

# Capenhurst Grange School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111517
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325396
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Saleem Hussain

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

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<b>Boarding provision</b>	
<b>Social care URN</b>	
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Karen Forster

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Foster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Myers-Whittaker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Chester Road Great Sutton Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH66 2NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 338 2141
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 348 0348

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector and one Social Care Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school caters for students with extreme behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Around a third of students also have other learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including attention deficit. The complexity of students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased significantly since the last inspection. All students have experienced major difficulties in mainstream schools and other educational settings and most have been excluded. Most students come from areas of social and economic disadvantage. The great majority are eligible for free school meals. All the students are of White British heritage. The school has residential provision for up to 18 students during term time including daytime at weekends. Currently, 12 students are residing for one to three nights a week. The school has Basic Skills Quality Mark, Every Child Matters Quality Mark, several awards for nurturing personal development, Sportsmark, Artsmark Gold, the National Healthy Schools Award, an Inclusion Quality Mark, Investors in People status and an award for good management processes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which is improving rapidly. It provides good value for money. Though attainment on entry to the school is low, achievement is good, given the severity of students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum is outstanding because it is very rich in opportunities which meet everyone's needs and interests especially well. For instance, chances to develop work-related skills and also to gain accreditations are plentiful. Most students gain a good number of external awards and national accreditation for subjects during their time at this school.

Strong care, guidance and support ensure that students make up for the lost ground that has resulted from their previous disengagement in education. The school has taken some very positive and largely effective steps to raise self-esteem through praise and reward for effort and good behaviour. Achievement is good across the school because the quality of teaching is consistently strong. Teachers establish very good relationships with students, quickly gaining their trust and confidence and so they settle into learning routines well. Stimulating presentation of work in lessons captures students' interest well and so the majority enjoy working hard. Although a few parents express concerns about behaviour management, inspectors judge that this is effective in securing the good behaviour of most students in the school.

The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure students' welfare and there are very strong links with other schools and colleges. Many students attend colleges regularly to undertake vocational training courses including construction skills, car mechanics, catering and sports-related courses. Along with their good achievements in literacy and numeracy, these factors contribute to students' good preparation for the future.

Personal development is good. Representative comments from students include, 'I have matured since I have been here not just because of my parents, but also the school's work in helping me to understand that I can do things well when I put my mind to it.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Students have a strong sense of right and wrong and their social development is also good. Most students behave well in response to the good support they receive, but there remains a small minority who find it difficult to stay on task and they sometimes disrupt learning. Attendance is satisfactory. Students enjoy school life. A majority have made good improvements in attendance when compared with that at their previous schools. However, there is small minority who do not respond to the school's efforts to improve their attendance. Students develop positive attitudes towards healthy living. For example, they show a strong understanding of the risks attached to smoking and drug abuse. They also have a good understanding of how to stay safe, for example, Year 9 students used equipment safely during a science lesson about chemical reactions. Students' contribution to the community is good. The Students' Voice (the school council) has made several positive suggestions leading to school improvement, for example, regarding healthy eating options in school.

Leadership and management are good. The impact is seen in the good academic and personal development of students and in their sense of security and well-being. The acting headteacher is highly respected and is doing a first-class job in maintaining the strengths of the school, pending the appointment of a new headteacher. Governors make a positive contribution to school development. They have dealt with staff matters well and have played a very strong role in professional development. The school's senior leadership team is experienced and effective.

Improvements in several key areas, most notably in the curriculum and students' personal development, demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of boarding provision**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of boarding at Capenhurst Grange is good and the school meets all key National Minimum Standards. The school's leadership team provides for the effective protection and promotion of students' welfare. Clearly written policies and procedures underpin the school's practice and there is good information provided for boarders and their parents. The quality of residential care is monitored by a representative from the governing body. Although the students and care staff are familiar with the representative and recollect their shared meetings, the frequency of reported visits from governors is minimal.

All of the recommendations made at the last inspection of the boarding provision in school have been suitably addressed. There have been developments in the care team's arrangements for medication storage and administration. Students are now involved in their care plan development and reflect on episodes of challenging behaviour. Care plans are up to date and regularly monitored by key and senior care staff. This means that students feel more involved in their care and their care plans are written in a very student-friendly way. First aid and medication training for staff is now a regular element of the care staff training calendar. Care staff receive regular opportunities to share practice issues and developmental needs with senior staff, which helps them to feel well supported in their care of the students.

