

INSPECTION REPORT

CLOUGHWOOD SCHOOL

Northwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111502

Head teacher: Mr D Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker
1424

Dates of inspection: 10th –11th December 2001

Inspection number: 243384

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Type of school: - Special
- School category: - Community Special
- Age range of pupils: - 9 – 16
- Gender of pupils: - Boys
- School address: - Stones Manor Lane
- Hartford
- Northwich
- Cheshire
- Postcode: - CW8 1NU
- Telephone number: - 01606 76671
- Fax number: - 01606 783486
- Appropriate authority: - The governing body
- Name of chair of governors: - Miss G J Sproston
- Date of previous inspection: - March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cloughwood School is a residential school for boys aged 9 to 16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides education for seven days a week for extended hours. This is a central factor in the culture of the school. All boys have statements of special educational needs. They join the school at different times of their school lives. Although the school provides for a wide range of attainment, when they enter the school all are achieving standards below those expected of their age. This is either because of underlying learning difficulties or because of the disrupted pattern of education they have experienced as a result of their behavioural difficulties. There are currently 66 boys on the roll of the school, all of whom are of white UK origin. 40 pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most of the boys come from the Cheshire area but some are from neighbouring authorities. The school is in a good location on a campus with a range of other schools. The school enjoys Beacon status.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an excellent school. By the age of 16 pupils achieve very high standards compared with similar schools and pupils of all ages learn very effectively and make very good progress. This is the result of the excellent leadership and management provided by the head teacher, well supported by the senior management team and governors, the very high standards of care and the consistently very good teaching. The cost of educating pupils is relatively low compared with similar schools. Because of these factors the school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- Achieves very high standards in public examinations compared with similar schools
- Creates a climate where pupils want to succeed and as a result have excellent attitudes and behave very well. Attendance is excellent compared with similar schools
- Provides an excellent range of learning opportunities through the formal curriculum, the extended curriculum and the extra curricular activities
- Has excellent leadership and management, particularly from the head teacher
- Provides consistently good and very good teaching.
- Is very highly regarded by the parents

What could be improved

- Measuring and recording the progress made by pupils for use in planning future lessons.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to make very good improvements since it was last inspected in March 1998. Standards have risen, the high quality of teaching has improved and the governors have developed their role in the overall management of the school. There has been an increase in the number of support staff working in classrooms.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	B	A	good	B
writing	B	A	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school achieves very high standards in public examinations compared with similar schools. Boys of all ages achieve well or very well in all aspects of their learning in relation to the targets set for them. By the age of 16 boys have made very good progress in all areas and achieved very well. The school's results compared with similar schools are very high. In the 2001 General Certificate of Secondary Education all boys achieved one or more passes at grade A-C and all achieved 5 or more passes at A-G. One boy achieved 5 or more A*-C grades. The results were close to the national average for all schools and represent a considerable achievement. This pattern has been maintained for several years. Their targets set for 2002 are challenging but realistic and are on line to maintain this standard. The average pass score in GCSE in 2001 for pupils attending schools for emotional and behavioural difficulties was 4.1 whilst for boys attending Cloughwood it was 34.0.

Younger pupils also do well. They make rapid progress and achieve very good standards in speaking and listening, personal, social and health education and in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.

They achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, creating a very good platform for their later success.

In all other subjects boys achieve at least very good standards in relation to the challenging objectives set for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys have excellent attitudes to school. They enjoy their work and join in with enthusiasm, co-operating very well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Boys respond very well to the high expectations and the school's behaviour management system.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and personal development are very good. These are significant factors in the development of a very good climate for learning, evident in the school.
Attendance	Excellent when compared with similar schools.

The climate of learning created through high expectations leads to exceptionally good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. Boys enjoy the challenge of school, attend regularly and achieve very well as a result.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 9-11	Aged 11-16
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The school provides consistently good and very good teaching.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. This is a significant factor in standards achieved and the progress made by pupils.

The use of subject specialists is a strong factor in the teaching, leading to very good knowledge of the areas taught. When this is added to the very good knowledge and understanding teachers have of the individual needs of the boys, very good teaching leads to very effective learning and high standards. Teaching methods and resources also enhance learning. These methods also serve to enhance pupils' social development, learning to co-operate and share ideas. The use of resources and different teaching methods is also a strength.

The very high expectations teachers have of pupils' academic performance and their behaviour, is an excellent feature of all the teaching observed. Pupils respond very well to this and as a result, develop positive attitudes to learning and a desire to succeed. Learning objectives are set for all lessons, these are shared with the pupils and evaluated at the end of each lesson. Targets are realistic but challenging.

