

The Woodsend Centre

Lydney Road, Flixton, Manchester, M41 8RN

Inspection dates

12-13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The centre continues to be very successful in providing short- and longer-term education for students who are unable to cope in mainstream schools.
- Parents and students value highly how the centre boosts students' self-esteem and helps them to achieve well.
- Students thrive in the positive atmosphere, feel safe being taught in small groups and behave extremely well: 'There is no bullying here, we all get on well together'.
- Good teaching balances sensitive awareness of each student's personal needs with structured academic tuition that plugs gaps in knowledge and pushes on students' learning.
- Students' attendance frequently improves from no attendance to 100%.
- All students who stay at the centre leave at 16 with qualifications and take up places in further education, employment or apprenticeships.
- Good leadership has resulted in improvements in provision which have enabled students to experience a widening range of award-bearing activities.
- The headteacher gives a strong steer in ensuring high quality pastoral care, productive links with families and academic provision suited to students' needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers do not always have the highest expectations of each student, especially the more able.
- Part-time attendance limits the achievement of students at Key Stage 3.
- In planning and reviewing the centre's work, leaders and managers do not focus well enough on the impact for students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with students, the Chair of the Management Committee, members of staff including a home tutor and the emotional well-being coordinator, and a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with a parent of a former home-tutored student.
- Inspectors looked at work completed by former and current students and heard some Year 9 students read.
- An inspector observed Key Stage 3 students in sessions held at a local leisure centre.
- Inspectors took account of the four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also the responses to the questionnaire completed by 12 members of staff.
- They observed the work of the centre at its Woodsend site and looked at a number of documents, including the self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, data concerning students' progress in the last academic year, planning and monitoring documents, and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Sonja Øyen, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jim Bennetts

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The centre provides education for pupils and students who are unable to continue in mainstream schools because of medical and well-being needs. Most have had irregular attendance at their mainstream school and some have had long periods of no attendance.
- The centre provides home-tuition for primary pupils and secondary students: 12 hours part-time provision each week for Key Stage 3 students in accommodation at a local primary school followed by structured reintegration when possible into mainstream education; and full-time provision for Key Stage 4 students at Woodsend Centre with reintegration when possible.
- Numbers attending the centre fluctuate through the year. Some students spend only a few weeks or months under the care of Woodsend staff, others for far longer periods. A few students are at Woodsend for a second time. Some students, having initially been tutored at home, attend the centre for one-to-one tutoring or on a part- or full-time basis. At the time of the inspection, seven students were receiving five hours' home tuition, five Key Stage 3 students were attending part time and seven Key Stage 4 students were attending full time.
- Students come from all parts of Trafford local authority and remain on the roll of their mainstream schools. Nine students are eligible for the pupil premium funding which is given to the mainstream school.
- At the time of the inspection, girls outnumbered boys and there was only one primary pupil who was new to home tuition. No student was in the care of the local authority, three had statements of special educational needs, and none spoke English as an additional language. Students came from a wide range of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.
- The Management Committee oversees the work of Woodsend Centre and the two other pupil referral units in the local authority, one of which was inspected at the same time as Woodsend by another inspector.
- In January 2012, the three pupil referral units jointly employed an emotional well-being coordinator who is based at the Woodsend Centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers and teaching assistants:
 - raise their expectations even higher of what students can achieve, especially the more able students
 - tailor learning activities even more closely to individual students' needs and ensure feedback to students clearly identifies what they need to do better next time
 - foster more assiduously students' independent learning
 - probe students' understanding more rigorously and encourage students to engage in debate and to give fuller contributions in discussions.
- Widen experiences and length of schooling each week for Key Stage 3 students by exploring possible provision in partnership with mainstream schools and other agencies.
- Strengthen further the rigour and quality of critical review and improvement planning by:
 - linking all decisions about provision with the intended outcomes for students
 - ensuring written records of meetings by committees reflect the depth and range of discussion.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards of attainment compare well with students in mainstream schools. In 2012, all the Year 11 students gained at least one GCSE qualification. Most gained five or more with one student gaining 10 passes. Almost half gained a good pass in English language and in mathematics. For the first time, some students studied statistics and gained a good GCSE pass.
- The success in many gaining good academic qualifications reflects students' often marked personal progress, especially in their growing ability to cope with schooling. Anxiety levels fall because students feel safe being taught in small groups at the centre, or because home tuition is geared closely to their needs. Students' skills, in being with and interacting with others, develop as they follow routines and programmes designed to help them to understand and help themselves. Their self-image improves due to the frequent praise and positive encouragement from staff and also the ready acceptance by other students.
- The gradual boost in students' self-confidence is mirrored in accelerating progress in learning. In 2011/12, for more than half of Key Stage 3 and Year 10 students, it also resulted in a successful return to mainstream schooling.
- Over time, given individual situations and differing starting points, students achieve well and come to realise that they are often doing better than they thought. Data from the last academic year show that most students made the progress expected nationally for their age, and some did better although more so in mathematics than in English. Nevertheless, there is still scope for students, particularly the more able, to achieve even more.
- Although at ease working alongside one another in lessons, students rarely choose to 'hold the floor', to explain fully their thinking or to give answers in depth. Few take the initiative to challenge and question one another or the teacher. As a result, the extension of learning through debate and joint working is limited.
- Students' reading, writing and mathematics skills develop well. Although students read aloud fluently, their delivery lacks the expression needed to hold an audience. On occasion, they need guidance in interpreting and summarising what they read. Some written work by Year 11 students showed considerable maturity and quality of content, such as in the effective use of rhetorical questions and choice of words to put forward an argument.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good. In lessons, there are often aspects of outstanding teaching but also some less effective aspects that detract from every student making the best possible progress.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong. Teachers and teaching assistants know the students well and understand the issues that concern them. The adults are quick to praise and they encourage individuals to interact, to give an answer and to have a go at a task. As a result, students engage compliantly in their learning and lessons run smoothly.
- Teachers plan and structure lessons carefully. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have individual students in mind and set tasks that build well on previous learning. They invite students to explain their answers through 'why do you think..' type questions, give helpful cues and prompts, provide useful examples to illustrate learning and review students' progress at key points in the lesson. As a consequence, students come to a secure understanding of new concepts and also appreciate their own progress.
- On occasion, in lessons seen, the level of challenge was not high enough to take students sufficiently out of their 'comfort zone'. Teachers were often too quick to accept a brief response from a student and to accept the pace of the slower workers. By sometimes saying and doing too much for students, teachers and teaching assistants missed chances to nudge them into being more independent, critical learners.

