

**CHARTWELL HOUSE**  
**GOODENS LANE,**  
**NEWTON, WISBECH,**  
**CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE13 5HQ**

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**Reporting inspector: AW Littlewood HMI**

**Dates of Inspection: 15-16 May 2000**

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**Information about the school**

Type of school:	Residential for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties
Type of control:	Independent
Age range:	10-16
Gender:	Male
Address:	Goodens Lane, Newton, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 5HQ
Telephone number:	01945 870793
Fax number:	01945 870885
Principal:	Mr CE Wright
Proprietors:	Mr CE Wright
	Mrs DA Wright
	Mr AE Dillnut
	Mrs EJ Dillnut

*The inspection team comprised:*

*AW Littlewood HMI (Reporting Inspector)*

*S Shoesmith HMI*

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

Chartwell House is an impressive school with many strengths.

Prior to joining the school, all the pupils had disrupted educational experiences, often with long periods out of school, and this is reflected in their lower than expected levels of attainment in respect of their age.

The pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and good in some subjects. All have made considerable advances in literacy and numeracy and are working towards nationally accredited awards.

The pupils' attitudes to study are excellent. They are hard working, conscientious and concentrate very well. They show initiative, co-operate and acknowledge that each has different skills and works at a different pace. They respect each other, adults and property, are polite and very well behaved and are developing good independence skills.

The quality of teaching is consistently good. Work is well organised, individual support is sensitively provided and relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Lessons start promptly and maintain a good pace throughout the time allocated. Study schemes are planned for each pupil, all work is completed and carefully marked and expectations are high.

The curriculum is broad and well planned to ensure that individuals regain their self confidence and establish good attitudes to study through success. Particular attention is sensibly given to raising the pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy. A satisfactorily balanced timetable ensures that sufficient time is allocated to each subject. However, there is insufficient depth of study in information and communication technology (ICT) generally or in science and design and technology (D&T) work for certain pupils. As pupils' confidence, knowledge, understanding and skills grow the school should consider entering them for more advanced accredited courses.

The pupils' moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. All adults set high expectations, there is close collaboration between care and education staff and all work together with a common purpose.

The school has created a strong ethos. Excellent relationships have been established between all staff and pupils and there is a happy family atmosphere which is evident at all times.

The quality of the educational and residential accommodation is good. Both are clean, well furnished, attractively decorated and health and safety matters are properly

maintained. However, dust extraction facilities in the technology workshop needs to be reviewed.

Good links are established and maintained between home and school, with all who returned the questionnaire expressing high praise for the school and all it had done for their child (*see Parental Survey*). Links with the local community are sound and growing as more suitable opportunities arise.

The school is effectively managed and very well led by the principal. Financial arrangements are sound, but the school has yet to produce a development plan in which future spending predictions are linked to curriculum and staff development.

Admissions, attendance, medication, incident and sanction records are properly maintained.

There are sufficient and suitably qualified teachers and care staff, but the school lacks the ICT specialist skills to meet the pupils' curriculum needs.

There are sufficient resources for the current programme of study and good use is made of the school grounds for educational and recreational purposes.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve further the quality of provision the proprietors and principal should:

- strengthen the curriculum by employing teachers with particular specialisms;
- introduce more academically demanding accredited courses for those pupils who have both the confidence and potential to succeed in them;
- produce a plan which includes costed curriculum, school, care and staff developments.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

Chartwell House is an independent, residential special school for up to nine boys between the ages of 10 and 16, who require a safe, stable, structured environment. It aims to provide a small family setting for boys of average or above intelligence who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. It is registered with the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) as a school and with Cambridgeshire Social Services Department as a children's home.

The school occupies attractive, well maintained premises and grounds on the outskirts of a small village near Wisbech. Along with a children's home and another residential school in the locality, it forms part of a group under common ownership. Currently four of the seven on roll have Statements of Special Educational Need and all have 52 week placements.

The school aims to "help the child to be happy and relaxed in an educational setting, to re-motivate the child into a pattern of purposeful learning, to provide an individual learning programme which will maximise their potential and to offer a gateway to further education and training."

