



Capenhurst Grange School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111517
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278711
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Bob Thompson CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Chester Road
School category	Community special		Great Sutton
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 2NA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 339 5141
Number on roll	56	Fax number	0151 348 0348
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Edwards
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Graham Stothard

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	Inspection number 278711
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school provides day and residential education. The current headteacher was appointed in February 2005 after acting as headteacher for 14 months. Of the 56 pupils on roll, 49 are boys and 7 are girls. There are 12 boys and 2 girls who board weekly. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high, 83.9%. All pupils are white British. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. One pupil is in public care. Because of their learning difficulties, pupils' standards on entry are below that expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need. The school has been awarded Investors in People, the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and the Inclusive Quality Mark from Cheshire County Council. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2000, and by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) February 2005. Provision for learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the authority is at present under review.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school is good and offers good value for money. It provides pupils with opportunities to succeed, which most accept readily. The headteacher and governing body were overly modest in judging the school to be satisfactory, because they know there is some room for improvement. Boarding experiences, links with mainstream schools and a wealth of out of school activities enhance the education of the pupils. The school is rightly proud that, after difficulties in previous schools and not so happy experiences, pupils learn to participate fully in activities offered. Because of this, pupils' self-esteem and confidence are boosted. Success is constantly celebrated and pupils' achievement and personal and social development are good as a result of high quality teaching.

The school has implemented innovative ways of ensuring pupils stay in school when expulsion looks imminent. This is achieved through the 'Take 5 Centre', an alternative curriculum in Years 10 and 11, and college and motivational placements. Rigorous self-evaluation has secured real improvement since the last inspection. Parents and carers are asked for their views about the effectiveness of the school and how things can be improved. The school takes notice of their responses. Parents are delighted with what the school offers and see positive changes in their children. All of this is possible because of good leadership, management and governance.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The last inspection report by the CSCI in February 2005 shows good improvement from the previous report. It recognises that almost all of the National Minimum Standards are satisfactorily met. Since then, the school has given good attention to implementing each of the recommendations.

The good procedures for handover at the beginning and end of the day are effective in alerting staff to any difficulties or successes that may affect pupils' attitudes, either to their work in the school or to the way they behave in the residence. Well established routines and the good relationships with care staff ensure that pupils are well cared for, are happy and that the residential provision makes a good contribution to the work of the school.

The boarding curriculum is well planned. Pupils take a full part in a wide range of activities that are aimed primarily at developing their personal and social skills and their enjoyment of learning. Older pupils mix freely with younger ones. They are encouraged to participate in a good range of activities within and outside the school such as archery, information and communication technology (ICT), art, cookery, and visits to the cinema and theatre. There are also literacy and numeracy classes, which are very popular as examinations near.

What the school should do to improve further

- For those pupils who are ready, build on opportunities to increase their independent learning in all lessons.
- Continue to improve attendance across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Meaningful data provided by the school point to pupils making good progress from a low base on entry and the inspection team agree. Overall, pupils' starting points are generally well below national expectations. For many, attainment has been affected by detrimental and erratic school attendance and disrupted learning at previous schools. It is recognised by the local authority, through an audit, that the school caters for some of the most challenging pupils in terms of emotional and behavioural difficulties in the authority. However, once settled, pupils do well. Pupils achieve well academically, in recognised external accreditation such as general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as personal and social development, including emotional and behavioural development. Pupils' achievement in relation to individual targets in their work and behaviour shows very good response to the challenges set for them. National data show that when looking at the value added to pupils' progress, from Year 7 to Year 11, the school is in the top 40% of the country when compared to national secondary schools. The very small number of girls, pupils looked after by the local authority, and those with additional learning difficulties or more extreme behaviour difficulties do equally well. The school checks on this rigorously as part of its self-evaluation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The inspection team agrees with the school that pupils' development and well-being are good. The large number of high quality staff ensure pupils interact with each other socially and thrive in a safe and healthy environment. Most pupils take advantage of the 'extended day' activities offered by the school. College placements and work experience, along with success in developing basic skills, teamwork skills and self-confidence, prepare pupils well for the next step in their journey through life.

