



Cicely Houghton School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124499
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 293012
Inspection date 27 September 2006
Reporting inspector Steven Parker

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Westwood Manor
School category	Community		Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks
Age range of pupils	5-11		Stoke-on-Trent ST9 0BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 550202
Number on roll (school)	41	Fax number	01782 550202
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Geoff Dowling
		Headteacher	Nigel Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Cicely Haughton School provides day and residential education for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, some of whom have additional difficulties such as autistic spectrum disorders. About half the pupils access residential and extended day provision in a typical week. Learners join the school at any time from Years 1 to 6 and there is a consistent pattern of total numbers increasing throughout the academic year. Many are transported into its village location from across the county of Staffordshire. There are currently only two girls on the roll since it changed its status to coeducational last year. A large and increasing proportion of pupils have socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Very few come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cicely Haughton is a good and continually improving school, where excellent care, guidance and support ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. Many parents wrote very supportive notes, and typical of the praise offered was 'this is a school where going the extra mile is the norm'. The highly experienced headteacher, working in partnership with his very able senior colleagues, has provided visionary leadership for the whole staff team. Together, they have developed wide-ranging provision that enables all pupils to feel safe and secure, so that they learn successfully. Staff are ambitious for their pupils, providing good quality teaching and extremely well focused pastoral support. As a result, all pupils enjoy their studies, often for the first time in their school career, and make good progress across all areas of learning. Standards are below average, although some leave the school attaining national expectations for their age and return successfully to mainstream schools. The nurture group focuses on the needs of younger pupils who require a very particular approach to overcome the complex difficulties that make the early stages of their learning problematic. It is impressively successful in enabling them to become more settled and able to integrate into the wider life of the school.

Behaviour is excellent and pupils relate very well to their peers and all the adults they meet and work with. They develop very positive attitudes to school and participate enthusiastically in the extremely relevant and engaging curriculum activities on offer. Unusually for a primary school, these include a wide range of sports, outdoor and environmental education, often using the attractive and extensive grounds of the school. Residential staff play an important part in extending the breadth and scope of these opportunities, providing a seamless and very productive 24 hour experience for pupils. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly appreciative of everything that the school does for them and their children. The development of a Family Links Service, now housed in a recently refurbished cottage on the lane into the school, is a clear manifestation of the school's commitment to working in productive partnership with families. The service also facilitates very effective collaboration with other agencies and professionals. One parent clearly represented the many who described the empathetic and practical support that had often transformed their families' fortunes when she said 'thank heaven for Cicely Haughton.'

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, most particularly in the curriculum, specialist resources and engagement with children's services. The school has a clear picture of its strengths, but does not always use information it gathers to best effect, particularly in planning for improvement. It was overly cautious in evaluating the quality of some aspects of its work, and the inspector was pleased to be able to upgrade some of these judgements.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 1

The residential element of the school makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' education by providing very high quality boarding provision for pupils up to four nights a week. It also offers excellent extended day opportunities for a smaller number of pupils. Regular Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) reports have been highly complimentary of the care and support provided, recognising that all the requirements of the regulations are fully met and, consequently, awarding the school 'green light' status. Residence is fully integrated into the life of the school, helping pupils to gain full benefit from their time there.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more structured approach to analysing the existing wealth of data available so that it informs planning more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are below average, although pupils make good progress and achieve well when considering the often very negative prior experiences that most of them have had in other schools. A significant minority make very good progress, so that they can return successfully to mainstream education. Most settle quickly at Cicely Haughton and become successful learners, making impressive gains in their communication and social skills. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy and learn to use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively across all subjects. The school sets demanding but realistic targets. Pupils rise to the challenge and rarely disappoint. Girls and boys, pupils with additional needs and pupils in the care of local authorities all achieve equally well. One parent celebrated the fact that 'staff strive to enable all the children to reach their full potential'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils say that they feel safe, enjoy coming to school and speak very highly of the wide range of activities provided for them. Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour, and recognise how important that is for successful learning. As a result, they become confident and exceptionally well behaved in class, around the school and out in the wider community. Their relationships with each other and with staff are mutually respectful and they are justifiably proud when talking about their school and work. Pupils' attendance is very good. The school encourages them to think of the needs of others and, consequently, they are protective of the school environment, the quality of which they clearly appreciate. They make a very positive contribution to the life of the school, for example through serving on the school council, where elected

