

Educational Diversity

278a Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY3 9JW

Inspection dates 19–20 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most students who attend well make good progress.
- Last year, 70% of Year 11 students left with at least one GCSE and 20% left with at least five passes at A* to G, including English and mathematics.
- Many students, especially from Key Stage 2, return successfully to mainstream schools.
- Key Stage 4 students often transfer successfully to college courses. Nearly all students go on into education, employment or training on leaving at 16 years of age.
- Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is outstanding. Lessons are usually made interesting, behaviour is well managed and special support assistants make good contribution to students' learning. Independent learning and cooperation in learning are promoted well.
- Students are safe and well looked after. Most behave well most of the time.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very effectively to improve the school. They share an excellent understanding of relative strengths and weaknesses in provision across all sites and have worked effectively to improve teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Absences frequently interfere with students fulfilling their potential. Lack of punctuality occasionally interferes with learning.
- Not all teachers are equally adept at assessing students' attainment and progress and current procedures for assessing and recording progress vary too much between sites.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons; one was a joint observation with an assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers; also with representatives of the local authority and a member of the management committee.
- Informal discussions were held with students.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire but the views of two parents, expressed independently, were taken into account during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at many documents, including data about student progress and attendance, documentation relating to self-evaluation and improvement and also that relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding.
- Ward teaching was not observed; students in hospital remain solely on the rolls of their mainstream schools; inspectors did not observe teaching in students' homes and there were no pregnant schoolgirls or nursing mothers present during the visit to their classroom.

Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
John Ellwood	Additional inspector
Keith Massett	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Educational Diversity is a complex pupil referral unit. It operates on many sites and includes an outreach team and has responsibility for home tuition and ward-teaching in the hospital. It also incorporates provision for pregnant schoolgirls and nursing mothers.
- Numbers on roll are constantly changing; at times last year there were over 250 students on roll.
- All students have faced considerable difficulties in attending their mainstream schools for a variety of behavioural, social, medical or emotional reasons.
- A few students remain on the roll of their mainstream schools in addition to being registered to Educational Diversity.
- The majority of students are in Years 10 and 11, almost all are of White British origin.
- A large majority of students is known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Nearly all pupils have been supported at school action plus or have been assessed for a statement of special educational needs prior to their referral.
- About 20 students access vocational courses at Blackpool and the Fylde College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve rates of attendance and punctuality by:
 - ensuring that all pupils have access to full-time education
 - establishing clear protocols and procedures to follow up absence more speedily
 - stressing the importance of punctuality and ensuring that teachers do not delay the start of lessons waiting for pupils to arrive
 - developing the reward system to recognise group, class or centre attendance to build a sense of competition and peer pressure in addition to rewarding individual achievement
 - setting every pupil a realistic attendance target
 - ensuring that all the recommendations in the attendance action plan are accompanied by a clear identification of how the effectiveness of actions taken will be evaluated.
- Improve assessment procedures to ensure more consistency across the school by:
 - ensuring that all systems used across all settings are compatible and comparable
 - making sure the moderation of assessment practice across the whole of Educational Diversity is more rigorous
 - ensuring that systems support transfer between different settings
 - ensuring that baseline assessments are accurate and are used effectively to set realistically ambitious targets
 - generating a central record of progress across all settings to give leaders and managers clearer information about comparisons between settings.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The number of students being entered for external examinations and the grades they are attaining keep on improving. Over 90% of students were entered for examinations, including GCSE, last year against 50% five years ago.
- The average points score of Year 11 students has risen from 58 to 72 over three years. This is well below the national average for all students but when attainment on entry is taken into account it represents good achievement.
- Students achieve well in each of the centres that constitute Educational Diversity. Attainment varies enormously. It is often very low because of students having missed large amounts of education in the past as a result of their behavioural, emotional or medical difficulties.
- Across most of the centres, students achieve similarly well in English and mathematics but at the Grange, achievement in mathematics requires improvement because pupils are not meeting their targets. This sometimes reflects the quality of teaching but is more often because initial assessments of students' mathematics skills are inaccurate and result in unrealistic targets being set.
- Students whose needs relate more to their emotional than their behavioural difficulties tend to attain higher standards but no group can be seen to be achieving differently when all individual factors are taken into account. However, students with poor attendance are not doing as well as their peers.
- Poor attenders are not able to make good progress and students make different degrees of progress often related to their level of attendance. Pupils are not all set attendance targets. A good measure of achievement is the successes of the many younger pupils who return to their primary schools with indications of good prospects of future success.
- Many older pupils transfer successfully to further education or training on reaching the age of 16 years. Very few end up out of education, employment or training after they leave; this is due in the main to the good work of staff at the VALT centre, who work closely with a local college and other providers to provide highly effective 'bridging courses' that support transition from school to adult life.
- Good attention is paid to meeting individual needs. Close working with a wide range of specialists and agencies who deal with students' additional needs results in many students receiving effective additional support to help them to succeed. The particularly strong focus on meeting students' emotional needs in the Mountford Centre plays a big part in encouraging them back into learning.
- Rates of progress cannot be easily compared across all the strands of provision offered by Educational Diversity because different centres use their own systems for recording progress, which are not always compatible with one another.

