements and talk about their successes.

Strong, meaningful relationships are developed and individual differences are accepted and valued by all living and working in the school. Residential pupils talked about supporting and looking out for their friends within the boarding house and within the wider school. Pupils develop trusting relationships with appropriate staff role models who strive to provide the very best experiences for them. Pupils show a strong sense of affiliation towards their residential environment, appreciate staff's hard work, and recognise that their level of maturity improves as their confidence grows. Pupils singled out improved relationships with family members as a result of staff support. Pupils benefit from developing a greater understanding and appreciation of their own circumstances. The pupils' positive behaviour and interaction with the inspectors was testimony to all their hard work.

The views of residential pupils are actively sought, valued and acted upon. Residential pupils contribute to the running of the care provision by putting forward suggestions. Pupils were working closely with staff in enhancing their accommodation with new colour schemes. Residential pupils also plan meaningful leisure pursuits. They are actively encouraged by staff to try new activities or group activities, for example, encouragement with swimming awards. Opportunities are provided for pupils to become engaged in community activities and these help with their social presentation skills. Achievements are celebrated and these help to improve pupils' self-worth.

Residential pupils settle into an environment where boundaries and expectations of behaviour are well established. Pupils say they are comfortable with this, which provides them with a feeling of security. As a result, behavioural issues usually decrease significantly as pupils settle and adapt to their surroundings. Behaviour of residential pupils throughout the inspection was excellent, with pupils responsive to each other's needs and treating each other with sensitivity, respect and understanding. This tolerance for peers leads to a strong sense of community within the residential provision.

Residential pupils are enthusiastic in keeping themselves fit and healthy. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Healthcare plans are

well written, are tailored to the specific needs of each young person and actively contribute to them remaining fit and healthy.

Residential pupils are very well prepared for life beyond the school, their next stage of life. There is a natural progression towards independence that is propagated throughout the time that pupils spend at the school. Constructive programmes and well thought out independence activities and programmes are enjoyed by the pupils. These programmes are also accredited through AQA, with specific independence skills awards being gained in the final school year. The school also has an independence flat that can be used to enhance learning and development in preparation for the time pupils leave. This facility has been used successfully in the past but was not being used at the time of this inspection. Each residential pupil leaves with a comprehensive record of their achievement that they are proud to show off.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of residential provision and care is outstanding in all aspects. Residential pupils have fantastic opportunities to develop their potential. This means they are increasingly well prepared for their future lives in society. Residential pupils are able to exercise their rights, including how to access children's help lines, and clearly say that they feel safe within this school. Ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity is fully recognised, valued and promoted throughout the school community.

School staff provide residential pupils with excellent pastoral care. Residential pupils can approach designated staff regarding their worries and these are addressed sensitively. All admissions are planned and there is a very caring and structured induction process for new pupils. A pupil discussed how helpful everyone had been since he arrived and felt that he had learned a lot about himself and changed in the short time he had been at the school. Communication between care and educational staff is effective, which helps to provide consistent support within the 24-hour curriculum. Detailed information being maintained on each residential pupil clearly shows the outcomes being achieved.

Residential pupils are empowered to make a positive contribution towards their school life. High levels of positive engagement enable pupils to develop self-esteem and gain increased confidence. This in turn helps them overcome barriers that have previously hindered their learning and attainment. Individual support strategies work effectively for pupils when they are at school and at home. Pupils learn how to control their anger and frustrations and this has helped them to restrict anti-social behaviour and offending. There is clear data to show a reduction in incidents as pupils engage constructively with their programmes.

Residential pupils' aspirations are continually promoted. They learn to take on new roles and responsibilities within the residential accommodation as they progress. For example, they have responsibility for supporting new pupils during their residential

induction as well as supporting them during the school day. All residential pupils show tremendous respect for their peers and they help them to grow in confidence. Staff are fully committed to ensuring that each pupil has the best opportunities and can achieve their full potential. This results in pupils making exceptional progress within education and within their social networks. Achievements such as those gained through AQA, GCSE, and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards are celebrated.

The placement planning for pupils is comprehensive. Plans provide a clear picture of residential pupils' needs and what steps are being taken to address their needs consistently. Access to external support agencies and health professionals ensure that pupils are receiving the right level of individual support in this caring environment. Pupils are familiar with the role of the independent listener and can access this service when required.

