Cicely Haughton

Cicely Haughton Special School, The Manor Hall Academy Trust, Westwood Manor, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST9 0BX

Inspection dates	17/01/2017 to 19/01/2017	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	**Outstanding**	**1**
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Outstanding	1
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Children make excellent progress as a result of the highly effective collaborative working between residential and school staff. Staff implement consistent strategies based on detailed assessments of children's needs. Children receive individualised care and support to meet their needs.
- Highly committed and motivated staff have high expectations of each child staying at the residential provision. This positively influences the quality of children's lives in the present and provides solid foundations for building achievements in the future.
- The safety of children who live in the school is of paramount importance. Safeguarding is the focus of excellent standards of information sharing between staff members. Children's safety and welfare is paramount. This is reinforced by excellent communication between all staff.
- Children learn new skills and grow in confidence. They enjoy a wide range of fun activities that enables them to develop new skills in a supportive environment.
- Feedback from children, parents, carers and other professionals about the residential provision and its impact on children is uniformly positive.
- The behaviour and communication of those children who board/reside in the school improves significantly. This is as a result of the use of highly effective and closely monitored individualised behaviour management plans. Children's behaviour and communication improves significantly because of the highly effective, closely monitored behaviour management plans. Children learn to recognise their emotions and feelings and think about how they can manage these more effectively.
- The residential staff team are highly aware of and attentive to each child's needs, as not all children are able to articulate their feelings. The quality of practice in this aspect of care is excellent and embedded in all residential routines with children.

- The quality of management and oversight from the leadership team is excellent and results in each child receiving an outstanding level of care from staff.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

There were no areas identified on this inspection.

Information about this inspection

This welfare only inspection was completed by one social care inspector, following a three hour notice period given to the school. A tour of the residential provision was undertaken. Time was spent with children and staff in the residential units, including joining them for meals. Several children were spoken to during the inspection. A range of records and other documentation were examined relating to the care provided. Discussions were held with a number of members of staff, a governor, members of senior staff, parents and carers.

Inspection team

Julia Wright	lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Cicely Haughton is part of Manor Hall Academy. It offers day and residential places to girls and boys aged five to 11 years. There are 50 pupils on roll, of whom 28 currently use the school's residential provision. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2016.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding

Outcomes for children who use the residential provision are outstanding. This is validated by children's experiences. For example, one child told the inspector, 'Staff are awesome.' Another said, 'There is always someone to speak to.' A parent adds, 'He bounces out of bed on the day he goes to residence with a big smile on his face. Residence is so friendly; they are like a second family.'

When children stay in the residential provision, the staff focus is on the children's safety and welfare, and staff make sure the children enjoy every minute of their stay. A staff member told the inspector, 'My colleagues all work tirelessly to make sure things are right for the children.'

Children can choose to stay for extended days, or overnight one or two nights each week. Children are well supported to recognise and manage their emotions and feelings, enjoy regular routines, make and sustain friendships with their peers, and make progress in all areas of their lives.

Impact assessments completed for each child evaluate and evidence the difference their residential stays make to children's overall academic learning. For example, teaching staff comment extremely favourably on the significant difference that staying in residence has on individual children progress. This includes noting that their concentration, attention and academic attainment all improve. One member of the teaching staff commented, 'Children are ready to learn.'

Staff work collectively to create a climate where mutual trust, respect and confidence are evident throughout the school community. This attention to detail in the provision of care means that children are happy in school and are making progress to levels that are enabling them to reach their full potential educationally, socially and emotionally.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, activities and helping each other. Medication arrangements are robust and promote children's health and safety. Staff work in partnership with parents and carers who have responsibility for their children. Children benefit as they have continuity of care and all adults work together for children's benefit.

Staff help children to expand their horizons by trying new activities that they may not have had the opportunity to try previously. Staff strive high and want the best for each child, and children respond knowing that adults want the very best for them.

The quality of care and support	Outstanding

Children speak extremely positively about their stay in residence at the school. One child told the inspector, 'The staff are fabulous here. I love coming to stay.' Another said, 'It is my favourite day of all when I come here. I look forward to it all week.' Another said, 'I wish I could come every day.'