Currently weekly fees, which include care, maintenance and education, are £1,550. The most recent report following an inspection by the Cambridgeshire Social Services Department (November 1999) concluded that "Chartwell House provides very good value for money."

### **Key indicators**

#### **Attendance**

There have been no unauthorised absences this year.

#### **Exclusions**

There have been no exclusions.

#### **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	10
Good	100

#### **Public examinations**

Pupils currently on roll are following National Skills Profile courses, Royal Lifesaving Society and Royal Society of Arts (RSA) awards. In the past two years pupils have successfully completed General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses in English, mathematics and science and also Certificate of Achievement courses in English, mathematics, science, healthy hygiene and safety, geography, the world of work and graphicasy.

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

*It is inappropriate to judge the pupils' attainments against age-related national expectations. Judgements are based solely upon progress in relation to their attainment on joining the school.*

All pupils follow courses leading to the successful completion of a range of National Skills Profile modules in English, mathematics, science, life skills, health and hygiene and motor vehicle studies. Several are working towards bronze medallion awards with the Royal Lifesaving Society and Associated Examination Board (AEB) and RSA basic skills certification.

Pupils make satisfactory and occasionally good progress especially in literacy and numeracy. Through persistence and good teaching their reading skills improve; several are now reading passages with fluency, expression and understanding to the rest of the class. The pupils are gaining a growing interest in books; their vocabulary is increasing and their spelling is improving. The pupils' creative writing still requires further attention although the presentation of their work has improved considerably and they are all taking a pride in their handwriting. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. Pupils listen carefully to both their classmates and staff; they also discuss and debate issues maturely and speak with confidence, assurance and an awareness of others in social settings such as during mealtimes. Opportunities to prepare and complete video recorded oral presentations as part of their coursework are regularly arranged.

The pupils' mathematical development is organised mainly through a suitable published scheme, which pays particular attention to basic numeracy skills. Their progress is at least satisfactory although one or two of the boys find the work difficult. They use calculators with accuracy and understanding and are increasingly confident in problem solving and memorising number bonds and multiplication tables. These skills are well used to answer questions involving money, measurements and time, often based on actual situations.

In science, a full range of practical work is limited due to a lack of suitable equipment. However, pupils make good progress in their study of the body, fitness, healthy eating and foods which constitute a balanced diet. A portion of the school's grounds are well used as part of a vegetable garden design and growing project and all pupils take turns to care for the school's collection of pets.

Regular use is made of the school's good ICT facilities and pupils are developing reasonable word processing skills. However, development is patchy due to the limited range of expertise in the school and the absence of a scheme of work to support progression in the subject.

Progress in other subjects such as art, woodwork, history and vehicle maintenance is satisfactory with the pupils demonstrating considerable pride in their achievements and using their newly learned skills, knowledge and understanding with confidence and enthusiasm.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

All pupils have, since joining the school, developed excellent attitudes towards educational study and work generally and have responded very positively to the strong family atmosphere created in the school. During lessons they concentrate hard and show a real interest in the tasks set, even continuing to complete an activity in their own time. They are proud of their efforts and keen to show visitors the progress

they have made in the recent past and the quality of presentation they now achieve. They show initiative, seeking information from sources other than those suggested by the teacher; they co-operate if they are sharing resources or working together and accept that each works at a different pace. They respect each other, and provide good support for those boys who have recently joined the school. They are polite, very well behaved and are developing good independence skills. These are very evident during mealtimes when each pupil willingly and with good humour, completes his assigned task with hardly any prompting from adults. This very positive improvement of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development represents a considerable achievement.

