

# West Kent Health Needs Education Service

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132186
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	360391
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bill (William) Stoneham

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Drummond Millis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	The School House Gravesend DA12 4BN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Seven lessons were seen which were taught by six teachers. In addition, meetings were held with members of the management, local authority representatives, staff and groups of students. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised including the service's development plan, its self-review, analysis of the attainment and progress of its students, records of lesson observations, policies, and 19 parental and carer questionnaires.

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

- What are the factors which affect the trends in attainment across the service?
- How effective are the care, guidance and support provided for students who may otherwise become disaffected?
- How well has the recent move to a new main campus been managed?

## Information about the school

West Kent Health Needs Education Service (WKHNES) provides education for students who are not in school because of their physical or mental health and a number who have phobias and anxieties in addition to their primary health needs. Students learn in a range of settings depending on the extent of these needs, and may move from one to another as their health improves. These include hospital, home, on the main Birling Base at Leybourne, or in one of two distant bases located in Tonbridge and Seal, near Sevenoaks. Approximately half of the students spend all or part of their time in one of the three bases. The Birling Centre opened as recently as September 2010. Prior to this, the main base had been located in temporary accommodation in Gravesend.

The number and nature of the student roll fluctuates greatly. The majority of students are in Key Stage 4. Just over 10% of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with most having a statement. The most common form of special educational needs and/or disabilities is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At the time of the inspection, virtually all students had a White British background. All primary-aged pupils were being taught by the home-tuition service and there were no students following post-16 programmes of study.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

West Kent Health Needs Education Service (WKHNES) provides an outstanding education for its students. The outstanding quality of its work reflects the sheer dedication of staff who are committed to changing and improving the fortunes of young people who face severe difficulties and traumas in their lives.

WKHNES students frequently have prior levels of attainment that are low for their age. This is usually a reflection of the disturbances they have endured to their education. Some students, particularly girls, have exceptionally high levels of prior attainment. The service has developed good, detailed and rigorous assessment systems and can show that students, including those with often extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties, make good progress in their learning and their social skills. Those who are reintegrated into mainstream schools frequently return with levels of attainment that are higher than expected. Those who sit their GCSE grades regularly do better than predicted. Over the last three years, there has been a sustained improvement in the number of students gaining five A\*-C grades (including English and mathematics), with some students gaining A-A\*. In addition to its success at reintegrating students back to school, the service has a good and improving record of ensuring Year 11 leavers have appropriate education and work-based placements to move onto. The majority of these students leave with levels of attainment that are close to the national average for their age. More-able students frequently leave with impressive GCSE qualifications.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Excellent partnerships involving education, care and health professionals ensure high-quality outcomes. As one education professional commented, 'The education needs service is a lifesaver. The difference this service makes to young people is staggering.' Extensive work is done to promote healthy and safe lifestyles and safeguarding arrangements are good. The students feel safe and most make at least good efforts to be healthy. This is evidenced by the numbers who participate in physical education. This includes home-tutored students for whom arrangements are made so that they can access sports, such as table tennis and badminton at a local sports centre. Various other outstanding features can be identified, including the engagement of parents and carers, the quality of the curriculum, especially the care taken to meet individual needs, and the work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

The students' progress is further helped by teaching that is invariably good and occasionally outstanding. Assessment procedures are good and staff are well informed about the needs and abilities of each student. The strength of the partnerships with 'home' schools contributes to good learning so that all, including students educated at home, maintain momentum in their studies.

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Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection. Behaviour continues to be outstanding. Attainment shows a rising trend of improvement and assessment procedures are now more robust. The unit is highly successful in reintegrating its students. The good management committee is most supportive. The recent move of the main provision to the new Birling Campus has witnessed a significant improvement in accommodation. Relocation offers the management committee and the staff a wonderful opportunity to work with the students to develop the facilities and to utilise the extensive grounds as an exciting outdoor learning environment. This is an opportunity for the students to make an even greater contribution to their school. A track record of sustained improvement amply illustrates the ambition and drive of the excellent headteacher and his strong team of senior and middle leaders and all other staff irrespective of the roles or position. Rigorous self-evaluation enables strengths and areas for development to be identified and appropriate plans made, reflecting well an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Give the students every possible opportunity to contribute to the development of their new campus at Birling, including involving them in the design and development of the outdoor areas as learning and social environments.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

In lessons, students' behaviour is invariably excellent and they respond well to the challenges set. On the rare occasions where a student shows signs of being unsettled, the disturbance is quickly and effectively handled by the teacher and support staff, and the lesson continues. In lessons, students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress because classrooms are settled and staff are prepared well. As a result, the students respond favourably to the set challenges and enjoy their work.

Students often join WKHNES with low levels of prior attainment reflecting the acute disruption to their education. Many are predicted to gain few or no qualifications. Data clearly show that those students who are reintegrated into full-time education return with improved records of attainment and are better equipped emotionally and socially to cope with the demands of mainstream school. Students who stay until the end of Year 11 leave with some qualifications. Many, including those with statements of special educational needs and/or disabilities, gain GCSE accreditation, including grades at C or above. This is a remarkable outcome given their circumstances. The service has a proud and improving record of enabling Year 11 students to progress to further education or the world of work.

