

Whiteheath Education Centre

Hawes Lane, Rowley Regis, B65 9AL

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

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.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics because every pupil is challenged to reach his or her full potential.
- Pupils in Year 11 gain excellent work-related skills and valuable qualifications. Almost every Year 11 pupil succeeds in gaining a place at college when they leave the centre.
- Teaching is inspirational. Teachers know the exact next learning steps of every pupil and plan very effectively to meet them. Outstanding teaching is found in all subjects.
- Care lies at the heart of this outstanding centre, including the excellent support provided for pupils with complex medical and psychological illnesses.
- Pupils and their parents, rightly, say that the centre is a 'lifeline' to them and it helps them turn their lives around.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are sensitive towards one another and have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe.
- Teachers and health professionals work in a very effective partnership to help pupils overcome anxiety and fear of failure.
- Pupils are offered a rich and wide range of academic subjects. Teachers help pupils to overcome any obstacles that stand in the way of their learning.
- All leaders, including the local authority and members of the management committee, are committed to providing the highest possible quality of education.
- Thorough checking of teaching and finding out how each pupil learns best have contributed to significant improvements in achievement.
- Money given to mainstream schools to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is not passed to the centre when these pupils are admitted.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by eight different teachers. Ten lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also heard pupils read and sampled their work.
- The hospital site was visited and a home tutor was observed teaching in a pupil's home.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the chair of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. There was focused discussion about the strategic plan for the centre post-April 2013, when there will be considerable change.
- The inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at assessment information, statistics on the number of pupils who return to their mainstream schools and attendance data. They looked at the centre's improvement plan, monitoring information, curriculum plans, the centre's website, at a range of policies including those relating to safeguarding and at minutes of management committee meetings.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. However, the lead inspector spoke with a few parents over the telephone, read e-mails sent by parents to the centre for his attention and examined the most recent parental survey conducted by the centre. The lead inspector examined 13 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David King

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sandwell Home and Hospital Tuition Service, commonly known as Whiteheath Education Centre, provides education for pupils experiencing ill-health or trauma of a psychological or psychiatric nature which makes it difficult for them to attend school regularly.
- The service is in three parts: hospital provision for up to six pupils from Reception to post-16 in a classroom and 10 pupils at the bedside if required; home tuition for up to 22 pupils from Reception to Year 11; and The Whiteheath Education Centre with a capacity to take 40 full-time pupils from Years 7 to 11.
- On occasion, the centre uses other alternative educational provision for its pupils, but no such provision was being made during the inspection.
- All pupils admitted with emotional or psychiatric conditions are on the special educational needs register in their mainstream school. The proportion can vary on a daily basis.
- All except a very few pupils (who have never had a secondary school place) are dual registered with a mainstream school. This means that they remain on the roll of their school as well as being placed on the roll of the centre.
- At the time of the inspection, most pupils on roll were White British and pupils of minority ethnic heritage all happened to be from families where English is an additional language, but the number in each group changes frequently.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (extra funding from the government for certain groups, in this case for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) was high at the time of the inspection but this varies almost on a daily basis.
- The centre is located in new purpose-built accommodation on a shared campus with a special and mainstream school.
- The centre is preparing for change in April 2013 when the management committee takes on more of a governance role. It will have its own budget and the management committee will take on the statutory responsibility for running the centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work in partnership with the local authority to ensure that when pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are admitted to the centre, the schools from which they are sent pass on the pupil premium funding so that it can be used to raise these pupils' achievement even further than at present.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry is different for each pupil. Typically, it is below average in English and mathematics because of gaps in learning. These are 'plugged' quickly as the individual needs of every pupil are met very effectively. Almost all pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement in these subjects is outstanding.
- Most pupils in Key Stage 3 make enough academic progress and gain sufficient confidence to go back to their mainstream schools. Almost all Year 11 pupils gain the academic qualifications required to go to college. The vast majority make more than the expected rate of progress in English and mathematics measured from their starting points and reach their full potential.
- Attainment is variable: for one, an A* in English language GCSE, for another, an Entry Level 1 qualification in English, dependent on where they started out. However, the progress for those who increase their reading age by four years from a very low base in two terms is as outstanding as that of pupils who gain an A* at GCSE.
- Pupils gain good GCSE results in English, mathematics, science and a number of other subjects, including A* to C grades. Results in art are particularly strong. Pupils develop outstanding literacy and numeracy skills through studying vocational subjects.
- Pupils of minority ethnic heritage (who all currently speak English as an additional language) and those known to be eligible for free school meals make the same outstanding progress as other pupils. All pupils with psychological needs were on the special educational needs register in their previous schools. Most achieve well, but the progress of a very few goes up and down over time because of their emotional or mental health needs. Slipping into an intense lack of self-worth accompanied by self-harm can slow their progress for short periods of time. With outstanding support, most bounce back quickly and sustain good progress.
- Innovative and creative on-the-spot daily planning (to accommodate change) ensures that pupils tutored in their homes and taught in the hospital make good progress. Meeting their needs lies at the heart of this provision, and their needs are exceptionally varied.
- Achievement across the centre consists of much more than the academic progress pupils make. It is typified by the parent who wrote, 'This centre has been a lifeline for our family'. It is about improving pupils' self-esteem so that they flourish. Those who were isolated and lonely before coming into the centre make real friends. Those who were anxious about studying mathematics mainly overcome their fear, and those who would not speak to anyone when they arrived blossom and enjoy 'chatting' with their classmates.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All teaching is at least good and much is outstanding. In a number of lessons, teaching is inspirational because all pupils are challenged and move on so rapidly with new learning. There are many different fun and interesting activities going on at any given time in the same classroom.
- Teachers' excellent subject expertise, exceptionally positive relationships, high expectations, very effective use of questions and a cracking pace are typical in all lessons. Flexibility in planning enables pupils learning French and Spanish to be taught together.
- Teachers use their knowledge of what pupils already know and understand to set work for them

