



The Roaches School

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Issues that concerned parents

Basic information about the school

Name of school:	The Roaches School
Type of school:	For pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	5-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Fees:	Day: from £30,780; Residential from £103,740
Address of school:	Tunstall Road, Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST8 7AB
Telephone number:	01782 523479
Fax number:	01782 511875
Headteacher:	Mr Ian Wilton
Proprietor:	Dr S Fitzpatrick, Mrs E Fitzpatrick
DfES Number:	860/6017
Reporting Inspector:	R G Dyke HMI
Dates of inspection:	18-20 June 2002

Part A - Summary of the report

Scope and purpose of the report

1. This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who has asked for reporting inspections to be undertaken in non-approved schools that educate and care for pupils who are publicly funded. The purpose of the report was to advise the Secretary of State about the quality of the school's provision under the Education Act 1996. The report concentrates on those aspects of the school relevant to that purpose.

Information about the school

2. The Roaches School provides a full-time education for 15 boys and a part-time vocational education or home tutoring for a further five boys and one girl. Pupils are aged between eight and

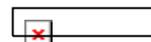
failure in several schools and of great social difficulties within their families. All the boys are resident up to 52 weeks a year within the Care Today organisation which is in the ownership of the school's proprietors. Some live in the accommodation within the upper and lower school buildings and others singly or in small groups in community houses locally. The girl is a day pupil, living locally, for whom The Roaches has recently arranged a college placement. The Roaches also provides part-time home tuition for two pupils resident with Care Today who are not on its roll.

3. All but three of the pupils on roll have statements of special educational need. Seventeen are funded jointly by their local education authority and social services department, the others solely by social services. Pupils' length of stay at The Roaches varies between three months and two years.

4. The school received final registration with the Department for Education and Skills in March 2000 and at the time of the inspection was seeking approved status for 34 pupils aged 5-16 years. It is on three sites. The lower school occupies a converted farmhouse in a rural area in the Peak District National Park near Meerbrook, Leek. This has capacity for six children in residence and twelve pupils in its classrooms. The upper school is in a former town house in a suburban area at Knypersley, near Biddulph. It has accommodation for ten residents and sixteen pupils. The vocational provision, known as the 'Catskill' (Care Today Skills) Unit, is in an industrial unit in Knypersley, near the upper school. This has space for six pupils. Two of the community houses include schoolrooms for home tutoring.

5. Care Today aims to provide a flexible range of provision to meet a range of needs and to respond to changes in young peoples' requirements for support as they develop. The school's mission statement is 'to become a centre of excellence in meeting the educational, social and welfare needs of our children, through the creation of a caring, and supportive family atmosphere'. The Roaches seeks to prepare as many pupils as possible for transfer to local mainstream or special schools or to colleges.

Main findings



How good the school is



6. The Roaches is a good and improving school. It fulfils its aim of providing a flexible range of educational and residential facilities to meet a variety of social and educational needs which are in turn subject to change as pupils develop. The proprietors and senior managers share a vision for the purpose of the care organisation and of the school. The managers and staff are beginning to put this into practical effect.

7. Pupils are well taught and well looked after. They discover that they enjoy learning, make good progress and take a fresh pride in their work. As the result of the support and encouragement of all the staff, they become increasingly able to manage their own behaviour. Attendance is good. The curriculum differs according to the nature and purpose of each site. It is appropriately balanced in each situation so to meet pupils' requirements. The school is seeking to develop the subject curriculum further, not least so as to offer a greater range of external accreditation. There is no clear view at present of the curriculum which the various elements of the provision will offer when development is complete. The school aspires to offer a 24-hour curriculum, but there is no agreed definition of what this means for co-operative working between care and education teams or of its implications for the school's intention to provide a home-like ethos.

8. The Roaches is well managed despite the challenges presented by the widely dispersed accommodation. As a result, it has overcome some earlier difficulties and has seen significant improvement recently. The school communicates effectively with parents and carers, who appreciate the team's efforts. Staff work hard to promote pupils' links with their families.

