

# Woolton High School

Woolton Hill Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 6JA

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. They make good progress from their very varied starting points and nearly all Year 11 leavers gain GCSE passes in English and mathematics. Physical education is a strength of the school.
- Students are well taught; teachers are very sensitive to individuals' abilities and needs. Behaviour is very well managed. Additional adults in classrooms are skilfully deployed to assist students' learning and conduct.
- Behaviour is usually good. Students usually follow rules and keep the school atmosphere happy and safe. When they do misbehave, they are quick to apologise and make amends.
- Students feel safe because they know that staff will keep them that way. Staff are good at ensuring the emotional safety of students as well as their physical safety.
- Leadership and management are good. A good structure ensures that responsibilities and duties are widely and fairly shared. High quality teaching is quickly recognised and rewarded; support for weaker teachers is effective and sensitive. As a result, teaching and learning keep on improving.
- The residential care and the outcomes it produces are of high quality.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some teachers do not advise and guide students enough about what they need to do to improve their learning.
- A few teachers overestimate how much work can be done in a lesson; as a result, learning becomes rushed and important learning opportunities are missed.
- Opportunities for students to follow work- and skills-related courses are not sufficiently developed.

## Information about this inspection

- Six lessons were observed, one jointly with the headteacher. Two other lessons were briefly visited. All but two teachers were observed.
- The lead inspector met with three governors and two representatives of the local authority.
- There were no responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors looked at responses to the school’s own surveys of parental views. The lead inspector also met with a parent governor.
- The social care inspector spent the best part of three days in the residence, talking to staff and pupils, observing daily routines and checking for adherence to national minimum standards for residential special schools.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Scully

Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a residential school for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Each has a statement of special educational needs reflecting the severity and complexity of these needs.
- Virtually all students are known to be eligible for free school meals. About one fifth are looked after children. All students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after.)
- There are currently no Year 8 students.
- The most significant groups identified by the school are minority ethnic students, looked after children and residents.
- Residential provision is made for up to eight boarders from Monday to Friday. Other students can join in with 'extended-day' activities which run until 8.00pm each day.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by making sure that teachers:
  - reinforce what students have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work
  - take more care when planning lessons to ensure that what is planned can realistically be taught in the time available, rather than skimmed over or omitted altogether.
- Improve leadership and management of the curriculum by improving the range of vocational and work-based opportunities for students.
- Additional good practice recommendations for further improvement of the residential provision:
  - enhance risk assessments related to individuals missing from care, to make clear the associated risks to them
  - enhance further the recording systems to ensure, in particular, that the dates when documents and policies are reviewed or updated are clearly identified.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students achieve well. On entry, their attainment varies from about average to well below average. From their individual starting points, most make good progress. Nearly all of last year's leavers gained GCSE passes in English and mathematics. There is a trend of improvement in recent years. All activities and all courses are open to all students, ensuring the promotion of equal opportunities. Early entry for GCSE examinations is not used.
- Historically, students have achieved better in mathematics than in English. In 2013 the gap between the subjects closed considerably, demonstrating the effectiveness of well-considered initiatives to improve students' literacy skills.
- Many students also gain qualifications in art, business and physical education. A high degree of success in physical education is further evident in students' enthusiasm and involvement in a wide range of individual and team sports.
- Minority ethnic students tend to achieve slightly better than others; they more frequently exceed expectations rather than merely meeting them. Looked after children achieve slightly less well; they nearly all meet expectations but rarely exceed them. Resident students achieve slightly better than average; they often start the day in a more relaxed state and in a better mood than some other students.
- The pupil premium funding is being successfully. Individual students are given good extra support to help them to improve their reading and writing. Those facing difficult personal situations are given expert help by specially trained school staff.
- Most students leave to positive destinations such as college or training. The proportion of those who give up on education, employment or training after leaving school has been falling in recent years. Nevertheless, students do not have enough opportunities to develop work-related skills or follow vocational courses before they leave.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good across all subjects and for all groups of students. Nearly all teachers have demonstrated the ability to teach outstandingly well but only a few do so consistently. Weaker teaching has almost been eliminated. As a result, most students learn well and make good progress.
- Expectations of students are high but occasionally misjudged as a result some teachers overestimate what can be learnt in a short lesson. This, in turn, results in them rushing and losing the vital attention to detail when trying to establish what students have learnt and whether it matches up to what was intended.
- Relationships between students and adults in classrooms are good. Assistants in each class are carefully deployed to support learning and behaviour equally, and are highly efficient in doing both. Students know that they are being listened to and they feel secure in the knowledge that adults have the necessary behaviour management skills to keep them safe.
- Teachers take care to make their classrooms bright and interesting. Students' best work is exhibited alongside informative wall displays. Every classroom prominently displays a series of steps towards improving reading and writing, and what has to be done to improve work and move up to a higher level in each subject. Too often, these are ignored by students because teachers do not make enough reference to them on a sufficiently regular basis for them to become engrained on students' minds.
- The assessment of students' progress is improving rapidly. The marking of students' work is usually good. It is accurate and helpful. It is good to see marking, such as in students' science files, which also forewarns students when the standard of their work appears to be slipping. Occasional weaknesses in assessment arise in those previously mentioned, rushed lessons where there is not enough time to establish what has been learnt or to give students immediate

