

# Cicely Haughton

Cicely Haughton School, Westwood Manor, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Staffordshire ST9 0BX

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential special school**

Cicely Haughton is part of the Manor Hall Academy. It offers day and residential places to girls and boys aged five to 11 years. There are 56 pupils on role and the school offers 33 residential places in its residential provision. The residential provision is part of the school's education curriculum offer. The head of care is suitably qualified.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

### **Inspection dates: 31 January to 2 February 2022**

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of previous inspection:** 25 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children benefit from exceptionally well planned, individualised care and support that helps them to make significant progress with their social and emotional development and their learning.

Staff have a genuine and unwavering dedication to delivering the best quality experiences for children. Staff know the children extremely well and pay attention to planning and implementing the detail of their care. Clear routines and expectations for behaviour have helped to create a healthy culture based on respect. Consequently, children enjoy their stays, have fun with their peers and trust the staff who provide their care.

An understandable and well-thought-out model of care, clearly linked to the whole-school approach, underpins and permeates through all areas of the care provided. Time is taken to identify children's individual needs and to plan and review how residency can and is helping to create the best foundation for the child to continue to grow. Individualised targets, combined with nurture-focused care from staff and a range of well-planned growth-focused activities, mean that children develop in self-esteem, confidence and communication and become increasing socially and individually able.

A holistic approach supports children's physical and emotional good health. Staff are aware of children's physical health needs and work well with health professionals and parents to make sure that health plans are clear, and that children's specific health needs are met by appropriately trained and informed staff. Staff are quick to respond to children's emerging health needs and demonstrate a sense of urgency in ensuring that children's healthcare needs are met at the earliest opportunity. Good communication between staff and the cook means that children's allergies and food preferences are catered for. Food choices are balanced, food is freshly prepared and is of good quality. A focus on children's emotional well-being has involved the use of a drama therapist, who is helping to develop the awareness of all staff of trauma-informed practice.

Strong bonds between school and residential staff help to support children's opportunities for learning and promote their academic progress. For example, training in phonics has equipped residential staff to better support children with their daily homework. A whole-school, whole-child approach to planning has ensured that resources are available for residential staff to promote learning activities linked to play and emotional well-being.

The opportunity for children to participate in their care and the development of the service is an area of strength. Children's views are threaded and embedded throughout every aspect of the residential service. Children influence their plans,

meals, activities and routines. Children know how to make complaints but prefer to make positive comments, particularly about how their peers have helped and supported them. These ongoing notes of positivity support children to be good citizens and to help and value each other.

Children's introductions into residency are carefully planned and taken at the child's pace. Staff understand that for some children, it may be their first experience of staying away from home and they need time to decide if they want to stay overnight. A gradual programme of getting to know residency through participating in teatime and activities supports the children and their families to make decisions at a time that is right for them.

Parents and professionals are overwhelmingly positive about the relationship and communication with the school, and the positive impact that residency has for children. For example, one parent said, 'It's an extension of our home and it's changed our lives as a family.'

A nurture-focused approach to the care of the children is mirrored in the attention to detail paid to ensuring that the environment is a welcoming space for children to spend time away from home. Children sleeping overnight have their own bedroom area that they personalise to their own taste and staff take great care to make sure that beds are well made and inviting. Good-quality curtains and duvets appropriate to the season ensure that children sleep well and are ready for school. The residential environment is clean, warm and spacious, giving a comfortable and homely feel for children.

Although the residential provision was closed for several periods during the COVID-19 pandemic, residential staff played a key part in keeping in touch with children and families during times of isolation. In addition, opportunities for on-site learning for several children who access residency were promoted by residential staff supporting school staff in helping children access day school when restrictions lessened. This helped to ensure that children and families had access to essential support during a time of national difficulty.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Senior leaders take safeguarding seriously. Managers ensure that staff have access to safeguarding training that is wide-ranging and regularly refreshed. This means that staff are equipped to identify signs of potential abuse and are fully aware of the school's safeguarding processes and how to report a safeguarding concern should it be necessary. Level 2 safeguarding training for middle leaders has increased their understanding and awareness of working together to safeguard children and bolstered the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Good relationships with parents and other professionals providing support services for families mean that staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs

and circumstances. This knowledge, combined with appropriate professional curiosity and good partnership working with parents and others, helps to promote children's welfare and safety.

Consistent recognition of children's individual achievements by staff, and between children, helps children to feel good about themselves, their behaviour and the support they give to each other. Clear routines and expectations for behaviour help children to feel safe. Consequently, children are respectful and kind and their manners are impeccable.

Skilled and perceptive staff anticipate children's needs and intervene in an inconspicuous and timely way to help children to manage their emotions appropriately. Positive relationships and low-stimulus responses from staff when children are excitable or sad helps children to self-regulate and to feel better quickly. This means that incidents in the residential environment are rare. Consequently, there has only been one occasion since the last inspection where a child has been physically supported for their safety.

School governors are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and keep their knowledge up to date through regular training. The residency and safeguarding lead governor visits residency regularly. Quarterly reports by the head of care to the governing body give the opportunity to scrutinise the operation of residency, including arrangements for the safety and welfare of children.

Staff turnover in residency is low. When new staff are recruited, this is done safely and helps to ensure that staff have the skills and experience necessary to support children well.

Arrangements to maintain the health and safety of the environment are meticulous. Routine maintenance of equipment is undertaken as needed and hazards are quickly identified and remedied. This helps to keep children safe. An alertness to children's individual needs and regular fire drills ensure that staff and children can evacuate the premises safely in the event of a fire.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The insightfulness and commitment of leaders have helped to create a residential offer that is a child-focused, welcoming experience that enables children to develop their friendships, skills and confidence.

Leaders are passionate about residency as an integral part of the whole-school offer. There is strong oversight of the operation of the residential service. Leaders can demonstrate the impact that residency has on the progress of children, and they are visionary about how they plan to continue to develop residency to help children's continual growth.

Staff say they are well supported and developed, that they are listened to and that they influence the operation of the service. An effective use of delegated leadership by the head of care helps to stretch the skills and experience of individual staff and promotes the use of research-based practice to benefit children. For example, following nurture-specific training, residential and school staff have worked together to develop a tool to ensure that activities for children are increasingly nurture-based and are bespoke to children's individual development needs. This has been shared with all staff and is being used successfully to support children's progress.

Systems for monitoring and developing the effectiveness of the residential service are strong and include self-evaluation, monitoring by the local authority, peer and governor monitoring and reviews by an independent visitor. A mix of perspectives ensures a broad view of the effectiveness of the service. Leaders ensure that the children's voices are integral to the review and development of the service, with the school council supporting the development of some residential policies.

Leaders are forward-thinking and continue to ensure that benefit to the residential aspect of children's journeys is taken into consideration in the securing and allocation of resources. For example, a shepherd's hut has been recently installed into the grounds for enrichment purposes and residential use and there are funds allocated to residency to replace some items of furniture and improve the equipment available for activities.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** SC038731

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Paul Spreadbury

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01782 550202

**Email address:** office@[cicely.manorhall.academy](mailto:office@cicely.manorhall.academy)

## **Inspectors**

Alison Cooper, Social Care Compliance Inspector (lead)  
Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

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