What the school does well

- Care Today is committed to high standards and the organisation places a high value upon education;
- The Roaches is flexible in striving to meet the needs of its pupils;
- behaviour is well managed in all settings and by all staff;
- teaching is good. Teachers are skilled at engaging pupils in lessons by providing relevant activities which are well matched to pupils' needs. In addition to promoting good progress, this is a crucial element in the school's success in improving pupils' behaviour;
- teacher assistants have a significant role in teaching and are effective in supporting pupils' learning and social development;
- education and care staff respect each others' roles. Teams communicate effectively on a day-to-day basis and co-operate well with each other;
- the care provision is well managed. It safeguards pupils' welfare and supports their social development;
- The Roaches is successful in re-integrating pupils into mainstream schools and colleges in their home authorities. Where residential placement is to continue, The Roaches makes use of its good links with local providers, including employers, to support pupils' integration;
- the newly established vocational education centre is already successful in meeting the

needs of a number of young people;

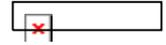
- music and drama are outstanding strengths of the school. Teaching is excellent and pupils become mature, confident and capable composers and performers;
- the school has strengths in the range and quality of outdoor activities it provides in education and care settings;
- Care Today provides a good range of opportunities for staff to extend their professional qualifications.

What could be improved:

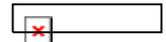
- shared understanding of the 24-hour curriculum;
- curriculum planning and co-ordination for the upper school and for the off-site provision;
- the precision and objectivity of target-setting for pupils in education and care;
- the use of targets in planning and in assessing pupils' progress;
- the model adopted for the monitoring of teaching;
- the mechanisms for sharing the best practice;
- the access of teachers to training in the subjects they teach.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the school's action plan.

Commentary



How high are standards?



The school's results and achievements

9. Pupils come to The Roaches with backgrounds involving disrupted schooling and long-term disaffection with learning. As a result their educational attainments are significantly below national expectations for their ages. Pupils' behaviour on admission is usually very difficult, and most have a history which involves aggression towards adults and peers.

10. The improvement of behaviour is the highest priority for the school as this enables pupils to participate in lessons. Pupils of all ages make good progress in their ability to control their behaviour. The effective management of young people by care and education staff on their first admission means that they are able to attend an appropriate element of the school's provision at the earliest opportunity. When pupils begin schooling, teachers are skilled in engaging the most volatile individuals in lessons, so that their success in the classroom quickly becomes a crucial additional factor in improving their behaviour.

11. Pupils make good progress academically. This is from a low baseline, so that it is exceptional for those at Key Stage 2 to attain at national standards in any subject at the end of the key stage. There is plentiful evidence of the progress made by these younger pupils from samples of their work, from teacher assessments and from the outcomes of standardised tests. The school is often able to bring the rate of improvement in reading ability up to that expected for all children, while some Key Stage 2 pupils have made double the expected rate of improvement and others more than that.

12. Pupils admitted at Key Stage 3 can be further behind than younger pupils as more schooling has been missed. Despite making good progress, most are working a key stage below the expectations for all children in most subjects. Many older pupils make rapid progress in their reading, with some pupils' test results indicating gains in reading skills at more than double the expected rate. Their written work presents clear evidence of good progress in a range of literacy skills.

13. Pupils' number skills show a similar pattern of limited knowledge and skill on admission. Work is well matched to capabilities; pupils try hard and get through a good volume of work. While progress is good, it is generally less rapid than in literacy. It is typical for a Key Stage 3 pupil to be consolidating their skills in the addition and subtraction of single figures and in telling the time to the nearest five minutes.

14. Progress in other subjects taught is at least satisfactory. In science, pupils learn to conduct fair tests and to write up experiments systematically. Progress in science and design and technology in upper school and in the 'outpost' schoolrooms is limited by the very basic facilities. Pupils become confident with information and communication technology (ICT). There is evidence of high quality art work displayed around the school sites, and pupils' progress at the upper school is being further

supported by the development of an art room.

15. Pupils remember information from earlier work very well in all subjects. This is noticeable at the times when the teachers refer back to knowledge shared in previous lessons or in other subjects. At this point, the pupils' capability appears to take a leap forward, as they are able to remember and make good use of this earlier learning. This contrasts strongly with their lack of more general knowledge and confirms the effectiveness of the teaching. As expectations are high, pupils work beyond their general level of attainment at times. For example, a Year 7 and 8 group became interested in the large amounts of money involved in the gross domestic products of different countries and were enjoying converting these from dollars into pounds.