Boarders feel that care staff look after them well and would know what to do if students reported evidence of bullying or abuse. The whole-school child protection policy is comprehensive and reviewed annually. This means that staff across school have access to current safeguarding policy and have a regular opportunity to refresh their understanding of child protection. The head of care, as the designated senior person in school for child protection, maintains good recording, reporting and training systems in line with national guidance.

Levels of staffing during the evening and early morning in the three residential units are appropriate for the numbers of resident students. Rotas allow for care staff to meet the needs of the boarders well and to complete administrative duties. There are two sleep-in staff across the three residential units at night. The school has additional nocturnal surveillance systems with bedroom door alarms, and there is no evidence of disturbances in the third unit. Although the school can demonstrate that this staffing level is suitably risk managed, there is insufficient written evidence of a review programme for the nocturnal staffing levels.

The level of care staff qualifications in the school is good, as all of the team have National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in the care of children and young people. This means that students benefit from the expertise of well qualified care staff. However, the induction programme for care staff focuses on school policies rather than on the competencies and needs of the individual staff member.

The accommodation provided in the residential units is of a good standard, where all resident students stay in single bedrooms. The bathing facilities provide appropriate levels of privacy and are easily accessible from the bedrooms. The communal elements of the residential areas are very domestic in style and comfortable for students' use. The fire safety arrangements in school are suitable to keep occupants safe and students confirm that fire drills are completed during evening hours.

The school's residential provision is taken up by students on a part-time basis, so that they may stay in the house for one or two nights a week. This promotes close family contact as students return home after short stays in school. However, while they are in school there are good facilities for boarders to contact their families. The care staff team completes termly home visits to boarders' families, which maintains a positive dialogue with parents and complements the parents' support programme provided in school.

Resident students are given responsibility for their belongings and living areas and the opportunity to develop self-help skills. Students develop a sense of ownership for their residential area and are highly complimentary about their residential experience. A good number of the school population express an interest in staying in school and joining the leisure trips at weekends. The school provides a very well respected and attended extended school programme, affording a wealth of after-school activities which match the interests of the students. The programme makes good use of the on-site facilities including the sports hall, computer suite and school grounds. There are regular opportunities for boarders to undertake physical activities, and there is a very well organised programme of off-site activities and trips at weekends.

Key care staff work hard to plan and implement good programmes of residential care for resident students. The care is provided in line with written care targets and behaviour management plans; this means that students receive good quality care that matches their strengths and needs. However, the care plans for those students aged over 14 years do not include sufficient information regarding the support required as they move towards leaving school. In addition, although the written care plans refer briefly to the faith needs of resident students, they contain little reference to their cultural and racial needs. Resident students respond well to the warm and friendly approach adopted by care staff in the house. Members of the team are consistent and provide clear boundaries for students, which is respected by the resident group.

There are good systems in school for identifying and addressing the routine and more complex health needs of resident students. The school maintains a positive working relationship with its health adviser and students are included within standard screening programmes. Well qualified first aid staff are always available in the residential units, and there are clear, well followed procedures for the management and administration of medication.

Resident students enjoy well prepared and presented food, with a choice of menus. Boarders can access fresh fruit and drinking water in the house and healthy snacks are prepared by students for their consumption.

The following National Minimum Standards (NMS) must be met.

- Ensure that quality monitoring visits provided by the governing body are completed every half term and reports provided following each visit (NMS 33).
- Monitor the nocturnal supervision arrangements in Cedar unit in respect to the provision of sleep-in staff (NMS 28).
- Develop a competence-based induction programme for care staff, such as the induction units provided by the Children's Workforce Development Council (NMS 29).
- Provide transitional information within care plans for students aged 14 and over, consistent with the educational transition plan developed by the headteacher and the Connexions service (NMS 21).
- Include more details regarding students' cultural, religious, language and racial needs in each individual's care plan document (NMS 17).

