

The Pendlebury Centre

Edgeley Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0RJ

Inspection dates 13–14 March 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.

- Following their referral to Pendlebury from their mainstream schools, students settle quickly here and make great gains personally and in their education.
- Pendlebury ably co-ordinates medical, therapeutic and educational services and tailors them very effectively for each student. Consequently, students quickly gain from the help they receive and re-establish learning.
- Through the excellent support provided the students gain self-esteem and self-confidence. They learn to trust others so they begin to succeed in lessons. They make outstanding progress and start to catch up rapidly, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teachers plan individual lessons for students, who, in their delicate conditions, are not given too much to do but are nevertheless challenged. Outstanding teaching is key to helping students make up lost ground.
- Teachers manage their classrooms very well and make sure that, despite students' difficulties, lessons are conducted in a very business-like manner.
- Students from all of the different parts of the service appreciate the help they receive. They enjoy their experiences and attend regularly. They feel safe and trust the staff to care for them. Their behaviour improves quickly and becomes outstanding.
- Through the excellent relationships established students make great personal gains. In their time here, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development becomes outstanding.
- The local authority and management committee running the unit, together with the headteacher and others who work within it, are outstanding. The great drive and vision demonstrated at all management levels have successfully developed this service to help a wide range of disadvantaged students.
- Performance management has been used well to ensure that the quality of teaching has improved.
- Pendlebury is greatly valued by the local authority, the community, local schools and by parents.
- Managers at all levels understand the unit very well and use their knowledge wisely to ensure that the service continues to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed seven lessons given by seven teachers and spent more than four hours in classrooms and observing other educational activities. Students' reading was seen and heard during the course of lessons.
- Lessons given to students from both of the different facilities within the main unit were observed.
- The inspectors visited the classroom used by Pendlebury staff at the local hospital and the remote building that provides therapeutic work for a small group of younger students referred to the unit on a part-time basis by some mainstream schools.
- A visit was made to the provider of alternative education used by the unit to check that students are safe and that they have opportunities to make academic progress.
- The inspector watched students having lunch, enjoying their breaks, arriving at school in the morning and leaving in the evening.
- Students' work was studied. The inspector spoke with students informally to gain their views and opinions.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other members of the senior team, teachers and mental health nurses, members of the outreach team, the school business manager and a member of the local authority, who was also the chair of the management committee. The headteacher of a local secondary school that uses the services of the unit, and who is also a member of the management committee spoke with an inspector on the telephone.
- The views of staff were noted through meeting with them and by scrutinising their completed questionnaires.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but one parent spoke with an inspector and the unit's own surveys of parents' views were taken into account.
- The work of the unit was observed and important documents concerning Pendlebury's own understanding of how well it works, planning, safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and the achievements of pupils were looked at.

Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This very complex pupil referral unit caters for the needs of secondary-age students who are vulnerable because of medical needs. For most, these include mental health illnesses and conditions associated with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. It also provides temporary education for any child of statutory school age on the children's ward of a local hospital.
- Almost all students remain dual-registered with their mainstream school and the great majority attends Pendlebury part-time or are supported in their school. Almost all return to full-time education in their mainstream school within six months.
- The different parts of the service managed by the headteacher are: in-house provision of education at the main site; a separate unit at the main site for particularly vulnerable students; a remotely-housed project for students in Key Stage 3, considered by their mainstream schools to be at risk of exclusion because of behavioural difficulties arising from their social and emotional problems; outreach work that supports students being reintegrated into mainstream schools; outreach work undertaken by teachers and mental health nurses to support students in mainstream schools and a classroom on the children's ward of Stepping Hill Hospital.
- The unit currently uses SMS Coaching, Stockport, as a provider of alternative education for a very small number of students.
- It is rare that students have a statement of special educational needs. However, all are considered to be at the school action plus stage of special educational needs. The service contributes to the assessment process that can result in a student gaining a statement of special educational needs and subsequent placement in a special school.
- More than half of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding and this is very high compared to all schools nationally. The local authority distributes the pupil premium funding between the unit and the mainstream school where a student is dual-registered. However, funds are provided for all at a much higher level regardless of their entitlement.
- Students are admitted at any age from 11 to 16. They are almost evenly distributed between Key Stages 3 and 4. Numbers fluctuate on a daily basis but there are generally similar numbers of boys and girls and most students are of White British heritage.
- The headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection. Since then the services offered by the unit have grown considerably and there have been changes in the management structure.
- Recently, the unit has undertaken a pilot role with the Department for Education being one of the very few pupil referral units in England permitted to support the training of new teachers.
- Links with Manchester Metropolitan University are being established to undertake research into measuring the success of certain aspects of the service.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to provide time and resources to middle managers so that the initiatives already under way will ensure continuing consistency in the support of students' reading, writing and mathematics throughout the curriculum.
- Encourage teachers to provide students with manageable targets for learning in each lesson, so that students make even greater progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students generally arrive with educational standards depressed by their difficulties. However, in all areas of the service students are highly successful in getting back into learning. Many are identified and supported before things go too badly wrong by the outreach service. Others are helped to avoid failure in their mainstream schools through the support of the unit.
- Those that remain full time at the unit until the end of Year 11 achieve very well, gaining higher than expected grades at GCSE. Those who return to mainstream also do better than previously predicted as a result of the help they receive in regaining the confidence and skills required to study successfully.
- The unit's records indicate that those in Key Stage 3 make outstanding progress in English and mathematics and this is confirmed through the observation of lessons and looking at students' work. The records make useful comparisons with other similar groups of students nationally. For very many of the students, progress exceeds the expectations of their parents and their mainstream schools. This is because of the highly effective medical and therapeutic work done to help students overcome their barriers to learning and take part in education. As a consequence, many quickly make up previous lost ground.
- All groups of students for whom the unit is partly or wholly responsible, make equally outstanding academic and personal progress, including boys and girls, any from minority ethnic groups and those supported in part here by the pupil premium funding. The attainment of this latter group is the same as that of all other groups. All make excellent gains in literacy and numeracy as a result of the specialist work and resources provided.
- At the hospital school students of all ages from five to 16 years receive completely individual tuition that successfully helps them carry on their education whilst receiving medical treatment. The very small number working in the alternative provision gain vocational qualifications.
- In English lessons, all students are highly motivated and achieve very well, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is because teachers match tasks to their needs accurately. Similarly, in mathematics lessons students settle quickly. They enjoy their work and contribute exceptionally willingly to class activities.
- Before returning to mainstream school or going to special education placements, all are well-prepared for moving on, having made up much lost ground.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The local authority and unit managers are clear that, whilst a great deal of medical and therapeutic support is provided, the aim is to help students get back into learning. Managers have ensured that teaching is always of a high quality so that students get as much as possible from their lessons.
- Teachers ensure that lesson tasks are matched well to students' levels of ability. Often, older students have completely individual schemes of work. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, the teacher provided a range of challenging work in line with the different level of qualification within the courses the students follow. Consequently, students were highly motivated, knowing that whilst it was challenging, they could succeed.
- Teachers are acutely aware of the different needs and difficulties of students. They know just how much they can encourage each to achieve without making them feel uncomfortable or insecure. Great attention is given to providing extremely vulnerable and distressed students with just the right amount of work. Often, teachers plan a great range of activities so that students are busy. The aim is to help them gain confidence.
- With this in mind, teachers maintain well-organised and uncluttered classrooms. Each room seems to send a signal – 'this place is for learning!'
- Staff use information from students' previous achievements skilfully so that important targets for

learning are set and high expectations established. However, in some lessons teachers miss the chance to challenge students to succeed even better within the timeframe of the lesson. Just occasionally, therefore, students make a little less progress than they should.