16. Pupils achieve outstandingly well in music and drama. Under expert group and individual tuition from the specialist teacher they work hard to become competent performers and composers of modern music on keyboards and electric guitars. The supportive and enthusiastic ethos leads to pupils being very ready to sing for an audience. The school provided examples of professionally recorded compact disks containing high quality performances by the pupils. The school also provided videos of pupils performing in plays. These showed the young people participating enthusiastically and speaking clearly and confidently.

17. The outdoor education programme is led in both care and education settings by a specialist instructor. Pupils make very good progress in acquiring confidence and skills. In a canoeing session during the inspection a Key Stage 3 pupil demonstrated his new-found confidence by volunteering to go overboard and to practise climbing back into the Canadian canoe crewed by the instructor. Only a short while ago he had been too nervous to venture into the canoe at all.

18. The inspection included scrutiny of the provision in a school-room attached to a converted farmhouse in a rural location. This serves young people unable to cope with the larger-scale settings. Pupils here make at least as good progress in lessons as in other parts of the school because the quality of planning and teaching was high and they worked hard.

19. Young people attending the Catskills vocational unit are learning completely new skills such as welding and the use of machine tools. They make good progress in acquiring and consolidating these skills. At the same time their personal and social progress is enhanced by the adult ethos of the unit, the contact with the staff of other nearby industrial units and the work placements organised by Catskills staff.

20. Pupils gain accreditation in Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) 'On Demand' Achievement Tests in literacy and numeracy and in the AQA Unit Award scheme. Pupils receive accreditation from the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) in Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). They also gain certificates for swimming and a range of outdoor activities. The school is enabling increasing numbers of pupils to gain Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Youth Award accreditation in a number of subjects and in aspects of personal development. These accreditation schemes celebrate success and add structure and purpose to pupils' work. Plans are in place to extend these opportunities further. The school has also begun to undertake the national curriculum tests and tasks at the ends of key stages in line with mainstream provision.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Despite their difficulties, pupils' attitudes towards staff and towards their peers and visitors are very good. The consistency of approach to behaviour management from all adults contributes well to the good behaviour of pupils in the residential and educational settings. Pupils understand and accept the school rules and routines. On those occasions when pupils misbehave, staff intervene quickly and pupils respond appropriately.

22. In half of lessons observed, pupils' responses and attitudes to work were good and in a further third they were very good or excellent. Attitudes and behaviour were never less than satisfactory. Responses were best in lessons where the teaching was of the highest quality. In a music tuition

session, a very volatile Key Stage 2 pupil behaved in a very adult fashion, bringing earlier learning in the use of computers into play as the teacher introduced him to a new feature of the 'virtual studio' on the computer. When the time came to play, he picked up an electric guitar, plugged it in, adjusted the amplifier and quite casually picked out the theme from a popular song in order to check the guitar's tuning and the sound level.

23. Pupils' behaviour in the residential setting is also good, they respond well to the friendly style of staff who are well known to them. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour required of them. They are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour through an effective reward system. The degree of responsibility given to those in residence varies from unit to unit according to its ethos, but there is no undue disparity. Pupils are encouraged to help with the preparation of meals and to do their own laundry.

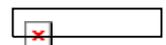
24. The quality of relationships throughout the school is good. Different age groups get on well together and during the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. A spirit of mutual respect exists between pupils and staff. Pupils are able to approach staff with confidence. This contributes well to their personal development. Many pupils demonstrate a good degree of self-confidence as well as care and concern for others' feelings. This was evident from the way they supported one another in lessons. In a reading session in the upper school pupils sensitively helped a peer who was experiencing difficulties with some words in a passage he was reading aloud to the class.

Attendance

25. Attendance is good in relation to the pupils' difficulties, being generally above 93%. The school keeps accurate daily records of attendance across the range of educational settings. This includes attendance at home tuition sessions for those pupils in care who find it too difficult to cope with school. The procedures for monitoring attendance are effective and the school's registration codes rightly distinguish between reasons for absence.

