

Halewood Centre for Learning (Community)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135475
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	343811
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1164
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Cooper
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Behan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Avenue Wood Road, Halewood Knowsley, Merseyside L26 1UU
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They visited 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and representatives from organisations working in partnership with the school. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including improvement planning, policy documents, the school's own data and students' work. Inspectors also analysed 116 parental questionnaires as well as those from a sample of students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following;

- The effectiveness of the school's cycle of monitoring, evaluation and action planning.
- The use of data by all staff, particularly in tracking students' progress and setting challenging targets.
- The extent of students' awareness of a range of faiths and cultures.

Information about the school

Halewood Centre for Learning opened in June 2009 following the closure of Halewood College on an adjacent site. The school is larger- than- average and occupies a new building. Almost all students are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has specialist status in performing arts.

A temporary governing body has been in place since the school opened. A new, substantive governing body has now been formed but is yet to meet; the first meeting is due to take place in mid-October 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Halewood Centre for Learning has quickly become established as an important hub within the local community. This good school has wasted no time in forming highly effective partnerships with a wide range of external agencies. This outstanding partnership work enhances the school's curriculum and makes a significant contribution to the excellent quality of care, guidance and support provided for students. A typical view of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire is reflected in the comment, 'I am proud to say my children attend this school.'

The new building with its innovative design provides a high quality physical environment for learning. The visibility around the site is a key factor in ensuring that students feel extremely safe at all times. The students themselves are very proud of their new school, with comments such as 'The building is just fantastic!' being common. The school's specialist status has a positive impact on students' confidence and self-esteem as well as providing a wealth of opportunities for them to experience a variety of performances in dance, drama and music.

Students achieve well. From starting points that are generally below average, they make good progress and attainment by the end of Year 11 is broadly average. The school's data show that trends in attainment and progress are improving. Staff use data well in order to track students' progress and to set challenging, achievable targets. Students have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They relish the opportunity to take on responsibilities and make an outstanding contribution to the school and local communities. Sixth form students are appreciative of the wide range of opportunities provided for them, and the overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Most teachers plan learning carefully and ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace. Many staff use assessment information well in order to set work that is suitably challenging for all students. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, staff do not always have high enough expectations of their students, who are sometimes given too long to complete simple tasks. In such lessons the pace of learning slows and students become disengaged.

The senior leadership team, exceptionally well led by the headteacher, has worked with great success in communicating a clear vision for the school's future to all staff. The improving trend in outcomes for students is due largely to the attention paid to monitoring and evaluation, leading to high quality action plans that are regularly reviewed. The school places great importance on safeguarding procedures, which are exemplary. Although the new governing body has yet to meet, senior leaders and the governors themselves recognise the importance of ensuring that all members have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to provide high quality challenge and support. The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and areas for development, and progress against all

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key priorities is reviewed on a regular basis. Capacity for sustained improvement is, therefore, good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - all staff have sufficiently high expectations of their students
 - the pace of learning is maintained throughout lessons
 - questioning is used effectively to extend students' knowledge and understanding.
- Ensure that the new governing body has the necessary skills and knowledge to provide high quality challenge and support to school leaders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the majority of lessons students are enthusiastic learners, keen to achieve well. They say that many lessons are 'fun and relevant' and it is clear that students are highly motivated in such lessons. In one outstanding lesson observed, students assessed each other with skill and sensitivity, showing excellent peer support. In a drama lesson, Year 11 students displayed great maturity, empathy and respect for each other's views, working very successfully as a team. In such lessons, students make very rapid progress; overall, the quality of learning and progress is good.

Attainment in mathematics and English by the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly average and improving. The school's focus on developing students' literacy skills is starting to have a clear impact on achievement, not just in English but across a range of subjects. The achievement of all groups of students, including boys and girls, is similar. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress. These students benefit greatly from the literacy support provided, as well as the personalised programmes of study prepared for them.

Students have an exceptionally good understanding of how to stay safe. They take great care when moving around the building and are also acutely aware of issues related to internet safety. As a result of the school's relentless drive to encourage students to attend regularly, attendance is now above average.

Students' moral and social development is good, due largely to the school's strong provision in this area. They have a good awareness of cultural diversity, including understanding of a range of faiths and cultures within the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers form strong working relationships with students. The school's common approach to planning helps to ensure that teachers maintain a sharp focus on students' learning and progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and good classroom management skills. In the best lessons, questioning is used very effectively to extend students' knowledge and understanding. This was evident in an outstanding dance lesson where the teacher tailored questions to match the ability levels of different students, ensuring that all were suitably challenged. Students responded to the teacher's expectations that subject specific language should be used, and all made excellent progress during the lesson. In less effective lessons, opportunities are often missed to probe students' understanding. The school's focus on developing the use of assessment is now beginning to pay dividends, with students' assessment of their own work and each other's work being a common feature of good and outstanding lessons.

