

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 children aged five to 11 years with social, emotional and mental health. There are 58 pupils on role and the school offers 33 residential places in its residential provision. The residential provisions are called Wedgwood and Coalport. The residential provision is part of the school's education curriculum offer. The head of care is suitably experienced and qualified.

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

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 31 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make outstanding progress in residency from their starting points. Parents, teaching staff and other professionals recognise and celebrate the positive impact residency has on children's lives, including on their social, emotional, mental health and education skills. As one parent told inspectors:

'This is invaluable for his social development, as mainstream clubs and groups are simply inaccessible due to a lack of suitably trained staff. My son now gets a chance to play with peers outside of school hours in a supportive but fun environment, which has done wonders for his confidence and social skills.'

Children live in suitable accommodation that is safe, clean and tidy and has a child-friendly focus. Sleeping arrangements mean that some children share with their friends; this is sensitively assessed and reviewed. Other children prefer their own space and there are separate rooms available. Children can personalise and take some ownership of their spaces. As a result, they feel a sense of pride and belonging, speaking passionately about their time in residency.

Interesting and fun activities are central to children's time in residency. These are rewarding and motivational. All children, regardless of their individual support needs, are empowered to participate in all activities. Staff welcome children from the moment their school day ends, supporting them with homework before using fun and entertaining activities to continue the learning process and subtly support children to develop new skills. This continual learning culture and the sensitive approach from staff are key aspects of the success and progress children make in residency.

Children are encouraged and supported to have a voice and be involved in their care. They are consulted on what they hope to gain from being in residency. Throughout children's stay, they are asked for their opinions, suggestions and views. From the children's forum through to the student council, the children's voice is key and is the focus of any improvements. This empowers children to feel valued and important and have a sense of belonging.

Inspectors observed warm and friendly relationships between children and staff. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming and children progress in the setting because they receive bespoke, well-planned care that is focused on their life skills. Promoting positive relationships between children and care staff means that children begin to develop friendships with others, and they can replicate these skills in the wider community.

Some children progress to a point where they can return to mainstream school. Through the high-quality planning, assessment, review and support, some children

learn life skills such as regulation self-help and independence. This, combined with academic achievement, has enabled a positive transition into mainstream school for some children.

Partnership working between education staff and care staff means that children experience seamless transitions between school and residency. This is further enhanced by care staff fulfilling roles in the school during the day. This means that children receive continuity of care and education across both settings.

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

The children accessing residency are safe and protected from harm. The safety of children is paramount in residency and throughout the school. Staff were able to confidently explain to inspectors their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff's competence is reviewed through supervision and team discussions. As a result of the robust safeguarding arrangements in place, there have been no safeguarding concerns within residency since the last inspection. Furthermore, all visitors and parents attending the school are provided with clear information about what to do if they have a concern about a child. This demonstrates the school's approach to the importance of promoting safeguarding across the service.

Staff receive focused training around behaviour to understand and support children's complexities. They utilise this knowledge to promote positive behaviours through verbal praise, sensitive reinforcement and meaningful rewards. This approach reduces the need for consequences or physical restraint and helps children to learn. As a result, there have been only two occasions when low-level physical interventions have been needed. This sensitive and nurturing approach to behaviour management has seen children make marked progress in their coping strategies. Several parents told inspectors how they have seen vast improvements in their children's behaviour following stays in residency.

Recruitment of staff is safe and effective. The single central register is up to date. This promotes children's safety and means that only suitable and safe adults work with children. The school does not have any adults living on site.

Environmental health and safety issues are well managed and monitored. Robust systems ensure that all required checks are carried out, including regularly testing fire safety equipment. Any maintenance issues are swiftly responded to and addressed. This ensures that children remain safe in residency. Detailed risk assessments, with senior leaders' oversight, are also completed to minimise risks to children both on and off site.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers have consistent, high expectations for the children, staff team and school. There is a continued drive to improve and not become complacent. The

service continues to progress and adapt to the changing needs of children and expectations from placing authorities. Leaders and managers ensure that any changes and improvements are child-focused and research-informed and that there is thorough consultation with all key people involved. For example, the development of nurtured play and linking this into staff development to empower staff to have the skills to complete important life skills training with children. This consistent drive to improve and innovate means that children make marked progress when accessing residency.

Leaders and managers provide excellent day-to-day support and ensure that sufficient trained and experienced staff are available to meet children's needs. Staff receive training to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to support the children. Where any child has a specific need, such as a health issue, managers ensure that all staff receive training in that.

Staff receive reflective supervision and appraisals. These meetings promote the professional development of the team and ensure excellent standards of practice.

Managers have an excellent insight into how well children progress from their starting points. Managers ensure that all children accessing residency have a clear admission plan, with initial teatime visits before overnight stays. Regular monitoring and review of children's progress in residency show the positive impact that accessing the service has on children.

Managers' monitoring systems highlight areas for development and the strengths of the service. This good-quality monitoring is evaluative and reflective of the views and opinions of others, including those of parents, independent visitors and the governing body. Governors continue to report on the suitability of the service and the impact this has on children. This provides a helpful level of scrutiny.

The head of care is well supported in her role by a deputy and has close working relationships with the executive head and head of education. She understands the aims, objectives and purpose of the residential provision. This is reflected in the targets set in the school's development plan. As a result, the whole school is invested in the future of the residential provision and responsible for the development and progress of the service.

The systems for dealing with complaints are clear. There have been no formal complaints from children, parents or others since the last inspection. A full range of statutory and complementary policies and procedures are in place, and accessible via the school's website.

This was the school's first inspection since the statutory review of the national minimum standards for residential and boarding schools. The school is fully compliant with the new standards and there were no breaches or recommendations from this inspection.

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

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Inspectors

James Tallis, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

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