- Literacy and numeracy have a high priority in almost every lesson and teachers plan very well to include these. Sometimes, however, staff are inconsistent in their support for literacy and numeracy and occasionally students struggle to work out the meanings of some words and to solve problems.
- Overall, however, students' great successes in lessons are a direct result of the very high quality support they get from staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour of students throughout the inspection was usually outstanding. This is because behaviour is managed very effectively in every area of the service through understanding students' needs and difficulties. Each student has a behaviour support plan to ensure consistency in their support.
- Staff report that following induction to the service, students' behaviour improves very quickly because of the therapeutic and psychological support provided. This is greatly appreciated by students and their families. One parent commented: 'without Pendlebury, things at home would be very different!'
- In the outreach work, teachers, nurses and therapists are highly successful in supporting troubled students to maintain their places in mainstream schools through helping them understand their difficulties. This work is greatly valued by students and their schools because the great majority continue their education and gain successes in GCSE and other qualifications.
- The overall average attendance of students is slightly lower than for mainstream schools nationally, but almost all students who use the service improve their attendance dramatically and maintain this improvement. Previously, many have failed to attend school.
- Records indicate that there are very few serious incidents throughout the service, that physical restraints by staff are almost unknown and that there are no exclusions. The unit maintains records to show the positive changes in students' behaviour and attitudes over time.
- Students report that they feel very safe here, including at the alternative provision. One reported that this is because of the very high number of adults and that this prevents issues from arising and ensures that any difficulties are concluded quickly. Students say that bullying is very rare. They learn to understand about harassing behaviour and the formation of positive relationships with others through the counselling and therapy they take part in.
- Students' excellent behaviour largely results from the superb relationships that exist between the staff and students. The adults get to know the students quickly. The strong support they provide encourages students to trust them. Consequently, students gain the confidence to step back into learning. They gain self-esteem so that success leads to more success. Throughout their time here, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, a remarkable achievement given their very low personal starting points and difficulties prior to enrolment.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and managers know and understand the unit very well. They are acutely aware of how to improve it even further.
- The local authority, parents, community workers and other local schools all comment how superb this provision is. A police community support officer who knows the unit well praised the headteacher and managers for their successes in helping students turn their lives round.
- The headteacher and managers are determined that all who use the service get the very best it can offer. The very high quality of teaching has been maintained and indeed improved since the

previous inspection through the consistent use of performance management. Specialists, such as mental health nurses and therapists, ensure that the complex needs of the students are met. The morale of staff is high and they are supportive of managers.

- The curriculum provides superb balance. Some lessons fill in missing gaps; others help older students gain qualifications. Students also have opportunities to work in less academic ways so they can follow personal interests and enjoy learning again. The excellent curriculum helps ensure that all are included in the life of the school and none are discriminated against.
 - The pupil premium and other funds are used to provide additional support in literacy and numeracy to those who require it. Resources purchased include electronic reading machines, and a teaching assistant is employed part-time to support students who are particularly in need of help. Training has been given to staff for supporting reading, writing and number work, but managers do not always ensure that the developments being made by the English and mathematics co-ordinators continue, so that students can always rely on consistent help from any staff they encounter.
 - Managers use excellent systems to record students' progress so they can see quickly how they are making progress and that none are left behind in their learning.
 - All requirements for safeguarding are met, with some exceptional practice.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Responsibility is with officers of the local authority with some delegation to the management committee, the members of which have recently provided the unit with assistance in sorting out difficulties concerning school meals and finance. The great vision and continuing support of the local authority has made the range of services here possible and effective. Close collaboration between the officers and the headteacher has enabled the unit to expand so that a wide range of vulnerable students continue their education successfully. The local authority has encouraged the collaborative and financial arrangements between mainstream schools and the unit that have made the service so effective. Officers have provided effective support and challenge to the headteacher, for example to maintain high standards of safeguarding practice and understand better how students achieve.
 - Performance management is monitored and the appropriate authority has a clear understanding about the quality of teaching, and how it is being improved and linked to staff pay. Furthermore, they ensure that finances are utilised wisely, including the elements of the pupil premium funding allocated, to raise students' standards of literacy and numeracy.
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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	106022
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	402997

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	46
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Andy Simpkins
Headteacher	Janice Cahill
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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