26. There are suitable procedures for dealing with the lateness of pupils in care homes who attend the school on a daily basis. This may involve a phone call to the carer or a visit to the home by a member of the school support staff. Pupils in residence at the school sites arrive promptly for the start of the school day and the great majority of lessons start promptly.

How well are pupils or students taught?



27. The quality of teaching by teachers and instructors is consistently high across the school. The teaching in half of observed was good. It was very good or excellent in more than a quarter. Only one session was less than satisfactory.

28. Lessons are well planned. They meet the needs of pupils effectively and catch their interest, meaning that volatile pupils can be taught as a class. In only one session was there an ineffective match to needs so that the work was of a lower standard than that completed previously. Lessons have a strong sense of purpose, and pupils are aware that that staff are striving to move them forward. There are often high expectations and a challenge to pupils' capabilities, to which pupils respond well. Occasionally, too much detail or too many new and complex concepts are introduced and the pace of the lesson is forced, so that pupils' learning is superficial.

29. As far as the school's resources allow, teachers make good use of practical materials, which pupils very much enjoy using. In a science lesson, the Key Stage 3 group had shown real interest in a survey of the acid or alkali nature of more than a dozen popular soaps. The plan at the outset was only to use litmus paper, but as the pupils took such an interest, the teacher brought in a

colleague's 'ph' testing kit intended for use in an aquarium. This enabled pupils to quantify the alkalinity of the soaps. The challenge in managing the lesson was in containing pupils' enthusiasm so as to ensure that they performed fair tests. The management of behaviour was not a problem.

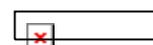
30. Teachers are especially skilled at introducing links between work in various subjects and between work in lessons and in other activities. An excellent literacy lesson made use of a folk tale involving a character lying and being found out. Without losing the focus of the literacy work, a strong moral theme was nurtured within the discussion. In many lessons, opportunities are exploited as they arise to enrich and extend pupils' use of language. This reflects teachers' awareness of pupils' deficits in this respect resulting from their disrupted schooling.

31. Good use is made of questioning during lessons. This often targets individuals at different levels so as to stretch the capabilities and extend the insights of the more able pupils or to check the understanding of the less able. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm. Occasionally an undue degree of informality on the part of teachers leads to volatile behaviour which then has to be brought back under control. The systems for the reward of good behaviour are applied consistently and are meaningful to the children. Marking of work in books is supportive and encouraging; the best also gently points out how work can be further improved. Homework is well planned so that it supports work undertaken in lessons.

32. Instructors lead practical sessions effectively. Pupils responded positively to a yoga session, trying hard and accepting constructive criticism of their efforts. Evidence for the value of the sessions came when a pupil from another group became frustrated and upset in a lesson. The teacher made reference to the breathing exercises the pupil had practised in yoga. The pupil undertook a few seconds of the exercise and the agitation was gone. A canoeing exercise on a nearby lake was conducted at a demanding pace, involving a succession of exercises and challenges which kept pupils alert and busy. The nature of the session was such that there was no opportunity or stimulus for anything other than the best of behaviour and the most good-humoured exchanges between pupils and with adults.

33. Teacher assistants and care staff in supporting roles have a significant role in supporting pupils' learning and their behaviour. The best of practice involves teachers sharing their plans with assistants the day before the lesson, enabling the assistant to consider the role they will play and any targeted support which they might need to offer. This approach is worthy of adoption throughout the school.

How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?



34. At all key stages the curriculum has an appropriate breadth and balance to meet the needs of the pupils. At Key Stage 2 the school provides all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum draws on National Curriculum guidelines and is adapted to the needs of the pupils and particular strengths of teachers. The curriculum of the upper school and the dispersed units serving pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 is less closely aligned to the National Curriculum as pupils' needs and their tolerance of formal schooling vary considerably. There are insufficient links at present between the curricular provision on the various sites serving Key Stages 3 and 4. The curriculum for older pupils includes careers education, citizenship within personal, social and health education and opportunities to learn vocational skills. The school is making increasing use of ICT. Little was seen being used by pupils during the inspection, but displays featured high quality ICT work and pupils referred to their enjoyment of lessons involving ICT.

35. Literacy programmes have been developed for the whole age range and the time allocation for the work is appropriate. Specific literacy schemes have been introduced to support pupils with reading difficulties. The lower school also provides paired reading activities. Pupils are encouraged to participate in reading sessions in school but opportunities for reading for pleasure outside school

could usefully be more structured.