Planning is a strong feature of the teaching. Teachers are always clear what they expect pupils to learn from the lessons, although they are not always as specific as they could be for individual pupils.

Although the permanent teacher of English for younger pupils was absent during inspection, the very detailed planning and the clear expectations and learning environment created, meant that effective learning could continue in her absence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the wide range of extra curricular activities and the excellent opportunities provided in the evenings and at weekends.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school promotes the moral and social development of pupils very well indeed and this is a key factor in the standard they achieve. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has excellent procedures for the welfare of pupils. Procedures for encouraging good behaviour and high levels of attendance are excellent. Procedures for monitoring and promoting progress are good but could be improved upon.

Parents regard the school very highly and enjoy very good relationships with the school. They consider themselves to be partners in the education of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher, ably supported by a relatively new senior management team, has been very successful over a number of years in achieving a very strong ethos for learning which has led to high levels of success.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very well. This has improved since the last inspection and governors now take a very active part in the management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school is always striving to improve and constantly analyses its performance and sets challenging targets for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are used very effectively and the school benefits from its Beacon status.

The school provides excellent value for money and fully applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leadership and management of the school.• The progress made by their children in both behaviour and academic work.• The approachability of the school and the relationship with them.• The range of education provided.• The expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework.

The inspectors agree with the very positive views expressed by the parents. However they could not agree that more homework is necessary.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school achieves very high standards in public examinations compared with similar schools.

1 Boys of all ages achieve well or very well in all aspects of their learning in relation to the targets set for them. Although pupils join the school at different points of their school lives they are all attaining standards lower than those expected for their age. This is either because of underlying learning difficulties or because of the amount of education they have missed because of their emotional and behavioural problems. They quickly settle into the life of the school and make rapid progress because of the high expectations of the school, the very good teaching and the secure caring environment created. By the age of 16 boys have made very good progress in all areas and achieved very well. The school's results compared with similar schools are very high. In the 2001 General Certificate of Secondary Education all boys achieved one or more passes at grade A-C and all achieved 5 or more passes at A-G. One boy achieved 5 or more A*-C grades. The results were close to the national average for all schools and represent a considerable achievement. This pattern has been maintained for several years. Their targets set for 2002 are challenging but realistic and are on line to maintain this standard. The average pass score in GCSE in 2001 for pupils attending schools for educational behavioural difficulties was 4.1 whilst for boys attending Cloughwood it was 34.0.

2 Younger pupils also do well. They make rapid progress and achieve very good standards in speaking and listening, personal, social and health education and in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. They achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, creating a very good platform for their later success. In all other subjects boys achieve at least very good standards in relation to the challenging objectives set for them.

3 In addition to the high academic standards achieved and the very good progress made by pupils, they also achieve very high standards in other aspects of school life. For example, boys regularly achieve success in regional and national trampolining championships.

The school creates a climate where pupils want to succeed and as a result have excellent attitudes and behave very well. Attendance is excellent compared with similar schools.

4 As a result of the high expectations of behaviour, academic and personal standards and the secure and caring environment created in the school, boys very quickly develop a desire to succeed and do well. This is very good progress for all of the boys who have had, for a variety of reasons, a record of failure in other schools. It is a major factor in the subsequent success they enjoy in public examinations and other high profile events such as regional and national trampoline competitions. Many parents at the meeting and through the questionnaire commented on this as a major factor in the school's success. They described significant changes in the approach to life evident in their children as a result of the work of the school. A number said " This school has given us our sons back. We are proud of them and of the school".

5 Boys enjoy coming to school and attendance is excellent compared with similar schools. Last year overall attendance was over 91 per cent with unauthorised absence being 2.1 per cent, compared with a average overall attendance of 80.7 per cent and unauthorised absence of 8.5 per cent in other boarding schools for emotional and behavioural difficulties, nationally. Pupils' records show that this represents dramatic improvement on their previous attendance levels prior to joining

Cloughwood. Again parents commented on how remarkable they considered this. They felt that it was a direct result of the climate for learning created in the school.

6 In lessons, pupils often have excellent attitudes and behave very well and this leads to effective learning and rapid progress. They co-operate well, share resources and willingly listen to the ideas of others. Records show that this was not usually a feature of their learning when attending other schools. It is a consequence of the high expectations, very good teaching and the quality of relationships evident in the school. In science or art lessons for example, pupils behave very maturely when engaged in practical work. They are very keen to help each other to achieve successful outcomes and the result is high standards of work. In the geography lesson mentioned earlier, the ability of boys to work together in a game, was a significant factor in their learning and the very good understanding that they developed. Similarly the discipline required in helping, encouraging and supporting work on the trampoline is indicative of the attitudes and behaviour leading to the very high standards achieved. These characteristics are evident in all aspects of school life.

