

# Cloughwood Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Helen Walker
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<b>Head/ Principal</b>	
<b>Nominated person</b>	Linda Trump
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	23/09/2010

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Cloughwood Residential School is a purpose-built special school, located within extensive grounds on the Mid Cheshire Campus in Hartford. It is run by Cheshire County Council educational services.

The school provides special education for 62 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties or related needs. The school caters for boys only who are aged between six and 16 years of age. The majority of young people are day students, but there is provision for a total of 17 residential places in four separate living units. Each unit has its own lounge and dining area, kitchenette and single occupancy bedrooms with en-suite facilities for all the young people.

The residential provision is open from Monday to Friday each week during term time.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was a short-notice full inspection carried out by two inspectors. All key standards were inspected alongside the progress made since the last inspection in September 2010.

The headteacher and head of care provide strong, supportive and effective leadership for the residential staff team to enable them to deliver an outstanding service. Pupils are cared for by a consistent, experienced and very caring staff team. Residential care staff significantly promote the well-being of the pupils in a very supportive environment. Strong links exist with a wide range of professionals which provides a holistic care approach to the needs of the pupils. Staff encourage pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle with an emphasis on healthy diet and exercise.

Staff understand the need to protect the pupils from harm with relevant safeguarding procedures and training in place. Pupils feel they are listened to and that their views are valued. They especially enjoy the friendships formed within the residential provision and say they thoroughly enjoy their residential stays. A strong team approach ensures the social and educational needs of the pupils are met.

To further promote pupils' well-being, two recommendations have been made. These relate to the pupils' placement plans and the half-term report by a representative of the governing body. However, these recommendations have no direct impact on the welfare of the pupils.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The headteacher and head of care have made excellent progress to address the recommendations made at the last inspection. These effectively improve the care practices within the residential provision. The school's Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and contains relevant information about the residential provision. A representative from the governing body now makes visits every half-term to the school. Staff have access to current policies and procedures which are kept up-to-date to support them in their work with the pupils. Students' placement plans contain detailed health information and staff ensure students are aware of and involved in the plans.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The school has excellent systems in place to promote the physical, emotional and mental health of students. Effective arrangements for contact with a broad range of health professionals, such as mental health teams, the school nurse and a paediatrician, enables students' needs to be exceptionally well met. The nurse is proactive and committed to provide students with sound advice and guidance on matters such as smoking cessation, sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse. Staff use information from students' comprehensive health plans to enable them to have a holistic overview of their health needs. Students confirm staff include them in all aspects of their health care and keep them well-informed to maintain good health.

Staff deal sensitively with pupils who have specific health needs and seek the support of specialist health professionals as needed. All staff are trained in the delivery of first aid so that young people are cared for safely in the event of injury or illness. Robust facilities and systems within the school ensure medication is stored securely and administered appropriately. The head of care provides very thorough monitoring of the relevant records to ensure their accuracy.

The school has achieved the Healthy School award which acknowledges the school is active in promoting the health and well-being of the school community. Students are provided with nutritious, as well as varied, meals and snacks. Meals outside of the school day are prepared and cooked by staff in the residential setting. This enables students to participate in shopping and cooking activities, develop skills for independence and learn about healthy eating. Students can readily help themselves to fresh fruit and use the fresh water drinking fountains. Students really enjoy their meals and say one of the very best things about residential is the food, one student said 'it's really good.' Mealtimes within the boarding houses are very social, pleasant and well organised occasions.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The school has robust policies and procedures for the handling of complaints, safeguarding children and bullying which ensure students feel listened to and protected. Students say they feel very safe at the school and confident they are well-looked after.

Clear systems within the school help to ensure the students privacy and confidentiality is very well regarded. Students have individual bedrooms with en suite shower rooms which provide them with their own personal space. Staff fully understand their role to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, paperwork relevant to their work with the pupils is securely stored and accessed only by those with the relevant authority to do so.