at the correct level to move them on rapidly in new learning. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, as soon as pupils worked out the angles coming off a straight line, they were moved on to explore vertical opposite angles. Another group, having mastered how to work out the area of a rectangle, was pushed on to develop higher order mathematical skills.

- Teachers know the 'quirks' of each pupil in their class: what makes them 'tick' and how they best learn. This enables them to target challenging, yet non-threatening questions, and use this technique to deepen pupils' understanding. This approach enabled pupils in an English lesson to grasp the deep inferred meaning of quotes presented to them by their teacher. Teaching of some subjects sparkles and enthuses pupils to learn. For example, an art lesson which explored wax rubbing and felt pen wash techniques totally absorbed each pupil in the classroom.
- Reading, writing and numeracy skills are taught exceptionally well across all subjects. Any pupil who struggles is given personal one-to-one attention and coached to succeed without being spoon fed: pupils make rapid progress in this context. In their marking, teachers provide pupils with high quality advice on how to improve their work.
- Teaching in the hospital classroom, on the wards and in pupils' homes is highly individualised. Pupils are helped to move forward with the most important piece of learning they need at that time. Consequently, a pupil out of school for a few weeks with a broken leg would not fall behind with say algebra, and a long-term pupil not able to cope with mainstream school because of mental health issues would be able to gain important qualifications required to enter college.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are keen and very enthusiastic learners. Behaviour in lessons is always at least good and often it is outstanding. Pupils respond with enjoyment to the interesting and challenging activities set, taking ownership of their own learning as they think critically and solve problems.
- The centre is always calm and relaxed, yet there is a work buzz in the atmosphere. At play, during lunch, and when moving around the centre pupils behave exceptionally well. They welcome visitors by engaging in polite yet interesting and humorous conversation. Often, their comments are deep: one said, 'We are all fragile here for some reason... that is why we look out for each other'. Pupils feel safe and say that they can talk about their worries with a trusted adult. Their parents agree that they are kept safe at the centre.
- The centre is a safe haven, yet also a challenging place that equips pupils to cope with the demands of adult life. There are no fights, no racist incidents, no exclusions, and the exceptionally rare instances of bullying are dealt with speedily and effectively. Pupils are expected to resolve any fall-outs they have without putting any blame on a particular individual: pupils sort out differences between themselves with maturity. Pupils at Key Stage 4 who have been at the centre for a long time are trained to help and support new arrivals: their mission is to ensure that anyone looking sad is cheered up and joins in with other pupils.
- Pupils have an outstanding understanding of cyber bullying and all forms of prejudice-based bullying. They are exceptionally skilled at assessing risks and managing their own safety. They know exactly how to keep themselves safe when using a computer. They know the risks associated with getting involved with a gang or fanatical religious or political groups. They understand that 'binge drinking' can lead to liver damage and unsafe sex could result in sexually-transmitted diseases.
- On admission, almost all pupils arrive having had exceptionally poor attendance records at their previous schools. Their attendance improves significantly because they mostly re-engage with learning. Some increase from not attending school at all to an attendance rate of as much as 96%. A very few, because of the severity of their emotional and mental health or very serious