36. There is guidance as to what will be taught in all subjects which draws on national curriculum materials so that subject content is clear. However, there are few detailed schemes of work. As a result there is little guidance on classroom organisation, on teaching strategies and on the key educational and behavioural skills to be developed within topics. The current teaching team is able to provide this detail within their own lesson planning. However, the detail needs to be transferred to schemes of work in order to inform newcomers to the teaching staff and temporary teachers, and to improve the continuity and progression of pupils' experiences across the various teaching sites.

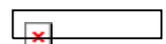
37. The school aspires to provide a 24-hour curriculum. A number of elements of this are in place. Activities after school are planned a little while ahead and are appropriately organised. Classroom and care teams communicate well with each other and share written reports. There is some joint objective setting. Homework appropriately related to schoolwork is set every evening and supervised by care and teaching staff. However, the degree of joint planning and complementary provision by school and residential teams which is generally associated with the notion of a 24-hour curriculum is not yet in operation. The school has yet to define and to agree amongst all the staff what is implied by the implementation of such a curriculum. Consultation will need to take account of Care Today's intention to make residential care as home-like as possible, in order to ensure that the two developments do not involve contradictions in terms of the ethos being sought.

38. Music and drama are strengths of the school. The lessons offer pupils opportunities to develop their self-confidence, social skills and self-esteem. Regular productions are staged involving all pupils. In a rehearsal in Key Stage 2, pupils had learnt lines and memorised stage directions. They sang and danced with verve. All were enthusiastic, working together and enjoying the experience. This was in strong contrast to their recent personal histories. Individual music tuition offer pupils the opportunity to learn an instrument, to use ICT in music making, to develop both oral and listening skills and to appreciate a wide range of music.

39. A vocational provision for pupils in Key Stage 4 has been established in the Catskills unit It includes access to ASDAN Youth Awards. This recent initiative also supports pupils in continuing their education through college and work placements.

40. The Roaches is effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Work in religious education introduces pupils to religious beliefs and practices. Yoga sessions promote reflection and relaxation. Outdoor education provides opportunities to reflect on the natural world. The school's prime focus on developing pupils' behaviour, and their awareness of the impact their behaviour has on others, lends a strong moral theme to all of school life. Extensive opportunities to learn outdoor activities such as rock climbing, canoeing and camping add considerably to developing pupils confidence and to their ability to manage their own anger. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. They explore the complexities of living in a community through their daily communal life, through personal, social and health education and through the school's weekly meetings. Appropriate attention is given to health education including drugs awareness. Careers advice is provided by the school and the local Connexions service. Music and drama activities provide an insight into a variety of cultures. Educational visits also enhance the range of pupils' experiences. These include visits to concerts, the theatre and to places of interest such as a visit to the principal sites of interest in London.

How well does the school care for its pupils?



41. The quality of the care given to pupils is a strength of the school. Staff show great concern for the welfare of the young people in their charge; meeting their individual needs in an responsive and flexible manner. This is at the heart of all the school seeks to achieve. Relationships between staff

and use praise and humour effectively to build pupils' self-esteem.

42. The residential care arrangements are good. Daily routines run smoothly and care staff give sensitive attention to pupils' personal needs. Residential arrangements are planned to help pupils work toward an increasing independence. At all of the sites, pupils are given the opportunity to help in the preparation of meals and to assist in their own washing and ironing. The levels of responsibilities increase appropriately for older pupils. Activities are provided in the evening and at weekends, with excursions to local places of interest, sporting fixtures and leisure centres all regularly available. Arrangements for care staff to participate fully in helping pupils to meet the whole range of the educational and personal targets, and to record their development, are underdeveloped.

43. Guidance as regards the next stage in their educational provision is available to all pupils and their parents, with great care being taken to ensure that pupils participate fully in any decision making. The school provides a flexible programme of access to mainstream education. There have been successful re-integration programmes with several schools and colleges in pupils' home authorities, as well as good links with local providers. The newly established vocational education centre, together with good links with local employers, provides the young people with an exceptional range of experiences in preparation for future employment.