The quality of teaching Is good

- The large majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding but there is still some that requires improvement. Leaders and managers know well the strengths and the weaknesses in teaching and are working hard to remove the weaknesses.
- Most teachers are making the best of their accommodation and resources to provide stimulating learning environments. At an early stage in the year there are already good examples of students' best work on display alongside longer standing, helpful displays of what pupils need to do to attain higher levels and how to improve their work.
- Some teachers do not do enough to access and to use information on students' prior attainment when planning future work. Outstanding teaching was observed at the Oxford centre when a science teacher carefully checked what pupils had remembered from a previous lesson before moving on to new learning. Weaker teaching, in the same centre, was observed

when it was clear that students already had a good command of what they were meant to be learning.

- Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of students. Leaders and managers are taking great care to match the strengths of teachers to the settings in which they can be most effective. Across all settings, there are good relationships between students and staff.
- Special support staff are very effective. There has been a concerted drive to ensure that they are employed to support students' learning rather than to attend to any behavioural issues. Many examples were seen of these staff playing a significant role in helping students to learn.
- Most teachers manage behaviour well. Leaders and managers are adept at recognising those teachers who relate best to more challenging students and those who are more withdrawn; this results in some outstanding teaching, such as a drama lesson at the VALT.
- Most teachers show skill in presenting students with suitably challenging work but a small minority do not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the importance of using assessment information in the planning of future work. The moderation of assessment practices across the whole of Educational Diversity is not as rigorous as it might be.
- Teachers are good at encouraging students to do as much as they can for themselves so that they do not rely too much on adult support; at the Willows, in particular, Key Stage 2 pupils are given a lot of opportunities to work together to solve problems and support one another.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Is good

- Most students behave well most of the time. Occasional misbehaviour by students rarely interferes with the learning of others because it is well managed by staff. Misbehaviour is mostly due to some students' difficult social and personal circumstances which impinge on their time in school. Staff are adept at helping pupils through these situations.
- Most staff feel that misbehaviour is well managed by teachers and senior leaders and managers. Inspectors agree. There were few occasions when a student's difficulties interrupted what was otherwise a calm environment.
- Students were encouraged to work together to solve problems and to work with as much independence as possible; these two strategies are addressing some students' needs particularly well.
- Many students, particularly at Speedwell, are in circumstances that make them particularly vulnerable; the nurturing ethos of that centre is central in helping them to feel safe and be able to relax and concentrate their efforts on learning rather than losing focus, for example, due to their anxieties.
- Instances of misbehaviour are reported in detail. There is a little bullying; there are a few instances of racist and sexist comments and an occasional reference to gender issues. None of these is endemic and all of them are resolved very quickly to the satisfaction and understanding of all parties involved.
- Absence remains an issue. Too many pupils do not attend well enough to achieve their potential. From the start of this academic year, full-time education has been extended to all students wherever this is possible. This is already having a radical impact on overall attendance figures. Current reward systems tend to reward individuals rather than groups, which limits their appeal.
- Many students make exceptional progress in improving their attendance. Attendance improves by over 10% on previous attendance figures in students' mainstream schools. In some centres it is higher. A few pupils, however, remain persistent non-attenders. Although all non-attendance is followed up on the first day of absence, some parents and carers cannot be contacted until the afternoon at the Grange, by which time it is too late to take action to remedy the situation. Clear procedures to speedily follow up absence are not fully in place.
- A recent external report made many recommendations which the school has incorporated into an action plan to improve attendance but they are not yet fully linked to ways in which the

effectiveness of actions taken will be evaluated.

- The effective work of the outreach team has resulted in many fewer referrals to Educational Diversity over the past year and has contributed to a significant fall in the number of permanent exclusions from schools in the borough.

The leadership and management

Is good

- Leaders and managers bustle with good ideas for improving Educational Diversity. The headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other well. They share a keen desire to secure improvement and work towards it through perceptive self-evaluation and a strategic drive founded upon the rigorous performance management of staff. This is accompanied by a good programme of continuing professional development of staff which is always linked to priorities identified in the school improvement plan.
- Leadership and management duties are well shared with assistant headteachers, who manage each of the centres that comprise Educational Diversity and its offshoots, including the outreach service.
- The local authority, in its role as the appropriate authority, gives good support to the school. It contributes well to the monitoring of provision and standards. There is a good relationship between the local authority and the management committee. The latter is a very well-constituted body which plays an increasingly important role in giving representatives of a wide range of linked support agencies a voice in considering future developments.
- Links with a local college of further education are highly productive and open up a wealth of vocational opportunities for older students, who have become disaffected with mainstream school. Students come to understand that other alternatives to an involvement in education and training are available to them which significantly help some students to improve their attendance.
- Some aspects of the assessment systems are not well developed to permit a transfer between different settings and which permit a central record of student progress across all settings to be created.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

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	131772
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	402509

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	6–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Allan Matthews
Headteacher	Wendy Casson
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 January 2010
Telephone number	01253 476660
Fax number	01253 476665
Email address	wendy.casson@blackpool.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 information 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'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

