

# Cloughwood School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111502
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	318519
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Padgett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	52
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs P Booher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Adrian Larkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Stones Manor Lane Hartford Northwich Cheshire CW8 1NU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 76671
<b>Fax number</b>	01606 783486

---

<b>Age group</b>	8-18
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 February 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	318519

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

When Cloughwood School was last inspected in December 2006 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils and students an acceptable standard of education. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress. The re-inspection was carried out by this inspector and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Cloughwood School provides for boys with a broad range of significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although registered for pupils and students between the ages of eight and eighteen, at the time of the inspection the age-range was from nine (Year 5) to sixteen (Year 11). Nearly all the boys live at a distance from the school and arrive and leave by taxi. The school has on-site residential accommodation for students. Currently nine board full- or part-time, during the week.

All the boys have statements of special educational need, some have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. They come from a diverse range of social backgrounds. Overall, most boys come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Almost all the pupils and students are of White British heritage.

The effectiveness of the boarding accommodation was inspected along with the school. It was also inspected by Ofsted's Children's Division under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assure those concerned about the quality and standard of the service provided. The most recent report can be found published separately on the Ofsted website.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Since January 2007, under a new headteacher, the school has made sustained good progress. According to those closely connected with the school, it is unrecognisable from what it was like when it was placed in special measures. It is now a calm, purposeful place in which pupils and students achieve well educationally and personally and where teachers teach effectively.

The impact of the outstanding leadership provided by the new headteacher lies behind all aspects of the school's improvement. He has provided strong direction for all staff and empowered them, particularly the senior staff and the teaching assistants. Teachers who previously did not enjoy their work now again find pleasure and personal fulfilment in teaching. They teach well, alongside invigorated support staff. The quality of the staff's relationship with pupils and students is first class. The commitment of the staff to its pupils and students could hardly be bettered.

The boys respond well to the improved quality of leadership and of teaching. All of them have significant behavioural and emotional special needs and, at any one time, one or more in a class may find it hard to cope. But teachers are excellent managers of behaviour and have well-understood staged procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Consequently, a crisis for one student is speedily resolved and does not become a crisis for the whole class and interrupt learning. Attendance has improved significantly. There have been no exclusions. Standards remain below average but more students are gaining passes at GCSE and all students are moving on to further education, employment and training. The school's assessments of students' progress shows that with higher expectations and much calmer classrooms, standards are rising: in Years 9 and 10, for example, a significant number of students are on track to reach good grades in their GCSE examinations. Students are beginning to believe they can compete with those in other schools on equal terms. Raising standards further is the next challenge for the school and for the boys.

Alongside the improvement in education there have been significant improvements in care. Always a stronger feature of the provision at the school, care and welfare of the boys is now outstanding. Each student has an individual social plan as well as an individual education plan, and personal development needs and progress of students are reviewed as frequently as their educational progress. There are very strong procedures to ensure pupils and students are safe at school and there are very good links with related professionals, coordinated highly effectively by senior staff and the school's Support Services team.

The school has good leadership and management and staff morale is high. The local authority provides good support. The school is well placed to improve further.

## Effectiveness of boarding provision

### Grade: 2

Boarding provision is well managed by the head of care and the headteacher. There is good liaison between staff in the main school and staff in the residential units. The small number of boys who board during the week are happy there. They enjoy the range of activities provided for them, their contact with the other boys, the privacy of their rooms and the quality of the accommodation. They trust the staff and feel safe and well cared for. The recent inspection by

an inspector from Ofsted's Children's Division left the school with a small number of issues to resolve but the overall judgement was that provision was good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards by further improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Young people enter the school at different stages of their education. They have a wide range of abilities and aptitudes but their common experience before coming to Cloughwood is often one of failure at their previous school(s) because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their levels of achievement on entry are low.

Pupils in the Key Stage 2 class (Years 5 and 6) and students in Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve well. Generally, standards are below average. However, in 2007, far more students than of late left school with qualifications in Year 11. Standards are rising. From 2008, the school's records of students' progress suggest that the more able are on track to reach their potential and achieve good grades in the GCSE examinations. Also, as the school responds better to individual needs, students who are more inclined to pursue vocational courses are achieving skill-based accreditations through varied pathways.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

There has been a significant improvement in the boys' personal development and well-being over the past year. Pupils and students now enjoy school and have high regard for the staff. This can be seen in lessons, for example, and in the levels of attendance which are 20% higher than a year ago. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: the boys are developing a strong sense of moral and social responsibility that was distinctly absent only a year ago, including a concern for the wider community. Absolute levels of behaviour are not as good as the inspection grade suggests. The boys are challenging at times but, allowing for the nature of their difficulties, they are making good progress in managing their behaviour - this is one of the reasons why the school feels calm and purposeful.