There is a transparent complaints procedure in the school to ensure any complaint or concern is taken seriously. Students have an abundance of child-friendly information to inform them about how to make a complaint. They feel confident staff listen to them and resolve concerns properly. Bullying is not an issue in the school. Staff are very proactive to have meaningful intervention and involve many different agencies to discuss topical matters, such as racial abuse. The school has a strong anti bullying culture which is totally accepted by the students. Students say there are few incidents of bullying and that staff intervene and deal with things swiftly.

Students are exceptionally well protected from harm. The head of care is the designated safeguarding co-ordinator and works successfully with local networks and professional agencies to help keep students safe. Strong links with safeguarding authorities mean staff have up-to-date advice, training and guidance to help protect students from harm. To enhance safeguarding practice, the head teacher has formed a school safeguarding committee. This has a student member and enables them to have a voice about safeguarding on behalf of other students.

The residential unit is well-maintained and staff understand the need to keep a safe environment. Risk assessments are completed for identified hazards, activities, and to safeguard individual students. They provide an excellent level of evaluation, clearly identifying the measures to be taken to minimise any potential risk of harm. Thorough recruitment checks are carried out on staff to confirm their suitability to work at the school. The headteacher and head of care are extremely aware of good practice in relation to this and have relevant training in the recruitment and employment of staff.

Students enjoy excellent relationships with staff and show a tremendous amount of respect to them. Positive behaviour management strategies help students to have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them, and what is unacceptable. Students feel staff are fair with them and that sanctions are relevant to the misdemeanour. Students are actively encouraged to be respectful to each other and to behave appropriately within the school and in the wider community.

Staff receive training to assist them to manage challenging behaviour. They are skilled to deal with difficult situations and resolve matters with minimal intervention. Staff readily give praise and encouragement to students which mean achievements are recognised and celebrated. Effective arrangements ensure staff are aware of the action to take should a student be missing from the school. In the event of such an incident the staff are clear about their duties to enable the safe return of the student.

The headteacher and head of care have innovative and comprehensive systems to monitor trends relating to students missing from school and the use of physical intervention. This enables staff to identify patterns of behaviour and implement strategies to further protect the student and reduce or eliminate this type of behaviour.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff take an excellent integrated approach to enable students to reach their full potential and benefit from their education at the school. Students receive support from staff who are knowledgeable about their individual education and learning needs. Staff are very enthusiastic and provide continuity and stability between education and care in the school. This helps students to develop their skills and build confidence in their abilities. The headteacher and other teaching staff spend time with the students in the residential setting. In particular, the headteacher has an in-depth understanding of the work of the residential staff and awareness of each student's level of need. This significantly enhances the links between care and education. The students say they enjoy this degree of contact.

Both the teaching and care staff contribute to the after school activities. All staff are enthusiastic in their involvement with the after school club and make this an interesting and totally enjoyable time for the students. The activities are wide ranging and students are actively supported to participate. During the inspection students went on cycle rides, trips to the cinema and to the outdoor swimming pool. The students thoroughly enjoyed these activities. The headteacher shows a strong commitment to involve parents in all aspects of their child's life at the school including their care in the residential setting. Family members are invited to visit and contact the students. This is usually for tea visits or school events, other contact is often maintained by telephone or email.

Within the residential setting students are provided with facilities to support their learning such as computers and internet access, various board and electronic games, films and access to books. The students also have access to school facilities such as the sports hall and outdoor fitness equipment. Students say they 'absolutely love it here, we're never bored and there's loads to do.' Students have staff support to engage them and fully participate in purposeful and enjoyable activities in school and in the local community.

Students receive appropriate and individual support according to their needs and wishes. A consistent and competent team of staff demonstrate they know the student well and show respect for their diverse care needs. There are extremely good support systems in the residential setting. This includes key workers who spend time on a one-to-one basis with students. For more specific support the students are referred for additional services to other agencies, for example, the educational psychologist. Students are clearly at ease in the residential setting and students feel that they are able to talk to all staff.

Good information sharing between education and care staff contributes significantly to each student's educational potential. The teaching and care staff work together to identify means of encouraging each student's personal, social and educational achievement.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

There are many and varied systems in place to encourage students to give their views about their care, education and day-to-day life of the school. The more formal arrangements for students to give their views are through the school council, residents' meetings and educational review meetings. Routine conversations with staff ensure students' views are heard and their opinions taken into account in the operation of the residential setting. Students continue to work with the office of the Children's Rights Director where their views are sought in relation to many aspects of residential care.

