

Cloughwood Academy

Cloughwood Academy, Stones Manor Lane, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1NU
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special 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. The academy caters for male pupils between the ages of 8 and 18 years. There are currently 64 pupils on roll. The academy provides extended day and residential places.

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Young people said that they enjoy staying overnight and that they have made good friends with a range of pupils.
- Young people said that the best thing about the residential service is the wide range of activities that they can access.
- The health needs of young people are clearly understood. Good procedures mean that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription.
- Feedback from stakeholders and parents is overwhelmingly positive. Parents, in particular, value the support and the difference that the boarding provision makes to their children's lives and behaviours.
- Safeguarding policies and practice operate effectively to keep young people safe. Boarding staff complete a range of safeguarding training to ensure that their knowledge is current and up to date. Therefore, there is a strong safeguarding culture across the school and residential setting.
- Boarding staff have a wealth of knowledge and experiences. They nurture and care for young people well. They develop meaningful relationships with young people and this allows the young people to trust, open up and discuss any concerns that they may have.
- Monitoring of the residential provision is good. This means that any improvement is quickly brought to the head of care's attention and effective action is taken. The senior leadership team, governors and staff are all committed to continuous improvement and to developing the service, so that young people make progress in all areas of their lives.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- When recruiting staff, ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to obtain references from the member of staff's last employer and that several references are not from the same employer.
- Records are not clear because they are not dated and have not been signed by the author. For example, there are several care plans on young people's files. This means that there is difficulty in knowing whether this is new or old information, or whether all parties are in agreement with the plans.
- Most of the young people's risk assessments cover a range of individual risks. However, one young person has self-injurious behaviour and another young person has a history of fire-setting in the community.. There are no strategies or actions for staff to take if an incident was to occur. Therefore, it is unclear how these needs are assessed to guide staff practice.
- Young people who have recently started to have extended days or overnight stays are not routinely taken through an emergency evacuation. This does not ensure

that young people know what to do in an emergency.

- When members of staff attend training events, their attendance is recorded as a group. Further to this, not all training results in a certificate of completion. Therefore, it is difficult to know which members of staff attended and who still requires to complete the training.
- Improve feedback to young people who have commented on or made suggestions about their care.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Further improve young people's risk assessments to ensure that they are sufficiently detailed to address individual risks and that they highlight any risk-reduction strategies.
- Ensure that records are signed and dated by the author.
- Ensure that a clear record is maintained of all staff who attend training.
- Promote children and young people's voices. In particular, use information received from feedback forms to improve the care provided.
- Further enhance recruitment procedures to ensure that references are obtained from the last employer and from individual referees.
- Ensure that all new residents are taken through an emergency evacuation procedure.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people can stay for up to two nights in the week, have extended evenings, or have a combination of both. Young people thoroughly enjoy their time in residence. One young person said, 'It is like going on holiday every week.' A parent said, 'It gives our family time to regroup, but most importantly he looks forward to going there.'

Care planning is good and reflects each young person's individual needs, the support required and the progress that they are making. However, there are several care plans on the young people's files. They are not dated or signed. Therefore, it is unclear which is the most current. This does not ensure that staff have the most up-to-date information to hand.

The inspector spoke to 12 young people. The young people were unanimous in saying that the best thing about the residential provision was the range of activities that they enjoyed. The young people were proud of being part of a football team that is currently top of the league. They have a football pitch in the residential grounds that they practise their skills on. Other opportunities include swimming, boxing, cinema, arts and crafts, games consoles and computing. Some of these activities are linked to school topics, such as information technology, and some are to encourage positive behaviour. For example, one young person is attending a boxing club. A member of staff said this was the young person's wish and the elements of good routine and structure, alongside trust and respect, have significantly improved the young person's self-esteem and behaviour. In addition to this, young people have the opportunity to go on Easter and summer camping holidays.

Young people say that they have good relationships with staff and with each other. They could identify a member of staff who they could talk to if they had a concern. All of the young people said that minor squabbles are sorted out quickly and that they were confident that members of staff would take appropriate action if they were unhappy about anything.

There has been some improvement in gaining young people's views, wishes and feelings. A new development is the school council which meets termly. Young people said that this is going well and they discuss numerous topics and are able to influence their care. For example, young people have recently discussed new activities, such as rock climbing and go-karting. After the school's last inspection, the head of care introduced a child-friendly feedback form. All the young people completed these. However, the head of care has not used the information provided by the young people to address any negative or positive comments made. This is a missed opportunity to show that the young people's voices drive the development or improvement of the residential service.

Young people's health needs are met well. Young people bring in their medication daily or leave a supply at the setting. Medication is efficiently recorded, stored and is administered by two members of staff. Members of staff are trained in administering

medication and in first aid. Therefore, members of staff can quickly respond to any inaccuracies of medication or in emergency situations. A qualified nurse attends the school twice a week. She links with the residential staff and provides additional support when necessary.

Parents said that their children's confidence, self-esteem and behaviour had significantly improved since they had been staying at the residential provision. One parent said, 'He has only been attending for six weeks and the improvement is startling.' Another parent said, 'We can now do things together as a family. He has come a long way.' A young person said, 'I now do things I was frightened of, like being with lots of people, but I now enjoy being with my friends.' This shows that the support that young people receive helps them to build their emotional resilience, to have a positive self-view, and to maintain friendships.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect. Members of staff ensure that young people are able to follow their beliefs, faiths and culture. The young people have completed topics around bullying. Therefore, they understand aspects such as discrimination, intimidation and online bullying. One young person quite eloquently said, 'It means treat others how you wished to be treated.'