### **Attendance**

There have been no unauthorised absences during this year. Lessons start on time and no issues arise related to truancy or lateness.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

The quality of teaching is consistently good and in one of the ten lessons observed, the standard was very good. Activities are well organised to ensure that each pupil is engaged in study which matches his needs and advances his knowledge and skills at a suitable pace. All work is completed and carefully marked and expectations are high. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that the pupils progress with understanding and confidence and work is well planned to provide plenty of reinforcement of previous learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. With the current levels of trust of staff shown by pupils and their remarkably good personal attitudes to work, the school should consider raising the levels of academic challenge even higher. The teaching staff are suitably qualified, but lack the range of specialisms needed to teach subjects such as science and ICT to greater depth.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

The curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced. The pupils' current study schedule is sensibly planned to ensure that individuals regain their self confidence and establish good attitudes to study through success. Particular attention is given to raising the pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy and a satisfactorily balanced timetable ensures that sufficient time is allocated to each of these subjects. Careful planning ensures that French studies are concentrated into the period prior to the school's summer trip to France. A programme of personal, social and health education, life skills and health and hygiene has been established recently and due attention is paid to sex education and drug abuse awareness. Opportunities to study the rudiments of motor vehicle maintenance are provided and pupils work towards a qualification which entitles them to join the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) motor vehicle studies course when they start at college. The school has devised its own programme of career guidance which includes suitable work experience opportunities and links with colleges of further education; it has successfully placed all its pupils so far. Good use is made of leisure time to further pupils' education with opportunities to

study for Royal Lifesaving Society awards and pursue hobbies such as gardening, listening to music and participation in sports.

Schemes of work are based directly on the National Curriculum programmes of study, commercially produced textbooks or course syllabuses. However, for certain pupils, there is insufficient depth of study in ICT, science and in the range of D&T work currently available. As the pupils' confidence, knowledge, understanding and skills grow the school should consider entering the pupils for more advanced accredited courses.

A thorough assessment of each pupil's literacy and numeracy skills is arranged shortly after arrival at the school and individual progress is carefully monitored throughout the pupil's school career. However, given the current high expectations of both the pupils and teachers, it would be timely to introduce a range of educational targets to be achieved on a termly or half termly basis.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The school very effectively promotes pupils' moral and social development; pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils know the difference between right and wrong, how to behave appropriately in different social settings and all staff make good use of every opportunity to reinforce and further develop this understanding. The boys enjoy each other's company and are polite and relaxed in the company of adults. During free time they show a good awareness of each other's sensitivities and are careful to sustain harmonious relationships. Mealtimes are very pleasant social occasions much enjoyed by both adults and pupils. Occasions to address the pupils' cultural development are planned, both in lessons and during evenings and weekends, when visits to places of interest are regularly organised.

All adults set high expectations, there is close collaboration between care and education staff and all work together with a common purpose. This is reflected in the strong ethos, excellent relationships established between all staff and pupils, and the happy family atmosphere which is evident at all times.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

The quality of care, individual attention and interest shown by staff for all the pupils ensures that the school is a safe, happy place in which they can make progress. Residential provision is of high quality with a well planned and suitable range of evening and weekend activities organised to ensure the pupils live full and interesting lives. In addition, they are able to follow their own interests including Army cadets, a local drama group, music tuition for piano and guitar, and scouts. The school also arranges two adventure holidays for the boys each year. Photographic records of these events are prominently displayed in the dining room and both pupils and staff spoke enthusiastically of their experiences on previous trips and looked forward to the next one with real pleasure.

Currently, four of the pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need related to their emotional and behavioural difficulties. They all receive a good level of support to address their particular special needs and are making steady progress. This progress



is reflected in the reports to parents and social workers. The pupils' needs are properly assessed during annual reviews. Both the staff and pupils' handbooks provide useful guidance on what is expected regarding behaviour, sanctions and complaints. Child protection procedures are clearly set out, but none of the staff has had any awareness training concerning this issue. Fire practices are regularly undertaken and appliances are frequently checked and tested. The no smoking policy is acknowledged and respected by both staff and pupils.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

The school makes every effort to maintain regular contact with a pupil's home and/or social worker. Parents are encouraged to visit and opportunities for the boys to telephone are regularly available; the frequency of calls is logged in the pupils' files. Assistance to attend annual reviews as well as advice to parents to help sustain good relationships during home visits are provided.