Students say they are listened to and their views make a difference to their care. Recent requests for changes are the addition of outdoor gym equipment and games consoles. So that students' bedrooms are more homely and personalised the students are invited to bring their choice of bedding from home and items such as posters, games and photographs. Students consider these things to be important to them and value the opportunities they are given for changes to be made.

Detailed placement planning with relevant parties takes place prior to admission to the school so that each student's diverse needs are effectively assessed. Information is also gathered from their statement of educational needs. This information is incorporated into a placement plan so that staff are aware of each student's educational, social, emotional and health care needs. However, not all plans are available to staff to enable them to provide consistent care in line with the agreed plan.

Students residing at the school usually have accommodation for a maximum of four nights a week. They return to their main carers, parents and families at weekends and during school holidays. This means students continue to have regular contact with people who are important to them. Staff maintain good relationships with the parents and carers of students and welcome visits, email and telephone contact.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Overall the residential accommodation is good and provides students with a comfortable and homely environment. The accommodation is an integral part of the school building which supports the school's holistic approach of the 24-hour curriculum. Staff involve the students in the appearance of the residential facility. They encourage students to personalise their bedrooms and some are very happy to do this. Students say they like their bedroom because it has everything they need. Some students say they really enjoy staying in the residential setting because they get to spend time with their friends.

Health and safety and fire safety are taken very seriously and appropriate checks and risk assessments are carried out so that pupils are cared for in a safe environment. Appropriate precautions are taken with regard to security of the school to prevent access by unauthorised persons.

The school promotes and maintains very positive links in the local and wider community. Pupils participate in fund raising for many charity events and inform and welcome their families and local people to join public events at the school.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a clear Statement of Purpose along with other supporting documents outlining the principles of the school and the admission criteria. This information is available to parents and other interested persons to enable them to consider and make an informed choice about the suitability of the school and residential provision.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership to the staff team and in turn the head of care is effective in her role within the residential provision. The quality assurance systems within the school are many and include systematic monitoring of relevant records by the headteacher and head of care. These systems ensure the welfare of the students is promoted and high standards of care are maintained.

The school's effective management structure ensures good communication and collaborative working practices between the residential and teaching staff, contributing to promoting students' welfare and keeping them safe. Strong leadership within the residential setting is underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures, providing staff with clear guidance to help them look after students well.

Students benefit from being looked after by a consistent, qualified and very caring staff team. Staff have an excellent understanding of individual needs and have a high regard for promoting students' welfare. The staff team have worked together for a

number of years which provides students with continuity of care. The students talk warmly and openly about their positive relationships with staff members.

Staff meetings at all levels give management a good overview of the practice in the school and highlight any areas for improvement. A school governor also visits the school at timely intervals and provides a report to the governing body. However, the report has insufficient detail to provide an informed overview of the residential provision. The headteacher recognises this as an area to progress with plans in place to address the issue.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Each individual's rights are respected and exceptional regard is given to the diverse needs of students and their emotional well-being. The staff group provide excellent role models for students in relation to values and attitudes in life. Staff have high aspirations for students to attain to their potential and significantly promote these aspirations through opportunities at the school.

Parents and carers offer praise for the level of care provided to their children and it is evident that students thoroughly enjoy staying in the residential unit. Comments include; 'my son has come on leaps and bounds and he really enjoys staying at the school', 'good bond with several staff members, reward system has really helped progress both socially and academically, excellent lines of communication.'

Staff undertake regular first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding training and study for relevant child care awards. The experienced, cohesive, male and female staff team, deliver an excellent standard of care and supervision to students. Regular monitoring of residential care practices contributes to ensuring students' welfare is promoted and safeguarded.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Compliance with national minimum standards**

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure the representative for the governing body who conducts a visit each half term provides a full written report on the conduct of the school (NMS 33.2,3)
- ensure there is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with their assessed needs (NMS17.1)