- The generally high quality of oral praise and feedback in lessons is not consistently echoed in teachers' marking across the curriculum. Although there is some well focused advice, especially in English, not all students receive clear guidance on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The high quality of pastoral care is a significant factor in students' outstanding behaviour and in a change in attitude to schooling. Students' progress is regularly reviewed with decisions about the way forward to build up confidence and resilience.
- Students, particularly those with a statement of special educational needs, are very well supported. All know what is expected of them and follow agreed routines and procedures. They like gaining credits and understand what may lead to detention. They comment that they feel secure and valued within the centre. They have opportunities through the student forum to raise issues and make suggestions. In previous years this has led to agreement about uniform and ways to be involved with the wider community.
- Observations during the inspection confirmed students' comments that they get on well together, chatting and socialising at the start of the day and at lunchtimes. In lessons, at break times, around the centre and at a leisure centre, students behaved sensibly and responsibly. They were polite and respectful to adults and each other at all times.
- Staff are in total agreement that behaviour is exemplary. A parent, in the on-line questionnaire Parent View, disagreed that bullying was handled well. The school's records from the last two years indicate that there have been very few incidents and that they have been dealt with sensitively and effectively. Older students said that there is no bullying at Woodsend. They and Key Stage 3 students know about different types of bullying, including homophobic, racist and cyber-bullying, and ways to combat it.
- During the inspection, there was 100% attendance. Data from the last academic year show that, for most students, attendance rockets often from no attendance at mainstream schools to consistently high at the centre. In addition, students arrive in time and ready for sessions. Year 11 students travel independently and show a responsible attitude to attendance and punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong, focused leadership and management underlie the success of the centre. The headteacher and staff draw on their wealth of experience and wide network of contacts to ensure that students and their families receive the support and guidance they need.
- All members of staff show a high level of commitment to the students. They adapt and devise home-tuition programmes, plan gradual induction into centre-taught sessions and structure reintegration programmes when students show they are ready for mainstream schooling. Former students and their families appreciate the centre's work: 'They helped me not to stress about GCSEs ... to build up my confidence', 'staff could not do enough for my child', and, 'home tuition enabled my child to blossom', are typical comments.
- Key leaders and managers continue to look for ways to improve the range and quality of the provision. They have an accurate picture of the centre's strengths and priorities for the year ahead. However, it is difficult to track how well the management committee and centre leadership committee follow this through. Not all documents related to improvement planning and the evaluation of success make clear the intended impact for students of the actions planned.
- The decision to educate Key Stage 3 students at a different site has contributed to a higher

rate of reintegration into mainstream schooling for this age group. The headteacher comments that students are no longer lulled into thinking that they will make an automatic move into Key Stage 4 at Woodsend. However, issues regarding accommodation and staffing have slowed the move to increase the taught time when students show they can cope. Staff are beginning to consider creative solutions.

- Effective decisions have been made about the curriculum. The initial focus on developing personal skills and self-image is complemented by extra-curricular activities, such as a film club. When students show they are ready, the teaching programme builds from English and mathematics to other subjects and options, including the Duke of Edinburgh award and work experience.
- Although students are given a 'taster' course in Spanish, no student has opted to follow a modern foreign language to GCSE level. Physical education takes many forms: walks in the grounds of Dunham Massey, badminton at a leisure centre or team building sessions. Some students also have the support of their families in going on a short residential break.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is effective. The management committee meets its responsibilities well, including those related to safeguarding, and it challenges both the local authority and the school's senior management team in decisions about finance, accommodation and provision.
 - In managing all three referral units within the local authority, the committee has a clear vision for the service as a whole and a very good understanding of the 'special' nature of the Woodsend provision. This has ensured effective support for the school in widening the curriculum and refurbishing rooms to support the teaching of science and food technology. Students have shown how, in following the BTEC course, they can design, plan, prepare and present meals to a high standard. For some, this is a notable personal achievement.
 - The management committee's support for the headteacher in appointing an emotional well-being coordinator has proved highly beneficial. The coordinator's work at all three pupil referral units enables her to profit from contact with an extensive range of agencies. She has an excellent understanding of students' individual needs and their family circumstances and provides a listening ear as well as guidance to help to boost students' self-confidence.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131134
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	402444

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair of Management Committee	Bob Merrell
Headteacher	Beverly Durham
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2009
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