

North West Surrey Short Stay School

45 Kingsway, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6NT

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2013

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.

- Students make good progress in changing their attendance habits, in improving their attitudes to school and in modifying their behaviour. This helps most students to reintegrate successfully into mainstream school at the end of their placements.
- Most students make good progress in English and mathematics. Many make particularly quick gains in improving their reading skills.
- The school makes good use of a range of accredited awards to recognise students' achievements. For example, students leave short-term placements having successfully completed a recognised life-skills programme.
- Students are motivated to improve because teaching often ensures that good account is taken of the way they prefer to learn.
- Training for teachers has been responsive to the changing profile of students' special educational needs. This has given them the skills to work more effectively with students who have autistic spectrum conditions.
- There are excellent, highly cooperative links between the short stay school and the 12 mainstream schools that it serves. This ensures that students who would normally be permanently excluded from school receive continuous care and their education is not further disrupted.
- School leaders and the management committee understand what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They successfully promote an ethos of high expectations among both staff and students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that the choices given to students about their work are challenging enough for them to make rapid and sustained progress.
- Students are not consistently well guided to make the best use of the teachers' marking and written feedback to improve their work.
- School leaders do not have highly rigorous systems in place for monitoring and analysing data about students' learning and progress.
- The management committee does not review and discuss detailed information about students' progress in learning, behaviour and attendance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector, together with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, observed teaching and learning in six lessons, taught by five teachers or appropriately qualified support staff. He also observed reading lessons and enrichment activities as part of two learning walks, each covering three classes. Teaching was observed on both of the school's sites. Students from the school were visited while learning at the GASP alternative provision.
- Students, staff and school leaders met with the inspector to discuss the school's work.
- The inspector met with representatives of the management committee, who are responsible for the governance of the school, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked carefully at a range of documents including the school's tracking of students' progress, the school's checks on how well it is doing and its development plans, safeguarding arrangements and minutes of meetings held by the management committee.
- It was not possible to consider the views of parents using the Parent View survey because there were too few responses for results to be shown. However, the inspector took account of parents' views by looking at the school's analysis of recent parent questionnaires. The inspector also considered the views of 16 staff who completed questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jon Carter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North West Surrey Short Stay School (NWSSSS) provides education for students who are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded from mainstream secondary schools. Almost all pupils are dual registered, which means that they remain on the roll of their mainstream school.
- The school has two distinct areas of provision:
 - The Kingsway Centre, for students in Years 7 to 11 who meet the criteria for permanent exclusion, but remain dual registered with their mainstream school before reintegrating into a new school, typically staying at NWSSSS for around one term.
 - The Pyrford Centre works with students in Years 7 to 9 on ten-week placements, who spend two days per week (Mondays and Tuesdays) in the centre and three days in their mainstream school. The centre also caters for students in Years 10 and 11 on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. These placements are reviewed every six weeks and students typically stay for four terms.
- The school uses a small range of alternative provision. This includes:
 - GASP motor project
 - MIT vocational centre
 - Guildford College.
- Most students have special educational needs that are supported through school action plus. Typically, the needs of these students are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- A few students have statements of special educational needs and are awaiting placement at a special school. Students in this situation typically have to wait nine months to be placed in more suitable provision. There are also a few students awaiting statutory assessment of their special educational needs.
- The number of boys is usually more than the number of girls on the roll of the school. At the time of the inspection there were no Year 7 students on roll.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is above average. The school does not currently have any children of service families on roll. The school currently does not receive this funding, nor funding for the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is retained by the students' mainstream school.
- Almost all students come from White British backgrounds, although the school works with individual pupils from other ethnic backgrounds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that a significant proportion is outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - teachers' planning clearly identifies students' abilities and is used to guide students to choose the work which provides the most appropriate level of challenge
 - students are routinely given time to respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - improving the rigour with which students' progress data are analysed, so that trends can better inform school improvement planning
 - ensuring that the management committee receives and discusses detailed information about progress in learning, behaviour and attendance to help it hold school leaders to account more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most students who are referred to the school are working below the level expected for their age when they start their placements. This is often because they have experienced a disrupted education due to poor attendance and exclusion from lessons.
- Students' learning typically improves well during their stay at the school. Both in lessons and over the relatively short length of their placements, most students make at least expected progress in key subjects. A good proportion of students make faster progress because the personalised approaches and small class sizes help them to overcome their difficulties quickly.
- Students' reading ages are often lower than their chronological ages when the students first arrive at the school. As a result of regular opportunities to practise in lessons, many students' reading abilities improve quickly. Recent training for staff has started to help those with poor basic reading skills to gain confidence in using the sounds that letters make (known as phonics) to read more accurately.
- Progress in English and mathematics is usually good. Students are able to maintain and improve their knowledge and understanding which helps prepare them well for their return to mainstream school. Where misunderstandings and misconceptions are identified, personalised teaching helps to address the problems and overcome barriers to future learning successfully.
- The school's approach to personalising learning for individual students promotes equality well. For example, students who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium make similar progress to other students. Although there is usually a smaller proportion of girls than boys on roll, there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- Students' learning and achievement are recognised through a variety of appropriate award schemes and nationally recognised qualifications. For example, almost all students in Key Stage 3 leave their 10-week placements having achieved the ASDAN Bronze Award. Students attending alternative provision used by the school to provide practical and vocational approaches to education also have their achievements recognised with a variety of unit awards.
- The short length of most placements at the school means that students do not completely catch up with missed learning. Nevertheless, high proportions of students successfully return to a mainstream school to continue their education. Monitoring records show that students sustain their places at new schools well, with only small numbers being referred for further help.
- The school makes arrangements to ensure that students can take GCSE examinations where appropriate, either on its own sites or in conjunction with other schools. It does not have a policy of early entry for GCSE examinations.
- A high proportion of the small number of students who complete their education at the school successfully take up, and maintain, places on appropriate college courses.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is consistently good, although instances of outstanding teaching are much less frequent. Teachers respond well to the regular changes in the school population. They assess students' abilities diligently on entry and use this information to plan lessons which are relevant to students' needs and interests.
- Students often respond well to the school's adopted method of providing work at different levels of difficulty in lessons. Whilst all students are expected to attempt the 'tricky' work, they are also given the option of tackling something which is 'trickier' or 'trickiest'. Many students are keen to show their enthusiasm by choosing the hardest work. However, teachers do not identify in their planning who should be working at each of these levels. Sometimes this leads to more able students not being sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers and additional adults involve students well in discussions. This is particularly effective where students receive the individual attention of an adult. Occasionally, teachers miss