Responsibility and enjoyment are actively encouraged. Through their own council, the students have a say in improvements and have recently submitted suggestions about how the new Birling facility might be redecorated. Students make good efforts to pursue healthy lifestyles, with a high number participating in physical activities, for example. Attendance is now close to being average but this outcome fails to reflect the hard work being done to reduce absence. Most students now have vastly improved attendance records, with a significant number attending almost all of the time. Economic well-being is promoted well because of the good emphasis that is placed on improving the students' skills in literacy and numeracy, in particular.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Most lessons are interesting and succeed in engaging and motivating the students. Their learning is good because they are consistently well taught by staff with detailed subject knowledge. The working relationships between staff and students are excellent. Good learning is further promoted through activities that are very well planned to meet students' individual needs. This was amply illustrated in many lessons and especially in an outstanding English session. On the rare occasions where the pace of learning is slower and effectiveness is lessened, it is because the teacher endeavours to do too much of the work for the students. Such incidents are rare. The lessons observed during the inspection featured mainly good and outstanding learning because of the challenges set and the high expectations.

The curriculum is outstanding. Students enjoy following programmes that have been carefully structured to meet their own requirements and curriculum innovation has significantly boosted attainment. This is illustrated by the curriculum partnerships that have been developed with schools in West Kent. This has enhanced the provision for subjects as diverse as vocational education, design and technology, photography and mathematics. Such partnerships have boosted attainment. The curriculum is further enhanced by a strong extra-curricular programme. Much thought, for example, has been given to ensuring students have access to good-quality sports teaching. The curriculum is designed to promote safe and healthy lifestyles as well as boosting confidence. The

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contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Some of the art and photography work is especially good at challenging ideas and make a very good contribution to spiritual and moral development.

WKHNES provides an outstanding, caring and supportive environment. There are excellent trusting relationships with parents and carers. The individual needs of all students have high priority. Families and carers, even from difficult-to-reach groups, are fully involved in their child's education and care. Its outstanding work with an array of agencies greatly enhances the students' learning, confidence and social well-being. As one parent commented: 'As a result of attending WKHNES my child has started to enjoy learning once again. We are very pleased with the excellent standard of both the education and care our child receives.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, plus the committed and dedicated support of all staff, results in a clear focus on successfully driving improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the good management committee, are ambitious for success and fully committed and involved in securing improvements. The beneficial working partnerships with many agencies help to secure excellent and individualised programmes for education and social care, and successfully promote good learning and outstanding care, guidance and support.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Appropriate risk assessments are applied and all appropriate policies are in place and monitored. There is a keen determination to ensure that the students enjoy an appropriate education in a safe setting. Leaders and managers have been most effective in achieving this.

Students make good progress because the management of teaching and learning has a good focus on raising attainment. An emphasis on respect, rights, boosting confidence, self-esteem and encouraging responsibility underpins much of its work. This makes an excellent contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination. Good efforts have been made to promote community cohesion. The students make a good contribution to their own community and their support for various charities at home and abroad, such as a cancer charity, 'Jeans for Genes' and support for under-privileged families in Eastern Europe ensure that the students' knowledge and understanding of the wider world is developed well.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Approximately 20% of parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire, with some adding comments. The overwhelming message to emerge is that parents and carers believe that the service is making a significant contribution to enhancing life chances by helping the students to overcome their problems and anxieties. A small proportion of parents and carers offered some critical judgements, though no trend in dissatisfaction could be identified.

The overwhelmingly positive views expressed by parents and carers reflect the inspector's judgements of the excellent quality of the service and the education and care provided.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Kent Health Needs Education Service 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 inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	16	10	53	3	16	3	16
The school keeps my child safe	11	58	6	32	1	5	1	5
My school informs me about my child's progress	6	23	11	58	0	0	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	42	8	42	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	53	7	37	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	37	10	53	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	32	11	58	0	0	0	0
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)	6	32	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	37	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	42	7	37	2	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	53	7	37	2	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	63	6	32	2	11	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



12 October 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of West Kent Health Needs Education Service, West Malling, ME19 5QA**

I thoroughly enjoyed my recent visit and thank you for making me so welcome. I have fond memories of my visit. I enjoyed talking to you and learning about your views. You told me about the quality of education you receive and I am pleased to say that my visit confirmed your opinions. You receive an excellent education and level of care and support. Many of you are making significant strides in your education and personal development. The staff help you to do this but you also help by your excellent behaviour and your enthusiasm. Your service has many strengths. You particularly benefit from outstanding care, guidance and support, and the work that is done with various partners and agencies to improve your education. The service benefits from excellent leadership and management. You are taught well. I was impressed by the work I saw, especially some of your photography.

This is an exciting time for WKHNES with the recent move to the new campus at Birling. In order for the service to build on its strengths, I am recommending that your staff ensure that you play a significant role in designing and implementing changes and improvements to this facility; especially in developing the outdoor areas as a learning and social facility.

Thank you again for making me so welcome. I enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector

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