44. Arrangements to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare are effective. Child protection procedures are fully in place and all employment checks are carried out rigorously. Procedures for hand-over of care between staff teams are satisfactory. There is an impressive range of training available to staff on the promotion of the welfare of pupils. All fire and electrical checks take place as required. Appropriate arrangements are in place to liaise with the relevant authorities in both health and social services.

45. The school goes to considerable lengths to maintain and promote pupils' regular contact with parents and carers. Active support and additional funding are provided to ensure that visits to home or visits by parents at school can take place wherever possible.

46. Individual education plans are drafted for each pupil and reviewed frequently. However, targets within these plans and within the individual progress plans in the residential setting are too general and long-term. Some are targets for staff rather than the young people. As a result, the plans are not open to effective review and their targets do not play an effective role in providing evidence of rates and profiles of progress or in focusing the planning process on short-term priorities.

47. The recording of pupils' behaviour, experiences and responses in school and care settings is detailed and is diligently undertaken. Records of achievement for pupils of all ages include samples of work and digital photographs of activities in progress. Annotation sheets indicate what achievements are being illustrated in the samples and photos, so that the records are effective. There is some good practice in the assessments of pupils' basic skills on entry to the school, supported by the use of standardised reading tests. The regular re-testing of pupils using the same or similar materials would provide a valuable additional insight into pupils' progress.

How well does the school work in partnership with parents and the community?



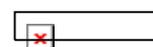
48. The school has established very good links with parents, carers and the wider community. Staff work hard to promote pupils' links with their families. This is a strength of both the residential and school settings. Staff deal sensitively and effectively with a range of difficult situations, and ensure that all concerned are kept up to date with any developments regarding the pupils.

49. Views expressed by parents and social workers in response to questionnaires sent out before

the inspection indicate that there is wide support for the work of the school. Many parents and carers pay tribute to the professionalism and dedication of staff, a view corroborated in the findings of a recent Staffordshire County Council Social Services inspection report. One social service department wrote additionally to the inspection team to draw attention to the good progress made by pupils they had placed at The Roaches School. They commented particularly on the quality of the communication from the school. Many parents noted the improvements in their child's confidence, behaviour and self-esteem. One parent and a carer noted the limitations of a small school in terms of developing pupils' social skills with peers.

50. The school has established effective links with local schools and colleges and with local firms and businesses who offer work placements and support for the school's vocational educational centre. Pupils make good use of local community groups such as youth clubs and also sports centres. The well-established links with the local community enable pupils to participate in events such as music and flower festivals and in fund raising activities for local charities.

How well is the school led and managed?



51. Despite the considerable challenges in managing a wide range and geographical spread of provision, the school is well led. The proprietors of Care Today have created a positive ethos underpinned by a belief that the education of the young people is a crucial component of their support and care. The headteacher has worked in partnership with the head of care and other key staff in furthering the vision of the proprietors and in establishing a climate that is successful in promoting high standards of teaching and learning.

52. All staff work well together towards achieving the aims of the school. There is a regular cycle of meetings involving both senior and middle managers. Due to the complexity of the sites, the school has plans to develop the involvement of middle managers further and to clarify responsibilities for specific establishments and for aspects of the curriculum. This is a positive move, as the consistent approach for which the school aims has not yet been fully achieved. While the roles of staff given whole-school subject responsibilities will be difficult to fulfil across the sites, this proposed development will be helpful in ensuring continuity and the effective use of shared resources.

53. The leadership of the school is honest in analysing its strengths, in recognising its weaknesses and in taking prompt action to remedy any perceived weaknesses. However some of this action is not sufficiently systematic or embedded across the school as a whole. For example, the school states that pupils benefit from access to a 24-hour curriculum while staff's understanding of this term is variable and its development is uncertain. An agreed and documented view of the proposed final pattern of academic and vocational provision across the range of sites is also needed to guide development.

54. As part of the self-evaluation process, the school has begun a programme of monitoring and evaluating the teaching. This is in its early stages but all teachers have had regular lesson observations. The school links these observations to the supervision requirements of the Care Standards Act. However, the frequency of these observations means that the depth of scrutiny and the detail of feedback to staff are curtailed. This does not therefore lead to the developments intended. The school has planned to refine the process as part of its arrangements for appraisal and performance management.

