

Pine Lodge Short Stay School

Pine Lodge Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, 79 Liverpool Road, Chester, Cheshire CH2 1AW

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pine Lodge continues to provide a top quality education for students who are patients at the Psychiatric Unit.
- Excellent teaching and outstanding student achievements have been maintained because of the drive of senior leaders and the management committee to ensure that teachers are inducted well to the school, staff learn together and the quality of teaching continually improves.
- A key reason why teaching is outstanding is that teachers get to know the students very well and plan work that is meticulously matched to their academic needs, interests and emotional states.
- Although it is not compulsory for post-16 students to attend the school, the fact that they do is testimony to the school's splendid work. Provision for post-16 students is outstanding.
- Students most often significantly outstrip the targets they had been set at their mainstream schools for their achievement.
- These impressive academic gains are possible because of the tremendous work done in harmony on a day-to-day basis with the Psychiatric Unit in supporting students' emotional development.
- Students say how well the staff listen to them, respond to their needs and show them respect. The care provided is exemplary.
- Parents and students have very high regard for the work of staff in reigniting students' education. Indeed, they often keep in touch to let the school know how the future has mapped out.
- Students' behaviour is splendid. They have great relationships with staff and apply themselves as best they can to their work.
- Students say there is no bullying. On the contrary, they say they have empathy for their peers because they recognise the traumas each has faced.
- The school is a calm, ordered and safe environment. Students say they feel very safe.
- Outstanding leadership has developed a very cohesive team of staff who support and guide each other superbly. Staff value the quality of leadership they receive and are proud to be on the team. Leaders do not always make the best of the information gathered regarding attendance and from consulting with parents and students.
- The management committee plays a full part in checking how the school is doing and in shaping its strategic direction. However, it is not always fully informed of the collective views of parents and its students.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the head of centre. A community policeman taught one of the lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, two members of the management committee, members of staff, a member of the clinical staff from the psychiatric unit and a representative from the local authority.
- Students' planning files were checked and students were heard reading.
- The inspector took account of an email sent by a parent and five staff questionnaires as well as looking at the results of surveys of parents' and students' views undertaken by the school. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The work of the school was observed and a number of documents were looked at, including the school's monitoring records, self-evaluation, data about students' progress, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, the school improvement plan and records of management committee meetings.

Inspection team

Eric Craven, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school shares its site with a Regional Adolescent Psychiatric Unit and students attend the school when they are in-patients. They have mental health problems including psychosis, depression and eating disorders. The unit provides a service for seven local authorities.
- The school has 14 places. There are currently three students on roll but this number fluctuates considerably. The school provides for post-16 students when it has the capacity. Each student is on the roll of a mainstream school or college as well as this school. At present, two of the students are post-16. The school is meeting the needs of some additional post-16 students who are not on the school's roll but who are in-patients. They attend group sessions. The school has provided for 79 students in the last year.
- None of the students has special educational needs. The local authority looks after one of the students. No students are eligible for the pupil premium.
- The executive headteacher and head of centre were appointed from positions within the school in September 2011. When the number of students on roll is low teachers often work in the community, teaching students with medical needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of the information gained from parental and student surveys and of the data on students' improvements in their attendance by:
 - evaluating these data over time in order to gain a broader view and to set future action points
 - making sure that evaluations are shared with the management committee.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Invariably students' education has previously suffered because of their mental health problems. As a result, when they arrive, many students are lagging behind in their learning or find it very difficult to make school work a priority.
- Students often emerge from very dark places and make splendid gains in re-engaging with education because of very well targeted work that is geared to meeting their personal, social and emotional needs. Despite their often fragile emotional states, students develop resilience and perseverance. They begin to regain confidence and self-esteem because they learn to trust staff and have excellent relationships with them.
- As these attributes start to re-emerge, students pick up pace in their learning. The frequent one-to-one sessions they have enable them to accelerate their learning at a rate that is just right for them. Typically, one said, 'I got all my GCSEs here and I don't think I would have got as good grades in school. The one-to-one work helped a lot.'
- Students read with fluency and confidence. They are often very reflective and learn to think deeply about what they are reading and learning. Ongoing opportunities to work closely with a teacher gives students plenty of chances to practise their speaking and listening skills and, as a result, make outstanding progress.
- When working in groups students are considerate to one another and listen to others' points of view. As their confidence develops they become more motivated. Two students were able to talk in an animated way about how they were now in a position to benefit from going to college.
- Standards of attainment compare very favourably with students of the same age elsewhere. This is also the case for the post-16 students. In 2012 almost all students gained a GCSE at A* to C and all gained a pass at A* to G. Indeed, nearly three quarters gained five or more GCSEs at A* to C.
- The progress students make is excellent. For the past four years school data show that, on average, students have achieved two grades higher in their examinations than they were predicted to achieve at the time of leaving their mainstream school.
- Testimony to this success is that all of the 28 students who left the school during the last year are sustaining places back at mainstream schools or colleges.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff make thorough assessments and take on board the information provided by their clinical colleagues. This, along with information from previous schools, gives them an accurate picture of students' academic and personal needs.
- Using this information, teachers set out plans that are very closely matched to what students need. As they teach they continually evaluate how well students are doing and make any necessary adjustments. Because of this students almost invariably make excellent progress.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and think extremely carefully about the resources they use in their lessons so that they are highly relevant and meaningful to the students. A good example is a lesson that had the students thinking deeply about the words of a song by Jessie J. The words described how she had overcome trauma as a child. From this students were able to reflect on how problems can be overcome.
- Teachers use simple but effective ways to remove pressures from students that might, in the past, have caused anxiety. For example, one student uses a 'time out' card, raised when the student doesn't understand something. This enabled the student to play a full part in lessons.
- Staff accurately gauge how much to expect from a student in a lesson. Students are very positive about how staff understand them and respond to their needs so well. As one student said, 'There is a real focus on our studies but also on our personal and social needs.'

