

Cloughwood Academy

Cloughwood Academy, Stones Manor Lane, Hartford, NORTHWICH, Cheshire, CW8 1NU

Inspection dates	09/10/2013 to 11/10/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils make excellent progress across all areas of their development. They receive exceptionally high levels of truly wonderful care and support in a comfortable, stimulating environment that meets their individual needs. This results in them benefitting from improved personal, social and emotional outcomes.
- Residential pupils' safety and well-being is of paramount importance. Residential pupils are safe and say that they feel safe because of the exceptionally well-implemented safeguarding procedures.
- The residential provision is exceptionally well managed. It is highly valued by senior managers and trustees and is an integral part of the school. Monitoring of the service is robust and helps drive forward development.
- Residential pupils and parents are complimentary about the service. They say the staff are 'great' and are 'always there for them'. Parents are confident to approach staff with any concerns. They know that they will be listened to and that action will be taken to support them and their children.
- The national minimum standards are met and in many instances exceeded.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of day one by the lead inspector to announce the inspection.

The inspection took place over three days with feedback provided on the afternoon of day three. During the inspection records and documentation were examined.

Interviews took place with the residential pupils, head of care, principal, staff and school nurse to secure their views upon the quality of care provided.

A tour of the premises and grounds was undertaken.

Evening activities were also observed over two nights.

Inspection team

Chris Scully

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Cloughwood Academy is a purpose-built day and residential special academy. It is located within extensive grounds on the Mid Cheshire Campus in Hartford. It is run by a board of trustees.

The academy caters for male pupils between the ages of 8 and 18 years. There are currently 55 pupils on roll. The academy provides extended day and residential places for up to 25 pupils on weekdays in term time, with a maximum of 17 staying per night.

Young people are cared for in four separate living units. There is a large range of boarding options available, depending upon the individual needs of the child. The residential provision was last inspected on the 26 June 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- complete the transition to the new style recording systems, encourage residential pupils to make comment on the entries and ensure they are signed by staff
- consider the use of some language when engaging in playful banter with residential pupils, so as not to provide mixed messages on the use of acceptable language.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcome of the boarding experience for pupils is outstanding. Residential pupils make remarkable progress and their life experiences are enriched, because of the extensive range of opportunities available to them when accessing the residential provision. Their individual needs and differences are actively acknowledged, supported and celebrated. Residential pupils enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with staff, which are built upon shared honesty, trust and respect. Residential pupils say that staff genuinely care for them and want them to do well.

Residential pupils have a very strong affiliation with the school and want it to succeed. It is obvious that residential pupils enjoy spending time with staff and have developed firm friendships with their peers. They say they get on well with one another, but acknowledge that they do argue sometimes, but this is 'normal when you live together.' They happily regale visitors with some of their escapades when on camping and cycling trips.

Residential pupils are thriving in an environment which is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which truly engage their interests. These activities effectively enable residential pupils to develop social, interpersonal and team-building skills as well as enabling young people to actively pursue their interests and develop skills for life. As a result, residential pupils are continually improving in confidence and self-esteem.

Residential pupils' social skills are significantly enhanced because of the opportunities to meet with their friends in the community and to spend time with them at school. This means that residential pupils are afforded the same opportunities as any other young people of a similar age. Residential pupils are proud to have earned the staff's trust in achieving this opportunity. They say they do not want to let themselves, their friends or staff down by abusing this.

Residential pupils are at the very heart of everything the school does. They feel valued and respected, because their views are actively sought, valued and are acted upon. Residential pupils feel empowered because they say that staff listen to them and, where possible, act upon their requests, such as outings or changes to their overnight stays. In addition, residential pupils have access to various helplines such as Childline, 'Bully Busters' and an independent visitor.

Residential pupils are enthusiastic about keeping themselves fit and healthy. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating. They thoroughly enjoy all of the opportunities to be physically active and improve upon their fitness and mobility. Residential pupils are equally proud of their friends' achievements. Residential pupils are able to access an extensive range of professionals and organisations, such as counselling services, drug and alcohol support groups and smoking cessation. This means that they are able to take responsibility and make informed choices about their own health and well-being.

Health care plans are well written; they are tailored to the specific needs of each young person and actively contribute to them remaining fit and healthy. This is further enhanced by the staff's encyclopaedic knowledge of each residential pupil's individual needs.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential experience for pupils is outstanding. Residential pupils receive exceptional pastoral care because; staff have an exceptional knowledge of their individual needs. Care planning is detailed and allows the uniqueness of each residential pupil to glow. Residential pupils individual health social and emotional needs are effectively identified. As a result, clear plans are implemented for improving the outcomes for the young person. Residential pupils are

consulted about their care plans, but are not currently asked to record their comments or sign to agree the plans. This is a minor shortfall within the recording system and does not impact upon the care of residential pupils.

Residential pupils are confident to approach staff regarding any worries and these are addressed sensitively. All admissions are planned and there is a very caring, structured induction process for new pupils. Extended day activities are effectively utilised to enable pupils to gain a taste of the residential experience and helps them to settle in, in their own time. Residential pupils say they have chosen to attend residence and that if they did not enjoy it they would not want to stay. Communication between care, health and educational staff is extremely effective, hence children quickly settle in the school and residential provision.

The residential setting is an integral part of the school. Excellent communication between care and school staff means they are quickly alerted to any difficulties pupils may be experiencing. Ultimately, they are able to initiate additional support to help the pupil overcome their difficulties. Staff are highly committed to improving the outcomes for residential pupils and have high aspirations for each of them. As a result, pupils are making as much progress as possible in relation to their starting points.

