

The Canterbury Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135952
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	360784
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Westington HMI

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jacqui Hughes
Headteacher	Mr David Whitney
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Eccles New Road Salford M5 5AG
Telephone number	0161 921 2550
Fax number	0161 921 2550
Email address	david.whitney@salford.gov.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. They observed nine teachers during 13 lessons which included two home visits with teachers as part of the home tuition service and a lesson observed in a local fitness centre. Inspectors held meetings with: the head of the centre and his deputy head of centre; members of the teaching and support staff; a local authority officer; members of the management committee; the connexions adviser; the school nurse; a group of parents; the school council and a small group of students. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation including development plans, management reports, all safeguarding and other policies, students' records and the centre's data on students' progress. In addition, they read 13 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as 21 staff and 29 student questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the centre's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Students' levels of attainment and the progress they make from their starting points.
- How successful individual students are in achieving their personal development objectives.
- The quality of leadership and management, especially the extent to which the capacity to improve and lead the centre exists within the centre's staff beyond the level of the head of centre.

Information about the school

The centre was established in September 2009 as a result of the closure of The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital School. Most students use the centre by attending for lessons, either on full-time or part-time timetables; other students are taught at home by staff from the centre. One member of staff works off-site in the assessment classroom at the local Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Gateway Unit, one day each week.

Most students have a combination of medical and learning needs. For nine students, their most significant need is their medical condition; for 13 students it is their mental health needs. Eight students exhibit emotional, behavioural and social difficulties; three have autistic spectrum disorder and small numbers of other students have specific learning difficulties, profound hearing impairment and moderate learning difficulties. Two students who transferred from the hospital school have statements of special educational needs and three others are in the process of being assessed for a statement.

At the time of the inspection, 26 students are attending full-time classes and six are on integration packages or following a reduced timetable. Seven students are being taught at home. Fifteen are male and 24, female. Eleven students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most students are in Key Stage 4 and the vast majority of students are White British.

So far this academic year, the centre has worked with 51 students, with 36 accessing the centre and 15 being taught at home. During the last full school year, the centre worked with 72 students.

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

'This school has saved my child's life,' said the mother of one student to an inspector. Her view of the work of the Canterbury Centre is not unique. 'It's brilliant', said another, 'The staff here go beyond what is expected—they nurture every child'. 'Look at us,' said yet another, 'We are parents who are smiling again.' Parents who contacted and met with inspectors were overwhelmingly fulsome in their praise of the staff at the centre and the work they do. For these parents and their children, the centre provides a lifeline. Inspection findings endorse the views of parents. Their children are in good hands. The Canterbury Centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support for the students in its care. Its engagement with parents is outstanding as are its links with other agencies and partners.

Despite the medical and mental health issues faced by students, their outcomes are good. Many have not attended school for extended periods of time and are helped to re-engage with education, attend the centre regularly and establish friendships. Their behaviour is good and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They are able to make choices about the number and range of subjects they study at Key Stage 4 and contribute to the decision making within the centre, for example on the timing of the school day. The good curriculum is personalised as much as possible to cater for students' intellectual, personal development and medical needs and all Key Stage 4 students leave with sufficient qualifications to enable them to go on to further education, either following a formal A level route or vocational route. Consequently, their progress while at the centre is good and, for some students, it is outstanding. All students gain qualifications in a core set of subjects: English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art but some students take eight or nine GCSEs and achieve very high grades. The standards attained overall are average but are higher in science, art, textiles and ICT than in mathematics and English. Students with a formal statement of special educational needs also make good progress as a result of the individual care and attention they receive. The small number of Key Stage 3 students who attend the centre are successfully supported to reintegrate into mainstream schools. Space is at a premium in the centre, inside and out. To ensure that students have access to physical education, the centre uses the local leisure centre. All students enjoy the walk to and from the leisure centre and most enjoy being able to use the gym and play indoor football and badminton. However, a very small number expressed a desire to try other activities that are not yet provided by the centre, such as dancing, swimming or aerobics.

The quality of teaching is good overall and some of it is outstanding. Inspectors observed outstanding teaching in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Almost all aspects of leadership and management are good and some are outstanding. Given the very short space of time in which the centre has established itself as a new

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entity, the quality of self-evaluation, of teaching and of the environment, the students' outcomes in its first year of operation, and the response of parents, carers and partners to its work, it is very evident that it has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- Broaden the range of opportunities for sporting and recreational activities to match students' interests.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly average. The range of their ability is very wide: some are capable of undertaking a clutch of GCSEs and gaining the highest grades in, for example, science or art. Others require support to work towards entry level qualifications. However, almost all students have had extensive periods of non-attendance since primary school, either for medical or mental health reasons. Consequently, on entry to the centre many have considerable gaps in their knowledge and skills and are functioning at levels below the average for their age. Despite this, the outstanding care, guidance and support each individual pupil receives results in them all making good and, in some instances, outstanding progress during their time at the centre. Evidence from lesson observations and from students' work confirms that they make at least good progress and in many cases rapidly catch up on lost time. Records show that, for example, one pupil left primary school with the reading and writing ability of a six-year-old and made little or no progress throughout the first three years of secondary school. In an outstanding English lesson, inspectors observed this young person reading extracts from Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', discussing the relationship between Lady Macbeth and her husband and then writing an analysis on a laptop as part of a GCSE assessment. Inspectors examined several examples of the pupil's written work, all of which were carefully constructed and well written using the laptop. More remarkable was that this lesson was for the lower ability Year 11 group. Students are clear about their future intentions, for example one young person explained that he would like to study chemistry at university; another that he would like to go into music production and another to go into catering.

