

Woodlands Education Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115840
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357827
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

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	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	null null
Headteacher	Wendy Springett
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
School address	Park House Havant PO9 4AJ
Telephone number	02392 442530
Fax number	02392 442532
Email address	wendy.springett@hants.gov.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Inspection number	357827

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector observed the 10 full-time teachers and monitored performance in 11 lessons. Discussions were held with the Chair of the Management Committee and with staff, parents and carers, and pupils. The work of the centre was observed and the inspector scrutinised the improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and management committee meetings, a range of other documentation and four completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the systems to set challenging targets and track pupils' progress to ensure that all make the progress of which they are capable.
- The management structures to determine their effectiveness in ensuring quality provision for all pupils.
- The systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The curriculum to ensure that it meets the very wide range of pupils' needs and how effective it is in enabling them to re-integrate into mainstream schools.

Information about the school

Woodlands Education Centre provides for pupils who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school or are at risk of being excluded. There are a large minority who have a range of health problems, including physical and complex mental health difficulties alongside severe anxiety and/or social phobia. A very small minority have a statement of special educational needs, usually related to their emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. All have missed substantial periods of their education. Over half the pupils are dual registered with a mainstream high school. Almost without exception, pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a few looked after pupils. The number eligible for free school meals is well above average. Since the last inspection, the centre has moved to purpose-built accommodation on a new site and there have been changes to the management committee including the appointment of a new chair. The centre holds the Enhanced Healthy Schools award.

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

Woodlands Education Centre provides a good education for its pupils. The care, guidance and support provided by all staff are excellent and pupils make outstanding progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem from a very low base. Pupils' progress in their academic learning is good and they gain qualifications in a range of GCSE subjects through which they are able to move successfully into further education, training or the world of work.

The centre has rigorous systems in place, such as its first-day absence procedures and its rewards system, which are effective in promoting attendance and encouraging punctuality. As a result, attendance overall is broadly average which, for many pupils, is a significant improvement. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in and around the school and when they are on trips out. This reflects the dramatic improvement all make compared with their behaviour when they first enter the centre. As a result, those who re-integrate into a mainstream school make a success of their placement. Those who move to college, work or training successfully develop the strategies they need to meet the challenges they will face. Pupils make a highly effective contribution to the centre and the wider community, and have an excellent awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle, which is reflected in the significant improvements to their daily lifestyles.

The curriculum is effective, being well balanced and giving a clear focus to the development of pupils' basic skills. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers establish excellent relationships with their pupils and these are the foundation of the exemplary guidance and support for pupils' personal development. The staff know each pupil well and use this knowledge effectively to address pupils' personal needs. In a few lessons, teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of teaching strategies to maximise the progress made by each pupil.

The headteacher provides a very clear vision about how the provision should develop. In communicating this to staff, she is well supported by her deputy headteacher. Together, they have established a stable staffing base and mapped out a clear path for improvement based on accurate and honest self-evaluation. This has led to very effective teamwork across the teaching, support and administrative staff. Systems to monitor and evaluate the provision have been developed well and provide high-quality information which gives a clear overview of the centre's performance. Since the last inspection, the management committee has undergone considerable changes in personnel, including the appointment of a new chair, so that it now has the skills and determination to act effectively to challenge senior leaders and bring about improvements in provision. However, these improvements have been fairly recent and, at times, the role of the committee in effecting change has been too slow. The centre's work with parents and carers is exemplary and partnerships with other professionals are used extremely well to promote pupils' needs

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

and well-being. The centre ensures that pupils have high-quality opportunities for a 'second chance' in education and it works effectively to address discrimination. The improvements which the centre has effected on pupils' achievements, their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning, linked to the effectiveness of its self-evaluation, show that the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies so that the progress made by each pupil is maximised.
- Use the skills of the management committee to full advantage to help to drive school improvement at a faster pace.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Since the last inspection, the number of pupils gaining GCSE A* to G and at A* to C grades has risen and are now close to those expected nationally. Given their low starting points on entry, this represents good progress and achievement. The present pupils, particularly those in Year 11, are on course to further improve on these achievements. There are no differences in the progress made by different gender groups or those with different needs. Most pupils have gaps in their knowledge resulting from their erratic attendance patterns at their previous schools and the centre is particularly effective in helping pupils to address these. This is due, in part, to pupils being extremely well engaged and motivated, particularly those whose previous experience of education has been negative. Through good and consistent management of behaviour, staff ensure that a secure base is set from which academic learning can be developed. Pupils learn to concentrate and listen to the opinions of others. In an excellent Year 11 English lesson, for example, the teacher used her knowledge of pupils' needs well, providing a very wide range of teaching styles to meet the ways in which individuals wanted to learn.

All staff have high expectations and provide good role models to pupils. Linked to the effective development of their personal skills, this enables pupils to make significant changes in their attitudes both within the centre and in their lives at home. Pupils explained how they learn to keep fit both through timetabled physical education sessions in 'Activities' time and by participating in out-of-school clubs. A significant number acknowledged how they have taken advantage of information about sexual health, tobacco and drug abuse to adopt a more healthy lifestyle. A session with the school nurse about sexually transmitted diseases demonstrated the effectiveness of such learning about health issues. The centre's Enhanced Healthy Schools status reflects the good practice that exists within the centre. Pupils are very supportive of the centre's reward system for good behaviour, work and attendance. All feel safe and many explained that the centre provides a safer environment than their previous schools.