medical illness, do not have the same high attendance rates as their friends.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's relentless drive to improve teaching has very significantly increased the amount of outstanding teaching since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are checked regularly and frequently.
- Targeted training is provided to develop individual teachers. They respond eagerly and improve their teaching. As a result, pupils' learning and achievement are constantly getting better. For example, teachers recently attended a course on 'fantastic questions'; they have implemented what they learnt and now use questions to deepen pupils' thinking and speed up their learning.
- The centre checks its work thoroughly and has an accurate understanding of what works well and what needs further development. Decisive actions result from this exercise and they significantly benefit pupils. For example, two years ago it was identified that the rate of progress in mathematics was a little slower than that in English. Analysis revealed that many pupils entered the centre with a great deal of anxiety about mathematics. The lead mathematics teacher attended a specialist course to address this problem and put what she learnt into practice. Last year, progress in mathematics was a little faster than in English and the GCSE results in mathematics improved.
- Senior leaders, the lead home tuition teacher and subject leaders work very effectively and make significant improvements. Partnerships with health enable pupils to get specialist therapeutic support. Pupils benefit enormously from the counselling, mentoring and therapy they receive.
- Parents are helped in supporting their children through what are occasionally very dark times. The staff team ensure pupils get a rich range of subjects, residential experiences and day trips to improve their social and academic development. They are enabled to develop very good work-related skills through work experience placements and get excellent careers guidance. In addition, they get the chance to work as volunteers in the community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils reflect deeply, for example, on the difficulties a person with a disability experiences when going away on a holiday or on the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust. They support their friends through difficult periods of poor health. They take on responsibility energetically as they help younger children in a primary school with their reading and initiate fundraising events for children going through cancer treatments. Their awareness of cultural diversity is raised through their 'world studies' lessons and they learn about the cultural diversity within Great Britain.
- Leaders ensure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed. They go the extra mile to support those going through a crisis for medical or psychological reasons. The centre does not tolerate any form of discrimination and pupils value each other's differences.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. The local authority in its governance role works in an exceptionally effective partnership with the management committee. It is preparing the way for the change to be implemented in April 2013, enabling the committee to take on its new statutory responsibilities. The local authority supports the training of the management committee and has recently been helping the headteacher to prepare to manage a delegated budget from April 2013. The management committee knows the strengths and weaknesses of the service and supports the headteacher in shaping the strategic plan for the future, so as to sustain the current high quality provision for pupils with often complex medical (including psychiatric) needs. Committee members are suitably informed so that they are able to ask the

headteacher tough questions about the performance of the centre, particularly about pupils' achievement. They are extremely knowledgeable about how external agencies such as The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service work to support pupils. Hence, they are able to support senior leaders, but do not shy away from challenging them. Any teacher who does not perform well is not allowed to move up the pay scale. The local authority ensures the headteacher's performance is reviewed thoroughly. It ensures that safeguarding meets all requirements. Management committee members have been rigorously working with the local authority to secure pupil premium funding from their mainstream schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, but this has not yet been achieved.

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	103887
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	403772

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maggie Bowles
Headteacher	Rowena Challoner
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
Telephone number	0121 5616887
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