55. There is a development plan giving a three-year overview of what the school seeks to achieve under both educational and care headings. This covers the development of curriculum areas and the training needs of staff as well as plans for the maintenance and refurbishment of the various sites. Priorities are clearly listed with responsibilities, costings and success criteria all identified. At present, success criteria mainly relate to the completion of tasks and are insufficiently linked to the impact these may have on the achievements of the pupils. The development plan omits reference to

some of the school's additional initiatives.

56. Residential provision is available in both the two main school sites as well as in a number of family style homes in the neighbouring locality and in a farmhouse in a rural location. Each home facility is managed on a day-to-day basis by an identified member of staff but the overall responsibility for ensuring a consistent approach is managed by the school's head of care. The lines of accountability for staff have only recently been put in place and are not yet sufficiently understood. Despite the best efforts of the new head of care, there is some inconsistency in the approaches employed across the various sites.

57. The day-to-day administration of the school runs smoothly. The school secretary provides efficient support in all aspects of the school's work including minor financial matters. The headteacher and the central office for Care Today deal with all major financial transactions. These are also administered effectively, although the lack of specific budgets for new initiatives sometimes restricts these developments.

58. Teaching and care staff are sufficient in number overall and a significant proportion are well qualified. However, there are times when the number of care staff on duty in the residential accommodation is barely sufficient to provide adequate cover for the many planned activities when difficulties arise.

59. Many staff have been financially supported by Care Today in furthering their qualifications. This is a strength of the organisation in raising standards and maintaining staff morale, and also in helping to retain skilled staff who know the school and the young people well. The school provides good opportunities for training generally, although there has been insufficient access to appropriate curriculum courses for teaching staff.

60. Resources for teaching and learning vary between subjects and locations. Those for music are very good in lower and upper school. Resources for vocational training in the new Catskill unit are already good and continue to develop. Resources for science and design and technology on the upper school site are very basic. Materials for history and geography are limited, although increasing use is being made of the internet to provide relevant paper-based resources. The range and quantity of books provided in the library and in residences is too limited to adequately cater for pupils' wide range of ability, age and areas of interest, although pupils do make regular visits to local public libraries. Resources to hand in the small outlying schoolrooms are understandably minimal, but staff have access to the main school resources.

61. The accommodation at the lower school site has been improved to provide two adequate sized classrooms and a music room. The upper school accommodation has also been developed and offers a number of specialist subject areas in addition to teaching bases. The combined science and technology room is not adequate to provide for the two subjects. A small but useful art room is being developed on the site. This promises to be valuable in and out of school hours. The upper school site includes a facility for animal husbandry, which is popular with pupils and a valuable resource for the science curriculum. The Catskills vocational facility is housed in a factory unit on a small industrial estate. Its utilitarian exterior belies the presence of a variety of pleasant and purposeful learning environments within the building. These reflect much hard work and ingenuity on the part of the staff team who proposed and undertook the establishment of Catskills. The quality of all of the school accommodation is enhanced by lively and attractive displays of pupils' work and other materials.

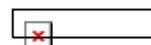
62. The quality of residential accommodation is generally good. A recently acquired five-bedroomed house provides excellent accommodation for three pupils. The residential accommodation for larger groups within the main school buildings is made as homely as possible. The farmhouse in the rural setting is very pleasant, although isolated. A small house on a low-cost housing estate providing for a single very difficult pupil is in a relatively well-worn condition. Most pupils choose to personalise their rooms, and Care Today has assisted many in purchasing music centres for their rooms. In all settings, repairs to buildings and furnishings and maintenance are carried out promptly. This encourages pupils to respect their environment.

What should the school do to improve further?

63. The school should:

- agree what a 24-hour curriculum means in the context of The Roaches and how it will be developed;
- define the pattern of curriculum to be offered by the various elements of the school's provision and how these complement each other;
- carry through the proposals to improve the co-ordination of curriculum development;
- ensure that targets set within individual education plans and residential progress plans are for the young people rather than for staff and that they are written so that they can be effectively reviewed;
- make full use of pupils' targets in planning and in assessing and recording progress;
- monitor teaching at appropriate intervals, providing effective feedback and ensuring that the best practice is shared;
- provide teachers with training related to the subjects they teach;
- continue to develop resources and facilities for science and design and technology in upper school and resources for the humanities.