opportunities to use questions that allow students to explain their learning and understanding in detail.

- Teachers make sure that students receive useful verbal and written feedback about the quality of their work. The identification of the main strengths makes clear to students where they have done well. Points for improvement are sufficiently detailed to guide students about how to improve their work. However, this does not consistently have a strong impact on improving students' learning because the students are not routinely given time to respond to teachers' marking.
- Opportunities to encourage students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well across a range of subjects. For example, during the inspection, teachers planned and delivered lessons connected with slavery in response to recent events in the news.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers and additional adults quickly establish strong working relationships with students. This makes a significant contribution to settling new students quickly when they change school and helps them to feel safe. They show a good awareness of different types of risky behaviour and respond positively to the school's support to keep them safe, for example when using the internet. Students value strongly the respect shown to them by staff.
- Students often improve how frequently they attend school during their placement. Their successful re-engagement with education is often due to the good quality of care and attention provided by staff. This is viewed by students as a particular strength of school. Students particularly commented that there is 'so much care' at the school and that staff give them lots of 'patient support'.
- In almost all lessons, staff consistently use the school's behaviour management systems well. This successfully enables students to understand what is expected of them. Staff are often skilful in redirecting students who are more reluctant to engage with learning. As a result, their behaviour in lessons is typically good. In the most effective lessons, teaching used rewards in a measured and proportionate way to help motivate students. Occasionally, where staff's use of school systems is less well developed, students are not always fully engaged with learning throughout the lesson.
- Students get on well with each other. The positive role models provided by staff help to foster good relationships effectively across the school. Bullying is rare and dealt with appropriately when it does occur. The school ensures that any discriminatory behaviour is challenged and recorded. Behaviour around the school and during activities away from the main school sites is also typically good.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has firmly established the role of the short stay school in the North West Surrey area through extensive collaboration with the 12 mainstream schools that it serves. As a result, the school makes a very strong contribution to ensuring that students at risk of permanent exclusion receive an appropriate and continuous education.
- The leadership team has successfully established high expectations of behaviour and learning that are consistent across both sites of the school. By continuing to ensure that students are provided with a good education, the leadership team has demonstrated the capacity to continue to improve the school.
- The headteacher and the heads of centre regularly check learning in lessons. Their visits show that teaching is typically good throughout the school and in alternative provision. They have used the information about the quality of teaching to make sensible decisions about the training that staff need to help them respond to the changing profile of students' special educational needs. However, the judgements made by senior leaders about the quality of teaching are sometimes too generous because they are not sufficiently focused on students' learning.

- The school monitors improvements in behaviour as well as students' attainment and reintegration success well. It keeps adequate records of students' academic progress and improvements in attendance. However, school leaders do not rigorously analyse progress data so they do not have information readily available to help inform school improvement planning.
- The school's curriculum focuses appropriately on a limited range of subjects which allows students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and keep up with other aspects of their school work. The range of enrichment activities, including sporting activities away from the school site, and alternative provision promotes students' emotional and behavioural development well.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. However, it has not yet taken sufficient action to comprehensively address the issue identified during the previous inspection that students with statements of special educational needs spend too long at the short stay school whilst awaiting more appropriate placements at special schools.
- The arrangements made to ensure that students are kept safe meet current requirements. There is regular review by senior leaders and the management committee to ensure that this is maintained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee has a broadly accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has been quick to ensure that it has responded to changes in statutory duties by establishing systems, for example to set and manage the school's budget. The committee includes a number of serving headteachers and, as such, they bring current knowledge of education to the group. They are able to attend training with school staff to ensure that their practice, for example in safeguarding, is up to date. This also allows them to evaluate the impact of the school because they have first-hand knowledge of the students that have been referred for help and the effect it has had on their attitudes and behaviour. Members gain further information about the work of the school through visits that they make to classes, as well as discussions with staff and information from the headteacher. However, the lack of detailed progress information has not allowed the management committee to hold school leaders to account as robustly as possible. The management committee is clear about how teachers' pay is formally aligned to their performance in the classroom and as leaders.

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	135894
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	426562

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	31
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Jo Ashworth
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 January 2011
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