Residential pupils benefit and thrive in their nurturing environment. Detailed placement plans and individual risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they meet current needs as pupils progress and develop. Pupils discuss and review their plans with staff and can demonstrate good insight into how they are cared for. They benefit from the excellent relationships developed with staff, who work openly, transparently and communicate positively with them. As a result, pupils engage with adults in a positive way and look to their own futures with optimism.

Staff actively encourage residential pupils to enjoy and participate in healthy activities and experiences. Parental permissions are gained to allow participation in events at the school and in the wider community. Each recreational experience is risk assessed. Staff promote healthy lifestyles in a variety of ways through personal, social, health and education programmes. Residential pupils are encouraged to improve their lifestyles through diet and exercise as well as modify certain aspects of their lifestyle, such as tobacco usage, drugs and alcohol awareness and abuse. Residential pupils have a secure understanding of their own health needs. The school employs a medical coordinator and this means residential pupils' medication is managed safely at all times by qualified staff. Staff are proactive in ensuring residential pupils receive the right health care support at the right time. Arrangements are in place for the care of residential pupils if they are sick or injured. Care staff are trained in first aid and safe medicines handling.

The school has a five star environmental health rating. Catering is managed well and there is frequent consultation with pupils on menu design and this allows good choice with food. Meals are pleasant social occasions and there is positive feedback from pupils on the quality of food they receive. Menus are balanced to ensure suitable nutritional value is being provided. Pupils' special dietary requirements and personal eating habits are known to the catering staff and this means pupils' eating habits can be monitored unobtrusively.

The two operational residential units contain single occupancy bedrooms for pupils, which are personalised to suit the taste and interests of the occupants. These units

are on the same floor but provide suitable age separation. Older pupils naturally take on more responsibilities as they develop key independence skills suited for life after the school. The general quality of the furnishings, fittings, equipment and décor in the living units is good. Pupils have contributed to plans to enhance their accommodation and have produced their own 'wish lists' of improvements. Some of these suggestions will be incorporated into the school improvement plan. Pupils are aware of the reasons why not all their suggestions can be included.

Residential pupils' safety

The school has outstanding arrangements in place designed to keep residential pupils safe at all times. There is a wealth of experience within the school senior management team and this means practice keeps the whole school environment safe. There is robust implementation of policies and procedures that relate to the recruitment of staff. As a result, only suitably checked people work with or have contact with pupils. Servicing and maintenance schedules are followed and this reduces potential hazards. There is an extensive range of policies and risk assessments in place and the residential staff team consistently implement procedural guidance to ensure pupils' safety. For example, pupils participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the living units when needed. A suitable fire risk assessment is in place and advice had been provided by the local Fire and Rescue Service.

The welfare of residential pupils is safeguarded, with staff having the experience, knowledge, training and familiarity with safeguarding procedures to keep pupils safe. Should an issue arise, prompt referral to external agencies ensures pupils are appropriately protected. The Local Authority Designated Officer confirmed there are no safeguarding concerns. Appropriate staffing levels, coupled with sensible deployment of staff around the campus, are effective in minimising incidents of bullying. Residential pupils say that bullying is not a problem and confirm that it is not tolerated. Pupils say they feel safe living at the school and this view is replicated by parents and staff. Effective monitoring of behaviours and incidents occurs, and as a result there has been a clear reduction in incidents involving residential pupils.

Residential pupils are supported to work positively through difficulties and say that any sanctions or punishments imposed are usually fair. They also recognise that good behaviour is rewarded and have a full understanding of how the incentive schemes work. Staff are extremely skilled at diffusing difficult situations and incidents, resulting in less confrontation and ultimately, less physical interventions. Individual behaviour management strategies are kept under review and adapted to pupils' presenting needs. Staff provide each residential pupil with an opportunity to reflect on incidents they are involved in. They develop coping strategies and learn how to manage their personal circumstances with more maturity.

Staff know how to respond should any residential pupil go missing or fail to return from leave. They are aware of the local multi-agency protocols and practices in place,

which are designed to protect pupils who are missing. This multi-agency response goes a long way to minimising the occasions where pupils become vulnerable or put themselves at risk. Residential pupils receive excellent advice and support about personal safety.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The management and organisation of the residential provision are outstanding. The school is professionally and efficiently run by the senior management team and this means all routines run smoothly. Management and staff share and promote a clear vision for the school's future ensuring all pupils remain extremely well cared for and fully supported in all respects. The school is fully committed to sustained improvement in the quality of care it provides. Changes to the organisation of boarding has seen a reduction in numbers of residential pupils and staff between inspections. There was no negative impact on the operation and organisation of residential accommodation. The small staff team have consolidated their working roles to provide a more focused service. There is excellent communication with parents, carers and placing authorities. Excellent partnership arrangements provide extremely well coordinated care and support.