- Staff use praise of their students' achievements superbly well, which helps to reinforce learning. Students recognise this is wholly genuine and appreciate that the member of staff has also taken great pleasure from their outstanding achievements. This makes a real difference to them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour seen during the inspection was never less than outstanding. Students behave sensibly and responsibly in lessons and in communal areas. The students confirm that this is typically the case as well.
- The school's data show that behaviour problems seldom rear their head and, if they do, they are acted upon swiftly and sensitively so they have little or no bearing on the learning of others. There has never been an exclusion from the school and there are no records of racial incidents or restraints of students. The records of bullying show one isolated case in the last year, which was managed very successfully.
- Staff have very high expectations of students. The reward system for students is extremely well managed and the rewards themselves are meaningful and appropriate to the ages of the students. Regular one-to-one tutorials play a splendid part in helping students focus on their targets.
- The personal, social and health education curriculum is very well planned and gives students an understanding of how to behave and become responsible young citizens of the future. As part of this programme, during the inspection, the inspector observed a lesson taught by a community police officer. This enabled students to learn about the dangers associated with social networking on the internet. They absorbed this information extremely well.
- The school's attendance is affected by students' states of mental health. On occasion, this can mean that they need to stay in the Psychiatric Unit rather than attend the school. Where it is evident that a student is absent when they are fit to attend, the school works earnestly to ensure they do so. The attendance of just one or two students in such a small school can dramatically affect the overall picture. Nevertheless, last year the school's overall attendance rose by 15%.
- The teachers share an important common attribute. They are calm, considered and unflappable. This rubs off on the students and they benefit from knowing life in school is safe and has no unexpected surprises.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Staff at Pine Lodge are a tight knit team who have common approaches born from working closely together and influencing one another's practice. This cohesiveness has been achieved by high quality leadership that has made clear what is required and has enabled staff to play their full part. Morale is high because staff feel valued by senior leaders and the management committee.
- The school works extremely well with its partners. Working productively with staff from other agencies is a hallmark of the school. Communication with clinical staff is very frequent and well used. Clinical staff provide training for teachers so they are fully aware of mental health issues and how best to respond.
- The feedback the school gets from parents is very praiseworthy of the school's work with its students and its support for families. The school's arrangements for students' transition back to school or college are excellent.
- The executive headteacher and head of centre use performance management extremely well to develop teaching skills. They have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and use lesson observations to identify high-quality practice and to strengthen it even further. Teachers are encouraged to watch one another's lessons and to provide constructive feedback, which

makes a valuable contribution to the maintenance of outstanding-quality teaching.

- Self-evaluation is accurate and used well to inform whole-school planning. The views of parents and students as they leave the school are gathered regularly as part of self-evaluation. Although senior leaders evaluate their responses on an individual basis, they do not always collate them in order to spot any patterns or trends within them.
 - Similarly, the school's attendance data are generally managed effectively but are not always evaluated to show trends in the attendance of different groups of students or to identify any required further action.
 - The curriculum, including for post-16 students, is excellent. It is constantly reviewed to ensure it remains precisely matched to students' needs and to ensure that it offers equal opportunities to all, fosters excellent relationships and tackles any discrimination. This, along with a wonderful range of experiences offered through the curriculum, is why students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is further enhanced by the school's arrangements for any visitors to make their impression upon the students and through the school's extensive links beyond the school community, such as within the locality and even internationally.
 - The local authority knows this school well and rightly treats it with a 'light touch'. The executive headteacher gets good support from her line manager in the local authority who also works effectively in partnership with the management committee.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Management committee members are not shy in making their views known and use a healthy mix of support, guidance and challenge to the school's senior leaders. They receive reports from the head of centre and ask searching questions about the content so that they fully understand it. Although they have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, they are not always fully informed about the collective views of parents. They have a wide range of experienced representatives who each bring their own valuable insights to the table; the Chair of the Management Committee, for example, is also a headteacher and is extremely knowledgeable of how performance management is used at the school and how to ensure the high quality of teaching is being maintained. They give full regard to the well-being and safety of students, who are very vulnerable at this time in their lives; the Chair of the Management Committee's training has put him in a good position to be the safeguarding representative.
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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	134766
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	381735

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	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	John Murray
Headteacher	Sian Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
Telephone number	01244 397598
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