Attendance is satisfactory and improving. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and parents' support. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school and they work hard. They feel safe in school and trust adults. Instances of poor behaviour happen from time to time, but the school deals with most of these effectively without resorting to exclusion. Because of this and the positive relationships between staff and pupils, the trend of exclusions is lessening.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff are good role models and celebrate pupils' academic achievements and improvements in their behaviour consistently through the day. Pupils from local primary schools regularly

use facilities in the school which they do not have access to in their own schools. The school council meets regularly and helps to shape the work of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. The school was unduly cautious in its assertion that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good teaching is characterised by the enthusiasm which the teachers have, the detailed knowledge of their pupils and the care they take over each child. Staff challenge and extend pupils' learning without causing pupils stress and adverse reaction. Classroom assistants are used well and lessons are well planned in detail to meet the learning needs and capabilities of each pupil. Some teaching assistants are attached one to one with some of the most challenging pupils. They have very good relationships and pre-empt difficult situations well.

In a Year 10 art lesson, the atmosphere was electric as pupils worked independently on their GCSE projects. Their achievement was outstanding from a very low base, as they complemented and extended their work through computer-aided design work. All this was due to exemplary teaching. Some lessons are a little too staff dominated and controlled. For example, in a Year 11 English class where a pupil needed to access his work on a computer, instead of supporting him, the teacher did it for him.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The range of subjects offered is good and meets statutory requirements. This is enhanced by pupils being offered further activities after the normal school day, and a good range of extra-curricular activities. There is a good uptake of these extra activities by both day pupils and those who board, which enhances pupils' development. The development of pupils' personal and social skills and the importance of living safe and healthy lives are emphasised in all aspects of the school's work. The management ensure this is a school where every child matters. The school offers residential trips both in this country and abroad.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all pupils who in turn trust staff and know who to approach if they need help. There is very good support for them when they are upset or troubled. The innovative Take 5 centre is very effective in pre-empting the need to exclude pupils. Pupils appreciate this facility and say so. Monitoring of pupils' progress and behaviour is a good feature of the school's work. Pupils' behaviour is tracked closely so that staff can spot where there is potential trouble and intervene quickly. Pupils say instances of bullying and racism are dealt with effectively. Staff

are sympathetic to the needs of all pupils regardless of ability or gender. Pupils with additional learning difficulties and those with more extreme behaviour difficulties receive very well targeted support. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and well known by staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully consolidated his role since becoming permanent headteacher. His strong commitment to promoting the personal development of all pupils has resulted in a school ethos that is positive and inclusive. The headteacher's vision and determination to improve the school, and the support from key staff and governors, have resulted in good provision for the pupils.

Governors and managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have a good development plan that builds on strengths while tackling the weaknesses. As a result of this knowledge, the school is accurate in its self-evaluation, the whole staff and governors being involved in the process.

The school is effective in seeking, and acting upon, the views of pupils and parents. Parents are particularly supportive of the school. This is borne out by the very positive questionnaires returned to the school. There are good procedures to check the work of the school such as measuring pupils' progress both academically and in personal and social development, particularly their emotional and behavioural development.

Governance is good. Governors comply fully with statutory requirements and give very good support to the school. Through their reflective discussions about all aspects of the school's work, they provide a very good balance of challenge and support, and are quick to act as critical friends when required. The school has improved well since its last inspection, particularly in ICT where equipment, relevant staff training and pupils' progress have developed well. Consequently, the school is in a good position to make further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we recently visited you to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning.

Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to us. It was useful to know what you think about your school. Mr Thompson enjoyed having lunch with you, meeting your school council, and listening to some good advice you gave him on healthy eating - 'eat more fruit' and 'cut out chips'.

There are some things that we think are really good about your school. These are:

- the enthusiasm from you and your teachers in wanting to do well
- the good progress you make in your work
- how well your headteacher and teachers know you so that they can plan exciting activities and lessons that will challenge you to improve even more
- those of you who need a little extra help in your work and behaviour have someone to turn to
- your parents are very happy with the school and all it does for you
- your behaviour is generally good and you are learning to be safe and have healthy lifestyles.

We have asked your teachers to help you work more things out for yourselves and encourage you to come to school more often.