The curriculum makes a strong contribution to students' good achievement. Project-based work at Key Stage 3 enables staff to make topics relevant and enjoyable. All students spoken to during the inspection were very happy with the wide variety of options at Key Stage 4, typically commenting that 'there's something to suit everyone'. The school takes great care in personalising the curriculum to meet individual students' needs; for example, excellent partnerships with a local training provider have enabled the school to provide tailored programmes of work-based learning for particular groups of students. Detailed

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mapping of curricular provision across the school is under way but is yet to be fully established.

Close attention to the precise needs of individual students underpins the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided. Excellent induction systems ensure that students feel safe and secure as they join the school community and they continue to benefit from outstanding quality pastoral care throughout their time at the school. Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. Students recognise and greatly appreciate the quality of the school's provision in this area.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership has a vigorous and unyielding ambition for rapid and sustained improvement. A clear focus on improving students' achievement has been firmly established by senior leaders from the very beginning. All staff are fully aware of their role in this process and consequently, in the 16 months that it has been open, the school has made significant progress in several important areas, notably the development of excellent quality partnership work and the establishment of exemplary safeguarding procedures. There is meticulous attention to detail in matters relating to child protection, keeping young people safe and in giving them the skills to look after themselves and one another. Teaching and learning are monitored well by managers at all levels and careful consideration is given to providing teachers with tailored professional development; as a result, the proportion of good and better teaching has risen over the past year. Those governors that have been involved with the school since it opened are highly committed to their work and are understandably proud of their involvement with the school. However, they recognise the need to quickly establish the new governing body as a supportive and influential group, particularly as a number of its members are new to the role. Engagement with parents and carers is good and improving. The school has sought the views of parents and carers and made changes as a result. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. All groups of students achieve well and every student has the opportunity to take advantage of all the school has to offer, for example, in extra-curricular activities. The school has undertaken a thorough analysis of its own context and has made a good start in promoting community cohesion beyond the immediate community.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form has generally been below average. They make good progress during their time in the sixth form so that, by the time they complete courses, their attainment is broadly average. Data show that attainment and progress are improving and inspection evidence supports this. Students are mature and responsible. They have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their time in the sixth form, as shown by their above average attendance. Good teaching and a varied curriculum support students' good achievement, although the level of challenge for the most able students is occasionally not high enough. Most students make consistently good progress and feel that they are cared for well, benefiting from good quality advice and guidance.

The sixth form is well led and managed and is bringing about improvement in provision and outcomes. Self-evaluation reflects an accurate view of strengths and areas for development, although leaders acknowledge the need for more sharply focused action planning to accelerate improvement further.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

Approximately a tenth of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire, which represents a fairly low rate of response. The returns were overwhelmingly positive, with the very large majority indicating that their children enjoy school and almost all parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe. Very few questionnaires included negative comments and these did not follow any particular theme. A number of questionnaires included positive comments that typically expressed a general satisfaction with the school, through comments such as 'I am happy with the progress that my children are making at this school' and 'I am very happy that my child's progress is monitored throughout the year and any successes or concerns can be addressed promptly.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Halewood Centre for Learning (Community) to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	30	73	63	6	5	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	49	42	64	55	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	31	62	53	13	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	32	68	59	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	29	74	64	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	26	68	59	11	9	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	21	75	65	14	12	3	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	25	69	59	7	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	28	69	59	6	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	33	68	59	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	21	68	59	9	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	34	29	72	62	6	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	35	66	57	6	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Halewood Centre for Learning (Community), Knowsley, L26 1UU

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us when we came to inspect your school recently. I would like to share our main findings with you.

You attend a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, for example, the excellent links with the local community and the highly effective partnerships that have been formed with a wide range of external agencies. Your awareness of issues related to safety is exceptional, and the school takes the utmost care in ensuring that you are safe and secure at all times. This is helped by the school environment, which is extremely impressive, and we were pleased that you are clearly appreciative of your new building and treat it with such respect.

You are making good progress and data show that trends in achievement are improving. Teaching is good overall and we saw some outstanding lessons during the inspection. We were particularly impressed by those teachers who used questioning to extend your knowledge and understanding, and it was good to see you accurately assessing your own work and that of your fellow students. We have suggested that the school aims to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by focusing on the use of questioning and the pace of learning, as well as ensuring that staff always have high expectations of you.

The school has not been open for very long and we were impressed that so much has been achieved in this time. This is largely due to the high quality of leadership, and because all staff have worked hard. A new governing body has just been formed and we have recommended that particular attention is paid to ensuring that all its members are well prepared so that they can offer support and challenge to the school's leaders. We are delighted that you are proud to be students at Halewood Centre for Learning and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Julie Price Grimshaw

Lead Inspector

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