Children are well supported when they stay. Staff are very good in developing an understanding of each child's needs, and are able to anticipate and recognise when a child becomes upset, or their behaviour becomes heightened. Staff are committed to ensuring that each child receives the best care possible and that they enjoy their stay and gain the most they can from each visit to the residential provision.

Staff ensure that every child has individualised planning documents and risk assessments that provide a comprehensive picture of children's needs. Strategies are formulated to meet individual needs. All assessments are constantly reviewed and revised to ensure that the staff approach remains reflective of children's needs and circumstances.

Partnership working is excellent. Parents and professionals commented on the difference staying in residence has on children. Parents' comments included: 'She has so many opportunities, and it gives her sibling a break too. She will ring us sometimes if she wants to, but mainly she is too busy enjoying herself!' 'Staff have made brilliant inroads with him. So much so, that he is happy to stay there. He is learning new things all the time, particularly about being with other people.' A social worker commented, 'We have seen great results, particularly around self-esteem, self-worth and confidence, self-care skills and social skills.'

Children receive a warm welcome when they join the residential setting. Depending on their needs, their induction may be short or take place over an extended period. The service is flexible, and considers the welfare and well-being of each child first and foremost. Staff involve parents and carers in the introduction process to ensure that children are supported at each and every stage. In addition, children are carefully matched to a group to ensure that all children continue to enjoy a successful stay.

Staff demonstrate a nurturing approach to each child. Interactions with children are calm, thoughtful and extremely caring. Children know that all staff have high expectations of them, including how they behave towards each other. Boundaries are clear, and when children's behaviour falls short of these, the conscientious approach of staff in supporting children to think about their actions helps them make adjustments over time and avoid repeating mistakes.

Children contribute their views and opinions in the residential forums. Children are encouraged to help shape the service provided for their benefit. There are lots of discussions about activities and menu provision. Children are helped to think about a range of activity options, including activities they may not be aware of. To help with this, staff devise laminated folders with choices of activities, including torchlight walks, chocolate coin hunts, BMX bikes and hide and seek. The forums generate much excited, animated discussion between children about the range of possibilities available. Children try new things, extending their repertoire and confidence.

Children enjoy fun, lively mealtimes. They enjoy the communal approach and each child takes responsibility for helping others. This includes passing drinks, collecting food, and clearing the tables. Staff are accomplished in helping children join in, drawing them into conversations, and listening attentively to their opinions. Children gain confidence that adults and peers listen to them and that their views matter to others.

Meticulous attention is paid to the promotion of children's health and well-being, including their emotional and mental health. Children enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious meals. Children's needs are reviewed and evaluated in a number of forums throughout each day, including senior leadership meetings, residential staff handovers, debriefs at the end of shift in residence, and in sharing and exchanging information with school colleagues. Any unusual behaviours or incidents are discussed and escalated to parents or other professionals when necessary. Consequently, children receive an exceptionally organised service, which ensures that, as far as possible, their needs are met. A recent change at the school has been the introduction of a school nursing service, when school nurses visit children weekly. The service is new and discussions are taking place between nurses and the school leadership team about target areas to improve children's health and well-being.

How well children and young people are protected	**Outstanding**

The arrangements for ensuring children's safety are outstanding. All school and residential staff are well informed about safeguarding policies and procedures. These underpin a wide-ranging, comprehensive programme of induction, training and refresher training for all staff, including listening to complaints, e-safety training, anti–bullying, managing behaviour and reporting concerns about staff or others. Children are protected as their safety and welfare is a high priority, and when needs are identified these are comprehensively discussed and action taken as necessary.

The senior management team, governors and all staff receive regular training that helps them keep up to date with safeguarding practice, research and developments in the field of safe care for children. Robust staff guidance and procedures are in place for all staff and are regularly discussed in meetings, and in staff supervisions. Consequently, children are kept safe as staff know what action to take if they are concerned about a child's safety. All staff know who the designated safeguarding leads are within the school, and what the roles involve. A safeguarding governor is appointed, and visits the children in residence. As a result, the systematic focus on safeguarding by the whole school ensures that children's safety remains the priority for all.