The school service history predominantly shows continuous improvements covering a five-year period. The school development plan clearly reflects how the residential provision will be further enhanced. Planning highlights the need to further develop the appearance of the whole school environment during the summer holidays.

Strong and thorough systems are in place to review the quality of care, identify areas for future improvement and take action to ensure that the school meets residential pupils' needs and promotes their welfare. This involves an independent visitor who visits the school regularly on behalf of the organisation to check records, assess the physical condition of the buildings and talk to residential pupils about their experiences. A new report format was created in response to a past inspection recommendation. The format captures all relevant information as well as commenting on pupils' progress and outcomes. The headteacher provided an accurate and insightful evaluation of the school's performance against the new inspection framework. This shows the capacity to continually plan for and enhance the high quality services already being provided. Services are continually evolving in line with pupils' needs; for example, the additional therapeutic and mental health support being accessed by a high percentage of pupils. The headteacher recognised the need to enhance staff awareness of the new inspection framework, new evaluation schedule and grade descriptors and new national minimum standards. Access to this specific training will keep staff fully up to date, ensuring pupils' needs remain comprehensively met.

The school provides education and accommodation for pupils with a wide range of complex behavioural, learning, emotional and social needs. Staff recognise residential pupils as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. Staff

have an excellent knowledge of the residential pupils they are working with, ensuring their needs are consistently met. All staff have relevant qualifications. All members of the senior management team hold higher level qualifications. The staff team also has an excellent combination of social welfare and education experiences and backgrounds fully suited to the delivery of the 24-hour curriculum of care and education.

Staff receive ongoing support, regular supervision and training as well as opportunities to discuss their practice and review their performance. The clarity of information within management records, especially the discussion that takes place during supervision can be improved. Staff with supervisory management responsibilities need to ensure their records are held in a central location Staff remain child focused and residential pupils are provided with excellent continuity of care from people they truly trust and respect. All required policies and procedures are in place and known by those required to implement them. Required records are completed and stored securely.

All recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. A new system has been introduced to support the monitoring of the school. The report format fully complies with standards, clearly showing where substantial improvements have been made. Placement plans clearly record progress and capture outcomes on an ongoing basis. All plans are detailed, up to date and implemented very well by knowledgeable staff. All staff including school governors have received training in the prevention and recognition of abuse, further enhancing safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils. A full and satisfactory response was taken regarding complaints the school received between inspections. Accurate records were provided by the headteacher and these showed transparent reporting, investigation and outcomes.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What should the school do to improve further?

- Enhance staff awareness of the new residential special school inspection framework.
- Improve the clarity of recordings showing the level of management support being provided for residential staff.
- Ensure plans are implemented to further develop the appearance of the whole school environment.

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.



03/07/2012

Dear residential pupils

Inspection of Chaigeley Educational Foundation

Thank you for spending time and sharing your thoughts with me when I visited your school. I had the opportunity to speak with every one of you during the inspection. You were all very comfortable and relaxed. You all made a full and positive contribution to the inspection.

Your views are very important and they helped me to make judgements about the residential provision where you live. You all gave positive examples about how well you are settling into the school and/or where you thought you had made progress.

You recognise you are well supported by staff and say you get on well together and feel safe. I was encouraged by how supportive you are to each other and how well you recognise that difference can be a good thing. You all have talents and these are clearly being supported.

You are kept busy doing interesting activities. The school has good resources. You keep yourselves fit and healthy. You are able to personalise your bedrooms and take pride in your appearance and the living space. You are working very hard to complete AQA qualifications. Based on where you were when you first arrived at the school, you all make significant progress with your lives. You have all developed skills and knowledge that will help you when you move on from the school.

You understand the boundaries put in place and the reasons why you need rules. Usually you keep to the rules. None of you expressed any concerns. Behaviour is managed very well by trained staff who you relate to very well. As a result of everything you said, the observations I made, and comments from your parents, staff, and different people supporting you, the residential provision was judged to be outstanding.

As a result of the inspection, the school has been asked to further improve the appearance of the boarding. I know you are involved in choosing colours for your bedrooms. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the school and its residential provision. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Trainor