Good progress is being made towards the boys achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes prescribed by the government for all youngsters. They feel safe at school and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. They are well prepared to move to further education and training, or to work, where several settle very quickly. The school has an active school council with members elected from each year group. They debate ideas for the improvement of the school, such as in school dinners, and hold a strong belief that their views will be given a fair hearing by the headteacher.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. There are clear strengths in the quality of the relationships between teachers and students, with humour and repartee from both sides during the course of most lessons. Teachers are skilled managers of the boys' behaviour. They remain calm in the

face of challenging behaviour, apply agreed sanctions and work positively with the boys to get them back into a frame of mind to learn. They promote an open and honest approach to evaluating students' progress in managing their behaviour. Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants and support staff, particularly those teaching assistants who help them teach their subjects, who are closely involved in teaching and learning. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared with the students.

Despite these significant strengths, not all lessons result in good progress for the students. Sometimes, this is because the students do not have the right attitude to learning, but in others, it is because the work is not sufficiently practical or interesting: for example, by not making full use of the interactive whiteboards. At times, work is not pitched appropriately for all the boys, because although there are few boys in each class, abilities vary widely.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has improved significantly. It now meets all statutory requirements, including providing religious education and citizenship. All National Curriculum subjects are taught and the school provides a rich curriculum to build the boys' life skills to promote their future independence. There are good arrangements to support vocational courses and boys receive good careers advice, with excellent links to a Connexions personal adviser.

There is a strengthening programme of extra-curricular activities, available to all the boys, and a regular programme of residential visits out of school which are eagerly anticipated and fully enjoyed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school meets all the requirements to ensure the pupils and students are safe and cared for properly. Clear policies, procedures and frequent reviews for safeguarding, child protection, health and safety (including for medication), and the assessment of risk are firmly in place and overseen by senior staff. The Students Services team has developed into a highly effective service to provide for youngsters' social and emotional needs. Apart from regular monitoring and assessment, they intercede whenever issues arise and often anticipate problems: for example, by being around at the start of the day when the boys arrive at school. Liaison with other related care professionals is very good: the boys are often seen by them at the school. Teachers and teaching assistants know the boys very well. They have outstandingly good relationships with them and part of this is expressed in the care, patience and support they provide for them in lessons.

The academic guidance for the pupils and students is good, now that guidance is backed up by a rigorous system to track and monitor the progress of each individual student.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school. He has a clear vision for the school's direction and has managed the changes required exceptionally well. The senior staff, in particular, have been empowered. Each member of the senior team now carries significant

responsibility for an aspect of improvement and is held to account by the headteacher. Senior staff are gaining in confidence, leading by example. There has been effective action on a number of fronts. The arrangements for the care of the boys' social and emotional needs have been completely overhauled and are now given appropriate weight in this school where all the students have experienced severe difficulties and traumas. Senior staff and the rejuvenated Student Services department lead the way. The headteacher has also empowered teachers, supporting them in applying clear and consistent rules for behaviour management so that they can teach effectively. With the encouragement of the leadership, teachers and teaching assistants now use their experience and expertise to raise the quality of teaching and learning through professional development and sharing ideas. Communication between all staff is much improved: there is a strong sense of teamwork in the school, of a unified staff that is increasingly confident and positive. Although the focus of the improvement over the past year has naturally been on taking action to remove the root causes of special measures, the headteacher and staff have been building capacity to move ahead as an independent, self-evaluating, self-improving school. For example, staff are currently undertaking training to provide more effectively for boys who are gifted or talented. The school is well-supported in its plans by the local authority.

Although progress has been rapid, much remains to be done to consolidate gains before the full impact of improved leadership and management are realised. The governing body, for example, is more active in certain aspects but it does not, as yet, play a full role. Partnerships are strong, but the school has some way to go, for example, in engaging parents as full partners in the work of the school, although a beginning has been made.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	3
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**

You may remember when Mr Adrian Simm and I came to Cloughwood recently to inspect the school. We came to see how far it had improved since it was placed in special measures. Thank you to the members of the council for talking to me. Thank you for your direct and honest answers to my questions.

You told me that Cloughwood was a much better place with Mr Larkin as the headteacher. You told me how much calmer the school was and how teachers can now get on with teaching and you can get on with learning. We saw all of that and we agree with your views. We decided your school no longer requires special measures. More than that, it is a good school.

We know that from time to time, most of the students go through bad patches where they cannot cope. We understand that: you would not be at Cloughwood if you did not have such difficulties. However, most boys behave well in lessons and about school. You are helped enormously by having some of the most dedicated teachers and staff you could possibly have. The care and support they provide you with is of top quality. We saw how well students get on with their teachers. It is rare to see such strong relationships in a school. We saw a lot of staff and students enjoying lessons.

We could see from your work, records and lessons that students achieve well. We believe that your standards are getting higher. However, they are still not high enough for you to compete on an equal footing with students from other schools. This is the big challenge that awaits you and your teachers, to get your standards to at least the same level as students of your age. Your teachers already teach well. We have suggested some ways they could teach even better, but it will be down to very good teamwork between you and them if you are to succeed.

For your part, as school councillors, would you please make sure that all the boys know what our judgement is by reading them this letter? Some of you may wish to read the full report.