Good use is made of the local leisure centre and visits to places of interest in the locality, especially for recreational purposes, are regularly planned. Several pupils belong to local clubs. The school also has well established contacts with the local community through the help the pupils provide at village functions, such as the annual firework display and fête. Recently, the pupils have planted trees and maintain a garden in a communal area.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

The school is effectively managed and very well led by the principal. The school has clearly stated aims, which are well understood by all staff and the strong family atmosphere pervades all aspects of the school. The pupils' welfare is of the highest priority and communication throughout the school regarding this matter is good with details of information circulated, properly recorded. The pupils' files and other records are well maintained.

All staff have job descriptions and a copy of the detailed staff handbook in which the school policies and practices are clearly recorded. The daily administration is effective and arrangements for visits and evening activities carefully planned and documented. Financial arrangements are sound, but the school has yet to produce a development plan in which future spending predictions are linked to curriculum and staff development.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

The number, qualifications and experience of both the teaching and care staff are suitable for the number of pupils, but the range of subject expertise of the teaching staff will need to be widened as the pupils' levels of attainment and commitment to study continues to increase. Several of the care staff are currently completing further, more advanced, studies in social work and child care, but opportunities for teachers to attend training courses are limited and need to be reviewed.

The classrooms, workshops and office are separate from the residential provision and both areas are clean, well furnished and health and safety issues properly addressed with the exception of adequate dust extraction in the technology workshop.

The teaching areas contain good displays of pupils' work and sufficient resources for the current programme of study. There is a small, but suitable collection of fiction and reference and text books to support work in the foundation subjects as well as art materials and basic mathematics equipment. The recent addition of two new computer systems provides a good resource for the ICT curriculum, but a scheme of work to make best use of the new equipment has yet to be produced. Equipment for practical science work is limited, but there is a reasonable range of reference and text books to support the subject. The pupils all take a close interest and involvement in the welfare and maintenance of the school's pets. The school has two very well maintained minibuses, each fitted with seat belts, which are used to transport the pupils to their homes and on educational and recreational visits. Drivers are appropriately qualified.

All pupils have their own well decorated bedrooms which they take a pride in keeping tidy. Washing and toilet facilities are sufficient and suitably located. There are separate facilities for staff to use when on "sleep-in" duty. Communal recreation, sitting and dining rooms are attractively furnished, tidy and well respected by the pupils. The kitchen is suitably designed and the cook presents a good weekly menu which provides a well balanced diet.

The grounds are very well maintained and effectively used by the pupils during recreation periods.

### **The efficiency of the school**

Financial control is thorough and day to day administration and expenditure is well managed. Financial planning for major developments is sound, but, while funding is readily available for educational resources and activities, this is currently not linked to curriculum development.

## **INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

- Ten lessons for a total of seven and a half hours.
  - Discussions with the principal, teachers and care staff.
  - Scrutiny of the school's documentation including policies, handbooks, the brochure, incident and sanction books, admissions and attendance register, fire practice and medication records.
  - Pupils' records and reports.
  - The work in the pupils' books.
  - The report of the most recent inspection by the Cambridgeshire Social Services Department.
  - Completed questionnaires returned by parents and social workers.
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## **Appendix 1**

### **Pupil and teacher numbers**

Number of pupils on roll	8
Number of pupils with a statement	5
Full-time qualified teachers	2
Part-time qualified teachers	1

### **Pupil numbers according to National Curriculum years**

Year 7	0
Year 8	2
Year 9	3
Year 10	2
Year 11	1
Total	8

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## **Appendix 2**

### **Pupils' placing authorities**

Barking and Dagenham	2
Essex	2
Hertfordshire	2
Southwark	1
Thurrock	1

### **Income**

	<b>Last financial year (£)</b>	<b>Forecast for current financial year (£)</b>
Basic budget	564,200	564,200
Income per pupil	80,600	80,600

## **PARENTAL SURVEY**

### **Summary of responses**

There were four responses to the survey distributed to parents or social workers, which asked for their views on the suitability and support for their child provided by the school. All were very positive, one including an additional comment that the school "has been excellent in all areas of education and social life. The quality of their commitment is of the highest standard and the manner in which they support parents is excellent".