

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 Trust. It offers day and residential places to children aged five to 11 years with social, emotional and mental health needs.

At the time of the inspection, there were 56 pupils on roll. The school offers 33 places in its residential provision. The residential provision is in two houses on the school site.

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: 10 to 12 November 2025

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 last inspection: 15 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The individualised care and support that staff provide to children is exceptional. Staff know each child deeply and use this understanding to tailor care and education to their unique needs. Child-centred plans set ambitious goals, promoting emotional well-being and academic progress. Staff use their skills to adapt approaches and build trust through consistent, nurturing relationships, enabling children to make remarkable progress both socially and academically, while developing a strong sense of belonging.

Relationships between staff and parents are excellent. Staff work in close partnership with parents through regular, transparent communication, ensuring parents remain fully involved in their child's progress. Parents consistently praise the school's nurturing ethos and the strong, supportive relationships that help them feel valued and reassured. One parent said, 'I can only thank them for what they have done for my child. This school has been the making of them.'

Children's voices are consistently prioritised. Staff actively listen and place children at the centre of all decisions about care, learning and daily life. Creative and inclusive approaches ensure every child can share their views, which directly shape planning and routines. This genuine respect for children's perspectives helps them feel heard, valued and empowered, fostering confidence and ownership of their progress. One child said, 'There's nothing you can change. It's too good.'

Children are supported to attend and achieve both academically and personally in school. Staff ensure that children who have previously faced challenges in education flourish and achieve. Children's attendance, attainment, behaviour, social skills, independence, communication and confidence all continue to improve significantly.

Children's experiences in the residential provision are exceptional, and children make remarkable progress from their starting points. Care is nurturing and tailored to individual needs. This creates a warm, structured environment where children feel safe and confident to explore new opportunities. Children thrive emotionally, socially and academically, while enjoying friendships and fun experiences, sometimes their only opportunity to do so outside of school. Staff provide a wide range of activities that further build confidence and social skills, such as supporting children to take part in sports events and attend local football matches.

Children are well prepared for their next steps, through personalised transition programmes. Moves within school, to further education or back to mainstream provisions are managed with sensitivity. Support for children from designated staff continues after they leave school, ensuring sustained progress and a greater chance of success. As a result, children develop vital life skills, resilience and confidence, leaving school very well equipped for future success.

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

Leaders foster and maintain a positive safeguarding culture that is deeply embedded within the school. Robust systems are in place for reporting and addressing concerns promptly and effectively. Staff receive safeguarding training that is regularly refreshed and updated to ensure good practice. Clear processes exist for sharing new information, and educative resources are provided to staff, children and parents to strengthen their understanding and awareness of safeguarding issues.

Staff use a strength-based approach to behaviour management, supported by highly effective systems that nurture emotional regulation and resilience. Clear boundaries and expectations are consistently reinforced, while children are encouraged to be kind and respectful and use good manners. As a result, children become safer, and their vulnerabilities reduce through the care and support provided in residence.

Incidents in the residential provision are rare, largely due to the consistency and predictability provided to children. On the occasions when incidents do occur, they are managed effectively and sensitively. Children are supported to reflect on their actions and understand the impact of their behaviour. A restorative approach is consistently applied, helping to educate children, repair relationships and reinforce positive choices. This helps to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for all.

Staff implement detailed and individualised support plans to ensure children's safety and well-being. The strategies used are proactive, regularly reviewed and tailored to each child's needs, enabling staff to anticipate risks and respond effectively. This robust approach not only safeguards children but also promotes confidence and trust, reinforcing an environment where they feel secure and able to thrive.

Safer recruitment processes are rigorous and highly effective, with detailed records maintained for all staff. The head of care oversees thorough checks for residential staff, including measures to confirm new staff are aligned with the school's values and ethos. These systems ensure only suitable, trusted individuals are appointed, reinforcing a strong culture of safety and safeguarding throughout the provision.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders across the school are inspirational, ensuring seamless alignment between the school and residential provision. They lead by example, creating a supportive culture that empowers staff to transform children's lives. The residential provision is integral to the school, delivering an impressive service that enriches children's experiences and enhances their life opportunities.

The head of care is an exceptional leader with a deep knowledge and understanding of every child. She demonstrates a clear and ambitious vision and sets consistently high expectations for all children. Her leadership ensures high standards of care at all

times. Supported by an equally dedicated deputy, she drives a culture of excellence where children consistently meet and exceed their goals.

Leaders and managers ensure continuity of care through a stable, experienced core staff team. Any gaps are filled by school staff who already know the children well, maintaining familiarity and trust. Staff speak extremely positively about working in the residential provision, the school's ethos and the excellent support they receive. This stability and expertise are key to children achieving consistently positive outcomes.

There are effective monitoring and governance of the residential provision, including local authority visits, peer reviews, governor reports and stakeholder consultations. These processes provide robust internal and external scrutiny. The independent person also regularly visits the residential provision and meets with the staff and children. This rigorous oversight ensures that the outstanding level of care for children is consistently maintained and improved.

Staff receive a comprehensive induction and tailored training programme in line with the ethos of the school. Learning is grounded in theory-based practice and embedded across the school. Regular, high-quality supervision and annual appraisals enable staff to reflect on their practice and focus on children's progress. Professional development is strongly supported, with leaders ensuring access to resources that enhance practice and promote ongoing professional growth.

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: Janey Hancock

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01782 550202

Email address: jhancock@icely.manorhall.academy

Inspectors

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

Sonia Sullivan, Social Care Inspector

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