Residential pupils are empowered to make a positive contribution towards their school life. This high level of positive engagement enables pupils to develop; this in turn helps them overcome barriers that have previously hindered their learning and attainment. Pupils are afforded an excellent range of extra-curricular and leisure opportunities which include: sailing, transport training, boxing, quad biking, outdoor pursuits, cinema trips, swimming, cookery clubs and a cycling repair workshop. Residential pupils say they particularly enjoy the opportunities to cook on the pit barbecue with staff.

Residential pupils enjoy wide range of healthy meals and snacks. Menus effectively take into account residential pupils' individual tastes, dietary, religious and cultural needs. Meal times are lively social events with plenty of friendly banter being exchanged; for example, discussions around who makes the best cottage pie. Residential pupils create their own menus and shop for food with staff. They develop good budgeting skills as they shop to a budget. Some young people use bar code scanners in supermarkets to see how much they have spent, which enables them to consider what else to purchase with their remaining funds.

Excellent arrangements are in place to support residential pupils' contact with family and friends. Residential pupils have access to the internet and home phone and are able to have their own personal phones. Family members and friends are regularly invited to the residence to enjoy an evening meal with young people.

Extensive refurbishment work has been carried out since the last inspection, which has significantly enhanced the homeliness of the residential units. Young people are very proud of the changes in décor and their input into this. Corridors no longer have an institutional feel and are light, bright and airy. Residential pupils are pleased that they can bring in items from home, such as electric keyboards, to personalise their rooms as this helps them feel at home.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety and well-being of residential pupils is outstanding. This is because staff have an excellent understanding of the safeguarding procedures and are suitably trained in child protection. They are extremely aware of the residential pupils' diverse needs and behaviours and how these may impact upon them. The school has appropriate policies and procedures, in conjunction with external agencies, to take decisive action to safeguard residential pupils. Young people are aware of who to contact, including independent people should they have any

concerns.

There are robust systems in place for the safe recruitment of staff, which assess their suitability to work with young people. Visitors are monitored and effectively chaperoned at all times. Staff provide an excellent level of supervision for residential pupils based on their age, understanding and ability, to make sure they are safe in school and in the community.

Residential pupils do occasionally go missing. However, there are clear, robust procedures in place should this occur, which means they are quickly located and returned safely to school. Staff work in conjunction with parents and police to ensure that pupils understand the dangers they place themselves in by being missing and to see if there are any contributing factors to this.

Residential pupils say that bullying is not an issue for them. If this does occur, they know that staff will help them to deal with this and quickly resolve the issue. Positive behaviour is exceptionally well promoted and is a strength of the provision. Residential pupils have a clear understanding of the rules and expectations, because they helped to create them and they are consistently applied. For example, staff consistently and sensitively challenge any homophobic or racist comments. On a very small number of occasions pupils are referred to as 'ladies'. While this is meant in a jovial manner and is seen as such by pupils, it may cause confusion as to what is or is not an acceptable use of language.

Staff are highly skilled at de-escalating challenging situations. They can resolve an issue simply by looking at a pupil, which enables them to think about what they are doing and alter their behaviour accordingly. As a result the use of sanction and physical interventions are minimal. Residential pupils are increasing in confidence and take ownership of their own and others' behaviour; for example, telling their peers not to swear, as they 'live here too'. Pupils have set their own rewards and consequences. This means that pupils have a sense of ownership about what happens in residence.

Residential pupils are protected by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff conduct regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and secure.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management is outstanding. The highly insightful management by senior managers actively promotes a culture that ensures pupils are always listened to and respected as individuals. They are extremely committed to the on-going development of the school, which has resulted in them recently being awarded academy status. Senior managers and trustees are highly committed to providing high quality care to each pupil. This is evident from the excellent progress young people are making. A comprehensive development plan is in place to drive forward a range of innovative ideas which will support all pupils such as establishing a youth club and possibly a children's home. Trustees comment upon the 'seamlessness' between the school and residence. They acknowledge that both are of equal importance and neither could operate without the others support. Consequently, the residential provision is firmly at the heart of the school and plays an intrinsic part in supporting all pupils.

A variety of arrangements exist for monitoring the quality of care by the strong management team. The experienced and nurturing head of care has really positive relationships with the young people in her care. She maintains a close day-to-day overview of each young person individually, alongside the general running of the residence. Any shortfalls are promptly identified and addressed. For example effective action has been taken to address the issues from the last inspection. Pupils' safety is enhanced, because additional self closers have been fitted to fire doors. This means they are no longer wedged open by staff. The recording in most records has

improved, providing a clearer picture of each residential pupils' time here. There is some slippage at this time due to the changes in paperwork, following the school conversion to an academy. However, managers and senior managers have identified this and are working with staff to rectify this.

The Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the school and residence. In addition, parents and young people receive a detailed information pack which clearly informs them about the school and the care that is to be provided. As a result, young people are appropriately placed, thereby enhancing their life experience.

Staff effectively create a culture where residential pupils' rights as individuals are respected and their differences are accepted. Staff work extremely well as a team. They receive regular professional supervision and meet regularly as a team to discuss how young people progress, and any emerging needs. They have excellent opportunities to attend additional training courses to gain new qualifications and skills; for example, NVQ 5 in management, diplomas in counselling and psychology, outdoor education leaders' awards and defibrillation training. The deployment of staff is child-focused and provides young people with excellent continuity of care from people they trust and respect.

All required policies and procedures are in place and known by those required to implement them. Required records are completed and stored securely.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	140093
Social care unique reference number	SC006625
DfE registration number	896/7105

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	8 to 18
Headteacher	Mr Adrian Larkin
Date of previous boarding inspection	22/06/2012
Telephone number	01606 288090
Email address	head@cloughwood.cheshire.sch.uk

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