The centre enables students to begin to develop work routines and habits that they have lost through long periods of absence. Individual pupil attendance varies widely but is vastly improved on the previous position. Lower ability students successfully complete life skills courses. Personal, social and health lessons cover financial capability and all students are prepared to undertake work experience but, on occasions, one or two are not able to cope with the challenge. Since January 2010, the school has organised three residential courses; a total of 18 different pupils have taken part, 10 of whom have attended more than one.

Students value their school community and are active through the school council. They participate in fund-raising for outdoor equipment and for charities and have contributed to the centre's anti-bullying policy.

Students appreciate the work of the centre's health worker who provides, for instance, smoking cessation sessions and to whom they can self-refer for any concern they have.

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

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

The core purpose of the centre is to provide a lifeline to young people who have fallen out of the school system for medical reasons; to rebuild their self-confidence; to re-establish good work habits and to plug the gaps in the students' skills and knowledge. The centre succeeds exceptionally well in this. The care, guidance and support of students are paramount and this underpins all of the centre's work. The students achieve well because they are extremely well looked after and cared for. The centre staff know each young person as an individual and each is provided with a tailored programme of support and care. As a result, relationships between the adults and young people and between the students themselves are good. Students want to learn and do well.

The quality of teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Key to the quality of the teaching is the careful assessment of students' progress over time and within lessons and the tailoring of lessons to the needs of individuals. The classrooms contain well-designed desks with flip up computers that enable students to move seamlessly from hand-written paper and pencil activities to computer-based work; as a result, time is used well and lessons are productive. Most teachers have high expectations; their subject knowledge is good and they foster students' independence.

As far as is possible, the centre tries to provide a normal mainstream curriculum and teaching staff are flexible in trying to meet the needs of individual students who want to

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take specific GCSE courses. More-able students can take a full range of GCSE courses, including sciences and humanities to ensure that they can follow formal A-level courses subsequently. All teaching staff are secondary subject specialists and between them cover English, mathematics, science, ICT, art, citizenship, humanities and careers. Teachers deliver small numbers of lessons which fall outside their areas of traditional expertise in order that students are provided with as broad a curriculum as possible. GCSE examinations are offered in all core subjects and in textiles and child development. Students are also entered for assessment in the 'Preparation for working life' award, Certificate in i-media and ALAN tests in both literacy and numeracy. The centre varies the curriculum offered year-on-year depending on the needs and interests of each cohort. Very vulnerable students who prove unable to cope with full-time attendance are offered a two day per week timetable which covers English, mathematics, ICT and art. The physical education consultant/coach organises a range of physical activities, for example, cycling and orienteering and residential trips.

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?

The centre is well led and well managed. The head of centre provides very clear direction for the centre and, in a very short space of time, since the closure of the Hospital School, has overseen the refurbishment of the building, the establishment of new routines and of new corporate management arrangements. The centre runs well. It is a testament to the commitment and dedication of the head of centre that he oversaw its establishment and led it to its current position without the support of a deputy of centre. The head of the centre has the full backing of parents and carers. The recent appointment of the substantive deputy head of centre provides additional strength to the management team in the school. Subject leaders have a good overview of their areas and plans for further development.

Without doubt, a strength of the centre is the link it forges with parents, carers and other partners. The lead inspector met with a group of parents and carers and heard moving testimonies about how the centre had turned around their children's lives and impacted, for the better, upon the lives of whole families. Another inspector heard from external partners how the centre works tirelessly to support individual students. Parents' and carers' questionnaires show 100% confidence in the centre to keep their children safe.

The centre has all necessary policies in place to deal with the safety and welfare of students. Clear and accurate records are kept of incidents and the action taken in response. Designated child protection staff hold positions of sufficient seniority and all

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staff have received recent, up-to-date training. Safe recruitment procedures are handled by the local authority. Health and safety on site is appropriate with fencing in place and security locks on doors. Adults' awareness of health and safety is evident in lessons, such as cookery and art where knives are used, and e-safety measures are in place on computer search engines. The centre ensures a rapid response to unexplained pupil absences.

The management committee provides good oversight of the work of the centre. It meets regularly to review the centre's progress and has a clear view of the centre's work and performance. Committee members have uppermost in mind the life chances of each student and the need to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The centre promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, although within the centre's own community links, it is outstanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the work of the centre. They highlight the care and attention shown by staff and the positive impact of the centre on their children. Two parental questionnaires indicated disagreement with the statements on the questionnaire.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Canterbury Centre 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 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 39 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	4	31	8	62	1	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	62	5	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	46	6	46	1	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	46	7	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	46	6	46	1	8	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	46	5	38	1	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	54	5	38	1	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	38	5	38	2	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	46	7	54	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	46	7	54	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	46	6	46	1	8	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Canterbury Centre, Salford, M5 5AG

I recently visited your centre with Mrs Austin. Thank you so much for making us feel welcome, especially those of you who met with us and who welcomed Mrs Austin into your homes.

We really enjoyed our time with you. We found out a lot about the Canterbury Centre. You are in good hands because the adults there look after you outstandingly well and they work exceedingly hard to make sure that you have access to all the help and support you need. Your parents and families are delighted with how you are getting on at the centre and they know, as we do, that the centre is doing a good job in teaching you and preparing you for the next stage of your life.

Since you joined the centre, you have made good progress in your studies. Indeed, some of you have made outstanding progress. Well done! Your work in art, textiles, science and ICT is great. We think though that the standards in English and mathematics could be even higher, so we have asked your head of centre to have a look at this. Also, we know that some of you would like to try some different activities, such as dancing, aerobics or swimming, so we have asked the head of centre and the management committee to give this some thought too.

One more thing, remember to say 'Thank you' to the head of centre, because he has worked really hard to get the centre to be as good as it is.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Angela Westington

Her Majesty's Inspector

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