Young people are supported to gain independence skills as part of their daily living. One parent said, 'He can now shower himself and he takes pride in his appearance.' The young people talked to the inspector about their new cooking club. One young person said, 'It's called "Let's cook" and I have baked cakes, made biscuits and homemade pizzas. They were better than shop ones.' As a result, young people are acquiring skills that will assist them later in life.

Young people's bedrooms and living areas have recently been redecorated and new furniture has been purchased. Young people have chosen their own bedding and accessories to personalise their bedrooms. This means that young people stay in a comfortable and welcoming environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Most of the young people said that they were safe at this setting. Three young people said that they sometimes felt unsafe or frightened when the older boys are around. However, they confirmed this was due to the noise level and their boisterousness rather than any direct bullying. Members of staff were aware of the young people who are less confident in group situations and take effective action to minimise the impact. Staff are vigilant but not risk averse. They encourage young people to take safe risks. For example, young people can try new activities, such as swimming, camping and trampolining. This means that they are able to try out new skills in a safe environment.

There are several appointed members of staff who take a lead in ensuring young people are safeguarded well. This includes the head of care, the school principal, the head of governors and a parent governor. They meet regularly to ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. External safeguarding professionals said that the school is excellent in reporting, sharing concerns and

taking action to safeguard young people.

Young people have not gone missing from residence. Members of staff are aware that there is potential for this to happen. They have a clear understanding of the process to take, if an incident was to occur.

The residential setting uses the school's risk assessments, which list all known risky behaviour. However, in some circumstances, the risk assessments do not give the residential members of staff enough information to ensure that everyone is following an agreed action or strategy. For example, one young person's risk assessment states that he has self-injurious behaviour. The risk assessment identifies these behaviours, but not what to do if an incident was to occur. The inspector observed an incident and the member of staff took appropriate action, but she said that she did this instinctively and not through any informed information. This does not ensure that all members of staff are consistent in their approach to these incidents. Similarly, a young person has set fires in the local community. His risk assessment does not show what additional countermeasures have been put in place to reduce the risk to other young people. In conjunction with this, new residents are not taken through an emergency evacuation procedure. This does not ensure that everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

There is minimal use of restraint. When incidents occur, they are recorded and reviewed appropriately. The strict guidelines of the legislative framework are followed. Young people and members of staff are debriefed after an incident. This means that everybody's views around the event are captured. The head of care oversees these incidents effectively and responds to ensure that lessons can be learned from them, for example offering young people time out or quiet time when situations are escalating. Similarly, sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are low. Young people said that when a sanction is applied, they are fair and proportionate. For example, young people said that if they misbehaved on an activity, they would not be allowed on the next one. However, they also said that they were able to make things right in some circumstances by apologising or completing a chore. Residential staff work closely with parents to mirror behaviour management strategies. A parent said, 'We have worked together and the good boundaries and structure mean that he is doing much better at home and at school.' Another parent said, 'He is like a different child. It is a pleasure to take him out.'

Residential staff are vetted to ensure that they are of good character and suitable to work with young people. However, recruitment processes could be further enhanced by ensuring that references are not from the same previous employer and that the last employer is contacted. This will make safer recruitment stronger.

Security of the setting is very good. All visitors' identification is required before being allowed on the site and they are chaperoned while in the school and residential setting. Health and safety checks are routinely completed. As a result, young people live in a safe environment and are protected from strangers.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care works closely with the senior management team and the principal of the school. Therefore, there is a seamless transition between school and the residential provision. All parties demonstrated that the young people were at the heart of the service.

Parents, colleagues and professionals were very complimentary about the head of care and how he interacts with them. One parent said, 'Nothing is too much trouble for him and he will go out of his way to help.' Another parent said, 'Communication is excellent. I know when my son has been good or bad. (Head of care' name) will often let us know when my son has achieved something. Therefore, we can all celebrate together.'

Members of staff said that the support that they receive from the head of care is very good. They said that he is approachable and often works alongside them. Staff receive regular supervision and this allows them to discuss their practice and development opportunities. The head of care has recently started additional group supervisions. He said, 'This allows us to look forward and plan the next term, discuss recent training and how this has impacted on the care young people receive, and any new research or developments in practice.' This shows that the care team looks to improve and develop the service.

A stable staff team cares for the young people. This means that young people receive consistency of care by people who know them well. Most of the residential staff have an appropriate qualification in caring for young people. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised qualification in this area. Some staff have additional qualifications, such as outdoor pursuits. Therefore, young people benefit from a range of activities that are led by a qualified person.

Staff receive good training opportunities to support them in their role. However, the school's single central register records training as a group. For example, recent training in care planning says 'all care staff'. This training was not certificated for attendance and completion. Therefore, it is difficult to establish whether all the staff team completed this training, or whether some staff were off sick or on holiday. This does not show that clear records are maintained to reflect the individual training undertaken by staff.

The head of care has made good links with other residential care services within the local community. They have recently completed some joint training. This has cut down on costs and has provided the opportunity to share good practice. For example, several residential services thought that the care plans used by this service were very good and have adopted the same format. Similarly, the head of care uses several formats to evaluate the quality of care within the residential setting. He is working with another provider and the principal of the school to have one self-evaluation document. The head of care has also visited an outstanding service to share practice. This means that the service is striving to improve and develop.

The school governors play an active role in the residential provision. They regularly

undertake quality assurance visits and speak to staff and young people. They evaluate the residential performance through monitoring reports, complaints and safeguarding incidents. They provide a supportive role and a constructive challenge to the head of care in order to maintain high standards and to drive continuous improvements.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC006625

Head teacher/teacher in charge: Adrian Larkin

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Inspector

Pam Nuckley, social care inspector (lead)



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