School data and indicators



Summary of inspection evidence

Number of lessons and individual sessions observed in whole or part	24
Total number of hours	15.25

Number of discussions with staff, other adults and pupils	34
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Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	5	12	4	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements.

Information about the school's pupils

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
3	1	-	1
4	0	-	0
5	1	-	1
6	6	-	6
7	3	-	3
8	3	-	3
9	2	1	3
10	2	-	2
11	2	-	2
Total	20	1	21

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils eligible for free school meals
0	18	N/A

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

	Total %
Authorised absence	3.6
Unauthorised absence	2.5

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils		Exclusions in the last school year		
	No of pupils		Fixed period	Permanent
Black - Caribbean heritage	-	Black - Caribbean heritage	-	-

Black - African heritage	-	Black - African heritage	-	-
Black - other	-	Black - other	-	-
Indian	-	Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	Chinese	-	-
White	21	White	1	-
Other minority ethnic group	-	Other minority ethnic group	-	-
<i>This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only</i>		<i>This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.</i>		

Teachers and classes Y3 - Y11

Number of full-time teachers	8
Number of part-time teachers*	2.4
Number of full-time teachers with Qualified Teacher Status	6
Number of part-time teachers with Qualified Teacher Status	2
Number of pupils per teacher	2.6
Average class size	4

**full-time equivalent*

Deployment of teachers

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	100%
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Average teaching group size

Nursery	-
Key Stage 1	-
Key Stage 2	4
Key Stage 3	4
Key Stage 4	4
Sixth Form	-

Teaching assistants Y3 - Y11

Total number of teaching assistants	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

Care staff* Y3 - Y11

Total number of care staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	672 (approx - 52 weeks)

**Residential Care Officers/Social Workers (RCOs/RSWs)*

Funding arrangements

Private/LEA/SSD	No of pupils
Private	None
Cheshire LEA/SSD	3
Derby LEA/SSD	1
Derbyshire LEA/SSD	1
Liverpool LEA/SSD	6
Liverpool SSD	1
Manchester LEA/SSD	3
Manchester SSD	1
Shropshire LEA/SSD	1
Staffordshire LEA/SSD	1
Stockport LEA/SSD	1
Stoke on Trent LEA	1
Tameside SSD	1

Financial Data

Income	Last financial year (£)	Forecast this financial year (£)
Basic budget	1,092,000	1,132,200
Grants	-	-
Income from facilities and services	-	-
Donations/private funds	-	-
Other income	200	200
Total income	1,092,200	1,132,400
Income per pupil (based on average of 16 pupils on roll)	68,262	70,775

Fees

Day: from £30,780. Residential: from £103,740.

Survey of parents, carers and social workers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	20
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Number of responses in each category

	agree	disagree
I am happy with the school my child attends.	14	-
I think this school meets my child's special educational needs.	12	1
I believe that the school helps me to understand what my child is taught.	14	-
I think that the school keeps me well informed about my child's progress.	14	-
I am happy with the standards of behaviour at this school.	14	-
I believe that this school helps my child have positive attitudes to school work.	14	-
I believe that this school helps my child to mix well with other children.	14	-
I believe that this school promotes the personal and social development of my child.	14	-
I think that this school prepares my child for the next stage of education and training.	13	-
I feel supported by the school.	14	-
I feel that my child is safe at this school.	14	-
I believe my child likes this school.	13	1

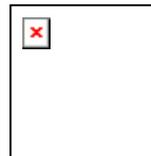
Summary of responses

Responses were very supportive and appreciative of the school's work. Several responses referred to the children's more positive view of schooling since attending The Roaches. Parents, carers and social workers felt well informed by the school. They felt that children made good progress. One social services department wrote additionally to the inspection team to draw attention to the good progress made by the pupil they had placed at The Roaches and the quality of communication from the school.

Issues that concerned parents

The one parent who said that the child did not like school phrased the statement in terms of his not liking school in general. While a number of parents and social workers drew attention to children's improving social skills, one parent and a social worker pointed out the limitations of the small school units in terms of developing children's social skills and confidence.

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