The school provides an excellent range of learning opportunities through the formal curriculum, the extended curriculum and the extra curriculum activities.

7 The school provides the full range of National Curriculum and religious education learning opportunities. In addition, a very extensive range of activities provided in the evening and at the weekends, considerably enhances the experience of pupils. Homework is provided every night. Extra-curriculum activities such as high quality trampoline coaching, ICT support and music tuition adds further to the experiences of pupils. The combination of these three elements provides an excellent education for the pupils. This is a factor, along with the quality of teaching and leadership and management, which contributes significantly to the climate for the learning established in the school. All teaching staff make a valuable contribution to support care associates in the management and provision of the extended education.

8 The approach to teaching the curriculum is based on high expectations and challenge. The provision is enhanced by the quality of the learning environment in which the pupils live and learn. Resource levels add to the richness and quality of the curriculum. For example, the use of interactive whiteboards in some classrooms.

9 Residential workshops in dance, drama, art and music add to the experience as do science and geography fieldtrips. In addition, a wide range of other educational visits support all areas of learning, for example all staff and pupils attend the annual camp and ski courses to the continent are a regular feature of the school.

10 An exceptional range of extended activities after school and at weekends develops the experience further. These include Army/Air Cadets, off road motor cycling, mountain biking, karting, canoeing and sailing as well as trampolining.

11 Use of the extended day and weekend time is extensively planned to ensure all boys have equal access to the range of high quality experiences. The excellent range of learning opportunities is another key factor in the climate for learning created and the high standards achieved.

The school has excellent leadership and management, particularly from the head teacher.

12 The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the head teacher, ably supported by the relatively new senior management team. Over many years the head teacher has successfully established a learning environment based on high expectations of behaviour and academic and personal

standards within a secure and caring environment. He, together with the governors, have developed a like-minded staffing structure with a consistent approach and philosophy, which has ensured that pupils receive clear expectations to which they respond well. High quality communication is a significant strength.

13 Teachers with responsibilities for specific subjects have increasingly developed their roles. They are responsible for identifying the development need of their subject and managing the budget allocated to it. There has been an improvement since the last inspection. They have a very clear understanding of the development needs and these feed in to the whole school plan. They are fully involved in the analysis of evaluating the standards achieved by pupils in their subject and are responsible for setting targets to raise them further.

14 The governors discharge their responsibilities very well. This is an improvement from the last inspection where it was judged that they did not play a full part in the strategic management of the school. They have complete faith in the head teacher and it was felt, relied too heavily on his judgement. The faith has continued and is justified but they now take a more active part in determining the priorities for development and in monitoring the impact of changes. The chair of governors is particularly active in school. The vice-chair who is the school doctor, also supports the school very well. As a result of their involvement they have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and are clear about the priorities for further improvements and the reasons for them.

15 The high quality school improvement plan clearly identifies the priorities for the school and is based on an audit of need and an evaluation of the standards achieved.

16 School finances are very effectively controlled and managed by the bursar in consultation with the head teacher and governors, and finance is targeted to priority areas. Although there is a relatively large carry forward in the budget this year it is the result of an unavoidable delay in appointing a new deputy head teacher and the governors are clear on how this is to be reduced.

17 The strength of the leadership and management of the head teacher over many years is a very significant factor in the success of the school. In more recent times his resolve to delegate more to staff and involve governors more, has added to the quality of his leadership and management.

18 The cost of educating pupils is relatively low, the standards achieved are very high, the quality of teaching is very good and the leadership and management is excellent. As a result it provides excellent value for money.

The school provides consistently good and very good teaching.

19 The quality of teaching is very good overall. This is a significant factor in standards achieved and the progress made by pupils. During the inspection 34 lessons were observed. Teaching was never unsatisfactory. It was good or better in over 94 per cent out of lessons, being very good in 53 per cent and excellent in 12 per cent.

20 The use of subject specialists is a strong factor in the teaching leading to very good knowledge of the areas taught. When this is added to the very good knowledge and understanding teachers have of the individual needs of the boys, very good teaching leads to very effective learning and high standards. In geography, for example, the teacher uses his subject knowledge very effectively to enable pupils to be fully involved and learn effectively. Teaching methods and resources also enhance learning. For example, the use of an interactive whiteboard for pupils to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of the location of countries and the use of a property board game to

develop an understanding of economic principles. These methods also serve to enhance pupils' social development, learning to co-operate and share ideas. The use of resources and different teaching methods is also a strength in other subjects. For example, in science, where pupils were testing the 'hypothesis', reaction times can be increased through practice and organisation of the lesson and the way in which pupils were encouraged to investigate the hypothesis, led to very effective learning.