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attendance of a minority of students.
- Improve the behaviour of a minority of students in lessons.
- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards currently not met, as detailed in the boarding section of the report.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All students, including boarders, make equally strong progress. Though standards are low because of students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achievement is good. Most students achieve well in literacy and in developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Every opportunity is taken to promote interest in books and this has led to good progress in reading. Achievement in mathematics and science is generally good and sometimes better because of the school's very strong emphasis on promoting learning through practical experiences. A good number of students of all ages gain accreditation in a wide range of skills including ICT, sports and outdoor pursuits. Provisional data indicate that most students leaving the school in 2008 were successful in gaining several GCSE entry level passes. The range of subjects passed at this level is better than at the time of the last inspection. Also, a significant number of students now gain A\* to G grades at GCSE, most notably in science, English, mathematics and art.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Students develop a high level of self-awareness. Their self-esteem improves markedly as they realise that they can do well if they put the work in. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are usually good. However, a small number of students find it hard to concentrate and sometimes try to disrupt lessons. Boarders and other students say that any bullying is taken seriously and dealt with effectively. Students quickly develop strong values about respect, justice and fair play. They enjoy many chances to discuss issues such as poverty, discrimination and human rights in lessons. Social development is strong, most notably through the paired reading and peer mentoring schemes where students really excel in helping others. Students' awareness of their own cultural heritage and the multicultural nature of society are satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Students make good progress and show good attitudes to their work because teaching is consistently good. Characteristics of the teaching are good presentation of work, good teamwork between adults in supporting learning and effective use of resources. Lessons move along quickly so that students are challenged and get through a lot of work. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well. A good example of teaching and learning was seen in a Year 9 literacy lesson. All students revelled in the opportunities to pursue their particular interests in Shakespeare's work. They learned well because they were given freedom to use their own initiative in finding commentaries about Shakespeare and his work in reference books and computers. Assessment is accurate and teachers provide good guidance in workbooks on how

to improve. However, teachers do not always use assessment information to the full in lessons to set learning targets for everyone.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

There is good provision for numeracy, literacy and ICT and this helps students to gain essential and basic skills for the future. Students greatly enjoy going on educational trips and also working with many visitors. For instance, theatre companies, dancers and performers enrich learning. Participation in sporting activities is good and this makes a significant contribution to improving health and fitness. Students learn much about issues such as anger management, drugs education and safety through a very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. The residential curriculum also makes a very strong contribution to personal development. The school provides excellent opportunities to gain accreditation through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the Prince's Trust. Many students attend college courses on a part-time basis, further extending the curriculum. Opportunities to gain work-related experiences are outstanding.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff are highly committed to the care and well-being of students and positively encourage hard work, enjoyment and achievement. Attendance and behaviour are promoted effectively through rewards. Consequently, most students make good improvements in these areas. Procedures to ensure health, safety and to safeguard students are clear and regularly reviewed. The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure students' well-being. For instance, regular meetings take place in school between many agencies to develop collaborative working between Children's Services and other services. Students speak very highly of adults in school including therapists, learning mentors and counsellors. In this supportive environment, students reach challenging targets and achieve well. The school acknowledges that more can be done to improve students' awareness of their future learning targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The strong leadership and management of the school have successfully kept the focus on improving the school further. The acting headteacher is passionate about developing a systematic approach to achieving excellence and this contributes noticeably to the common sense of purpose across the school. Other staff with leadership roles, including within the residential provision, are effective. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders are taking stock of the school's positive work in this area in order to make further improvements. Inclusion is good and lies at the heart of the school's work. Students' performance is monitored well so that any problems are quickly identified and support put in place. The school is currently developing a system of presenting achievement information differently so that senior managers can see patterns and issues more easily in order to raise achievement further. Inspection judgements match the school's insightful self-evaluation very closely. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis with office staff making a very good contribution to this.



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**Annex A**

## 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
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	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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	2
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome at your school and for all your help during the inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and learning about your school. The school and boarding provision are good because you make good progress. Your curriculum is outstanding because there are lots of chances for you to learn in the way you like and gain many accreditations. The school provides strong care, support and guidance. I am pleased to see the strong contribution you all make to the community through becoming members of the Students' Voice or taking up other responsibilities. Personal development is good. Most of you behave well and attend regularly. Teaching and learning in your school are good.

Leadership and management of your school and boarding provision are good. School and care managers are working hard to make sure you carry on doing well. The full report about the school covers all the points in this letter in more detail. In order to improve, the school must make sure that:

- all students improve their attendance
- the behaviour of a few students gets better in lessons
- the school meets the National Minimum Standards currently not met, as detailed in the boarding section of the report.

If you are one of the students whose behaviour or attendance could be better, I am sure you can help the school and yourself by improving. Once again, thank you for the welcome you gave inspectors, it made our visit very enjoyable.