The centre's first-day absence procedures are operated with rigour by the administrative staff. Pupils respond well to this and attendance rates have been considerably improved, although the centre realises that with some pupils there is still some way to go to fully effect improvement in this area. The improvement that pupils are making in improving their attendance is a major factor in enabling disaffected pupils to re-engage in education. Pupils are challenged to manage their own behaviour and all rise to this and make significant improvement, including those who are in the centre for a very short period of

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

time. Most now enjoy coming to school. Pupils make an extremely positive contribution to their immediate community through the school council. Their work in the local community includes entertaining local elderly residents, involvement in the Prince's Trust and many fund-raising activities. The literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications they gain, together with the gains in their personal skills, prepare them well for life when they leave the centre or return to mainstream education.

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3
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?

The very effective individual mentoring and tutorial sessions underpin pupils' learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and in their planning they always identify the needs of their pupils. However, in a few lessons, this does not extend to clearly identifying the range of teaching approaches they will use to fully challenge each individual. In these lessons, although the vast majority of pupils make good progress, it is not maximised for everyone. Generally, teachers use resources, particularly interactive whiteboard technology, very well to interest and engage pupils. In most lessons, such as mathematics and ICT, the range of activities is very well matched to pupils' needs. Assessment is used well to ensure pupils are set challenging targets. Teachers mark work conscientiously and give pupils effective feedback about how to improve.

The curriculum includes good links with mainstream schools to support pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 to re-integrate back into mainstream settings. The recent development of

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

timetabled 'Activities' sessions for all pupils, focused on emotional literacy in academic subjects and a wide range of physical activities, is having a very positive effect on engaging and motivating pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.

Staff make sure that all pupils, including those who arrive at different times over the year, settle quickly and happily into life in the various aspects of the centre's provision. Transition arrangements for those moving into the centre and for those who move to other schools and colleges are excellent and contribute extremely well to reducing pupils' anxieties. Staff support pupils extremely well, listening to their problems, providing advice and helping them to gain the confidence they need to manage their own learning more effectively. They are given excellent guidance about careers and opportunities available to them when they leave the centre.

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 headteacher provides the determination, commitment and enthusiasm to ensure that all pupils have the high-quality provision they deserve to make a success of their education. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and, between them, they have ensured that improvements have taken place in classroom practice and that everyone is clear about what needs to be done for the centre to improve further. Staff approach key developments enthusiastically, for example the introduction of vocational and work-related programmes in Key Stage 4. The changes in personnel on the management committee have enabled it to include a wider range of skills, particularly in terms of financial management. Streamlining its operational systems and structures has enabled it to be much more effective in supporting and challenging the centre's leadership and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. However, these skills are not used to best advantage to effect change quickly, for example in improving teaching and learning. Across the provision, there are very effective strategies to overcome discrimination. The centre's rigorous use of data to set challenging targets and track pupils' progress results in pupils receiving the support they need to re-engage in education. As a result, equality of opportunity is assured for all pupils.

The centre's partnership with parents and carers is excellent. The work that all staff undertake to help parents and carers to understand and support their children's needs is particularly impressive. Excellent links are established through regular review meetings, first-day absence calls and regular contact by phone or visit if there are issues identified at the highly effective staff 'wash-up' meetings at the end of each day.

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

Everyone is clear about their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection. As a result, procedures are effective and meet national requirements and guidelines. Risk assessments are a particular strength, being thorough and detailed. The centre uses excellent links at local level with social services, the youth offending teams and the police to support pupils' well-being. Through its audit of community cohesion, the centre has ensured that provision at local and national level is good. It is working to improve the opportunities for students to learn about life for those who live in other countries.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Only four parents and carers submitted a completed questionnaire, which is well below the average for pupil referral units. The majority of these referred to placement issues which are outside the centre's control. The inspector scrutinised and made use of the centre's own questionnaire returns and interviewed parents and carers to gain further evidence of their views. From this information, it is clear that the vast majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the centre and how it helps their children. Comments such as, 'Thank you for minor miracles' reflect the esteem in which the centre is held. The inspection findings, which show the very high quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive for their personal development and their good progress, fully support these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodlands Education 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 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 48 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	2	50	2	50	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	25	0	0	2	50	1	25
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	3	75	0	0	1	25
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	2	50	2	50	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)	0	0	2	50	0	0	1	25
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	25	1	25	0	0	1	25

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.



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Education Centre, Havant PO9 4AJ

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I inspected the centre. I particularly enjoyed being able to talk to so many of you. You explained clearly to me that Woodlands is a 'cool' centre because of the way staff treat you like adults and help and support you, not just in the centre, but in your home lives as well. I could see that these aspects contribute significantly to helping Woodlands give you a good education. The centre enables you to have a 'second chance' in education; the care and guidance provided by all the staff is excellent. By helping you to overcome your dislike of school, Woodlands enables you to gain qualifications which prepare you well for life after school or when you re-integrate into a mainstream school. The small group sizes are a real help and, as one of you said, 'Lessons are fun, it doesn't feel like a school.'

I have asked teachers to ensure that in every lesson they use the widest range of teaching strategies so that you all maximise the progress you make in your academic learning. The management committee now has a great many skills which I want it to be able to use to make Woodlands even better. I know all of you will play your part in this by doing your best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.