21 The very high expectations teachers have of pupils' academic performance and their behaviour is an excellent feature of all the teaching observed. Pupils respond very well to this and, as a result, develop positive attitudes to learning and a desire to succeed. Learning objectives are set for all lessons, these are shared with the pupils and conducted at the end of each lesson. Targets are realistic but challenging. In physical education, for example, each lesson the pupils achieve very high standards in trampolining, succeeding very well against all schools in recent championships. The high expectation leads to determination and dedication from pupils who, as a result, develop very high levels of skill. Again this approach to teaching is character building and adds to the social and spiritual development of pupils, demonstrating considerable progress from the time the boys enter the school.

22 Planning is a strong feature of the teaching. Teachers are always clear what they expect pupils to learn from the lessons, although they are not always as specific as they could be for individual pupils. Planning in art and design is excellent and leads to very high standards of work. For example, planning for a lesson where pupils were developing printing techniques, was excellent. It was clearly based on the earlier learning of pupils, enabling them to build a new skill and had clear and detailed learning objectives. There was a clear emphasis on skills development and high expectations involving creating and cutting of very detailed stencils, using scalpels. Expectations of good behaviour were very high and pupils were given a great deal of praise and encouragement. As a result excellent learning took place.

23 Although the permanent English teacher for younger pupils was absent during inspection the very detailed planning and the clear expectations and learning environment created, meant that effective learning could continue in her absence.

The school is very highly regarded by the parents.

24 The parents and carers of boys attending the school rightly regard the school very highly. A high percentage of them returned the questionnaire and a high proportion attended the parents meeting. In the meeting and through the questionnaire returns it was clear that parents and carers overwhelmingly feel that the school has made a major contribution to improvements both academically and personally, to their children. Many talked about the great difficulties they had experienced with their children prior to their attendance at Cloughwood School. Most had experienced great difficulties in other schools often culminating in permanent exclusion and many had had periods of no schooling. This was confirmed in the school's records of individual pupils.

25 They feel that the school is very well led and managed and the climate of support coupled with high expectations and demand enable their children to settle very quickly and, as a result, make rapid progress in their work, their attitude to school, and others and their overall behaviour. Evidence from the inspection supports their views. The very wide range of activities offered by the school were also seen by the parents as a major factor leading to the improvements they noted in their children. The climate and the opportunities provided, they felt, enabled their boys to become more mature and responsible for their actions. Again inspection evidence supported this. The boys' attitude to work, their determination to succeed in public examinations and the positive relationships established demonstrate very good progress.

26 Parents and carers are also correct in valuing the high quality of teaching which is significant in the improvement made by boys and the success they experience. They feel very well informed and are considered partied in the education of their children.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Measuring and recording the progress made by pupils for use in planning future lessons could be improved

27 Although in most subjects good end of year and end of topic assessment data is effectively used to inform annual reviews and progress reports to parents, the small gains in learning made by pupils in lessons is not always accurately recorded and used to inform short term planning. As a result records do not always consistently demonstrate levels of learning requiring consolidation and lesson plans do not consistently match the specific knowledge, skills and understanding of individual pupils. They do however identify learning objectives for the group well. Fine tuning using more specific individual assessments could lead to even greater progress and opportunities for pupils to be more involved in monitoring and developing their own progress.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

28 In order to improve further the head teacher, staff and governors should: -

- (1) Improve the monitoring and recording of the small gains pupils make so that they can be used more effectively in setting individual objectives for lessons
(Paragraph 27)

The head teacher is aware of the need for this development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	18	10	2	0	0	0
Percentage	12	53	29	6	0	0	0

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	66
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	0	12

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	1	12	12
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	1	12	12
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	8%	100%	100%
	National	N/A	N/A	N/A

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	34
	National	35

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	12	100
	National	N/A	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	66
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.8:1
Average class size	6.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y3 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	495

(To be confirmed by Head)

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	1178735
Total expenditure	1158449
Expenditure per pupil	17552
Balance brought forward from previous year	33175
Balance carried forward to next year	53461

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	20	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	29	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	30	9	0	2
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	82	14	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	96	4	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	94	6	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	94	6	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	16	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	96	4	0	0	0