Behaviour management practice is exemplary. A key strength of the residential provision is how school and residential staff understand the complexities of children's difficulties, behaviours and communication needs. This insight informs effective organisation and operation of daily routines, which support children. Staff consistently encourage and reward positive behaviour, and personalised incentives are embedded in practice. Children's self-confidence and self-esteem is enhanced. For example, children are thrilled when they are rewarded with certificates and stickers to celebrate achievements.

Physical intervention is only used as a last resort. Records are scrupulously maintained, and each incident is analysed by a member of the senior staff to understand any patterns and trends. If patterns are found, for example time of day, a particular staff member, or dynamics between children, discussions take place between staff and strategies are implemented. This means that children receive targeted support that helps them to manage their emotions and feelings in a productive way.

Monitoring and governance of safeguarding is excellent and conducted at appropriate intervals by the senior leadership team, governors, and by the local authority. Children know who the independent visitor is and she sees the children in both announced and unannounced visits. Her reports reflect highly positive observations and discussions with children.

Detailed risk assessments are in place to ensure that the school staff are fully informed about potential hazards. These assessments are reviewed and updated to reflect children's changing needs and allow children the opportunity to take assessed risks in line with trying new activities.

Since the last inspection, considerable work has been undertaken on the school site. New fencing has been installed, including a lockable gate, which allows school staff to control access to the school building. A new fire system has been installed within the school, and the heating system has been upgraded. New access arrangements have been devised for the school buses and taxis bringing children to and from school, avoiding the previous arrangement where children and vehicles were sharing the same space. Consequently, children's safety is promoted and significantly improved. Children express confidence about the safety and security of the school. A new fire evacuation drill has been practised by staff and children and all are familiar with the escape routes and drill. Regular checks of equipment take place, enhancing the overall safety and welfare for all.

Children continue to be safeguarded by the school's robust recruitment procedures, which are in place to ensure that all staff complete the necessary recruitment checks prior to starting work at the school.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	**Outstanding**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The senior leadership team are unwavering in their commitment to provide the highest possible standards of care for children staying at the school.

The leadership team's focus on monitoring and improvement of all aspects of the service is exemplary. Internal and external quality assurance processes mean that senior managers and staff have developed a wide range of expertise and specialist knowledge relating to the service. Leaders, managers and staff are highly effective in ensuring that the residential service continues to evolve and develop, offering children the highest possible standard of care, and one that enables them to realise their potential, improving their life choices.

Staff are unanimously complimentary about the management, support and development opportunities they receive. Staff benefit from a wide-ranging development programme, as well as supervision and regular professional discussions with managers and peers. Consequently, staff continually extend and develop their knowledge. The staff team is extremely motivated to ensure that each child enjoys every evening they spend in residence, and gains the most they can from their stay.

Staff relate and apply what they learn in courses and professional discussions to their practice. For example, following their attendance at a conference, staff reflected on behaviour management strategies, considering the message 'Reward in public and reprimand in private', and the use of rewards as positive reinforcement for children. Staff commented that they have extended the use of this approach and observed the positive impact it has on children. Staff also considered messages about the use of medication for children, and the necessity of reviewing their use. Staff are extending their skills in relation to offering children a wider range of activities and opportunities to enrich their time at the school, including bushcraft, archery and other sports activities. Leaders, managers and staff have adapted a research tool for use with children in school, and children's social and emotional needs are assessed. This enables staff to evaluate individual progress, and target areas to work on with children across the school. The senior team undertakes analysis of the impact of these measures to ensure that they continue to remain effective and relevant to the needs of each child.

The management of record keeping is exceptional. The head of care is well organised and scrutinises all aspects of information retained in residence. She sets very high standards and ensures that these are maintained. The head of care prioritises children's privacy, and ensures that all information retained is stored securely. Children's records show their personal development and outstanding progress.

Despite the provision being judged outstanding for a number of years, the school demonstrates persistent determination to continue to improve the service for the benefit of children. Leaders and managers scrutinise and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision, and the school has an excellent record of compliance with national minimum standards.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	124499
Social care unique reference number	SC038731
DfE registration number	

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	50
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	five to 11
Headteacher	Mr R Redgate, Executive Head.
Date of previous boarding inspection	01/03/2016
Telephone number	01782 550202
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