members take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils eat very healthily as a result of the good quality food, imaginatively planned and cooked on site, and participate fully in many physical activities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the impact of an outstanding curriculum and high quality enrichment activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, helping pupils to learn successfully. Very strong teamwork between teachers and their exceptionally talented teaching assistants makes an important contribution to the settled atmosphere in classes, which encourages good behaviour and supports effective learning. It is also an important factor in making some lessons outstanding. Well chosen and presented materials, as well as very good use of computers and interactive whiteboards, motivate pupils and bring subjects alive. In the majority of lessons, good quality planning takes full account of the range of learning needs in the class so that all are engaged and challenged. Occasionally, however, all pupils are given the same task, resulting in some pupils finding the work too easy and others struggling with what they have to do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum that is highly relevant and caters for the full range of pupils' needs and capabilities. It rightly prioritises basic skills as a foundation for all other learning. It does, however, have an imaginative structure that weaves in the full range of National Curriculum subjects and provides experiences that feed pupils' curiosity and extend their interests and capabilities. As one pupil perceptively observed, 'I'm learning stuff that I will always be able to use'. Clearly, those pupils who benefit from the enhanced opportunities of residence and the extended day provision are fortunate, but the school ensures that impressive enrichment activities, utilising the grounds and the wider community, are available to all. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on personal and social development, health education and awareness of personal responsibility as citizens of a community and the wider world. Individual education, behaviour and care plans are used well to personalise the curriculum, although the school does not yet track the full experience for each pupil.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides exemplary support for pupils' personal development and highly focused guidance to encourage their academic progress, placing the individual at the heart of its thinking. Pupils' safety, protection and welfare are considered paramount, and highly effective arrangements are in place with a range of agencies in relation to

pupils' overall development and pastoral care. More vulnerable pupils and their families benefit from excellent, well focused intervention and support. In this respect, the Family Links Service has been an imaginative and highly effective development. Parents are particularly praising of this aspect of the school's work and many offered examples of the positive outcomes that had accrued. An outstanding feature of care and guidance is the school's nurturing support for younger pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's outstanding leadership, through the example of his highly child-centred approach, has inspired all his colleagues right across all aspects of the school's work, to give of their best. He is ably supported by a very effective team of senior managers who provide focused leadership in their well defined areas of responsibility. Recent changes in the middle management structure of the school are not fully embedded, and these managers are not yet making an effective contribution to monitoring and evaluation. Each staff member is, however, already clear about the expectations that are placed on them. A sensitive and thoughtful approach to recruitment, induction, training and development of individuals' potential has resulted in the creation of a staff group that works together as a very effective team. Governors are highly supportive and make sure that they are extremely knowledgeable about and fully understand what the school does, so that they can provide appropriately strong challenge. They are aided in this process by the school's rigorous approach to gathering information from pupils, parents and other agencies. This helps to form a clear picture about the school's effectiveness, but the school does not always make the best use of this data in its analysis and application of the outcomes. In spite of this, the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Cicely Haughton School, Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. ST9 0BX

As you know, I visited your school recently to find out how well you are getting on. Thank you for making me feel so welcome, showing me your work, which really impressed me, and talking to me so confidently. I was particularly helped by listening to your views on how well the school helps you to learn, and about how you appreciate the support you get from staff. Special thanks must go to the members of the School Council, who spoke for all of you in telling me how good they think your school is. I too thought that your school was very special and there were many things that I liked:

- Yours is a good school where the excellent support you receive helps you to make outstanding progress in how you develop as young people.
- Your school is a very happy place which helps you to feel better about yourself and more positive about learning.
- You really enjoy coming to school and this helps you to make good progress.
- Your teachers and support staff make a great team and ensure your lessons are interesting, so that you are helped to do your best.
- Those of you who stay in residence or take part in the extended day activities benefit enormously from the excellent care and guidance you receive.
- The school helps your families to help you, and your mums, dads and carers really appreciate this.
- Your headteacher and all the staff do their very best to make sure your time in school is the best you can have.
- Your school knows what it is good at and where it needs to improve.

I have asked your school to find better ways to plan for improvements.