feedback.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Most students are keen to learn and try to behave well. They are encouraged to work independently and to take more responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. A Year 11 mathematics lesson was characterised by students getting on with their tasks, occasionally asking for help and only when necessary.
- Students listen to staff because they have become used to the idea that what the staff are saying is often helpful and complimentary. Misbehaviour in class is nearly always linked to individuals' recognised difficulties and circumstances. Moments of individual crisis are very well managed.
- Staff show a good awareness of the fact that many students are insecure and emotionally vulnerable. Students respond well to the nurturing atmosphere of the school and this helps them to keep emotionally safe.
- Attendance remains lower than average but inroads into absence have been made in recent years and in 2012 to 2013, the school all but met an ambitious target for attendance.
- At lunchtimes, students enjoy their food and mix well. Behaviour at informal times is good. At break times, students choose purposeful activities and stick with them rather than roaming around the school looking for trouble.
- Parents are supportive of the way behaviour is managed and how the good behaviour often transfers to home at the end of the day. It certainly transfers very well into after-school activities and the residence, where students are particularly well behaved.
- There is very little bullying and there is clear evidence that for the last three years it has been declining. There is virtually no homophobic or racist element in any bullying. Students show a good awareness of what constitutes bullying and what to do about it. They also understand the perils of using the internet and different forms of social communication unwisely.
- Exclusion is very rare. There has been a three-year trend of reduction. Leaders and managers have been successful in creating a school where reward is seen as far more effective than sanction.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders, managers and governors have created a school that students increasingly want to attend and that staff are proud to work in. Leaders and managers have a good record of employing keen, sometimes inexperienced teachers and coaching them well in the acquisition of good teaching skills and behaviour management.
- There is a good leadership and management structure. It is fair and extends to all levels with all individuals taking on clearly developed roles and responsibilities.
- Teaching is good and improving. All classroom staff participate in performance management and a good programme of professional development. Individual targets are getting more challenging and more closely reflect priorities for school improvement.
- Self-evaluation is thorough. It is suitably informed through both formal and informal monitoring processes. As a result, it forms a very useful tool for driving further improvement.
- Extensive attention is paid to improving students' literacy skills. Every teacher in every subject this year has been set the task of identifying a literacy focus for each lesson.
- The curriculum has a very strong focus on promoting the basic skills of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology. Vocational courses used to be delivered by other providers. This provision was closely monitored and found wanting. As a result, it was stopped from September 2013. Although steps have been taken to begin to develop alternatives through consultation with the local authority's alternative provision commissioner, leaders and managers have not been quick enough to provide a suitable spread of alternative programmes to meet

these vocational needs.

- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements in school. Equal opportunities are promoted well and good attention is paid to promoting students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority provides appropriate support, particularly through the services of a school improvement partner and an attendance officer.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are highly supportive and are particularly knowledgeable about the residential provision. They understand less about some of the finer details in the school, such as how much extra funding they receive through the pupil premium, how it is used and to what effect. They do, however, have a better understanding about the quality of teaching and the learning and progress that students make. They are suitably involved in the performance management of the headteacher and make sure that consistently strong performance by teachers is suitably rewarded through pay and/or promotion.

<b>Outcomes for residential pupils</b>	<b>are outstanding</b>
<b>Quality of residential provision and care</b>	<b>is outstanding</b>
<b>Residential pupils’ safety</b>	<b>is good</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the residential provision</b>	<b>are good</b>

- The residential provision is well managed by a highly committed and dedicated team of staff and head of care. Staff have an innate understanding of each resident and ensure all of their needs are identified and addressed within the provision.
- Records and documentation reflect the uniqueness of each individual and effectively contribute to the exemplary care provided. However, when some records are updated or reviewed the dates are not recorded. Also, the ‘missing from care’ risk assessments are somewhat lacking in detail. The impact of this is minimal because of staff’s knowledge of the residents.
- Staff always place the well-being of residents at the centre of their practice.
- Careful consideration is given to young people’s stays to ensure that the group is compatible, so friendships are promoted and individuals’ diverse needs can be met. Staff work tirelessly to remove barriers to participation, consequently students enjoy an extensive range of activities on- and off-site, such as golf and swimming.
- Residents feel valued, as staff listen to them and respond to their requests. They are keen to point out that they have chosen to attend residence. They say it is a ‘home from home’ and it is another family for them. They say staff are ‘great’.
- Care planning is highly personalised and allows the uniqueness of each young person to shine. Planning carefully encompasses young people’s ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Residents are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and one another. They acknowledge that they do argue sometimes, but explain that is what happens in families. Residents are usually very well behaved. A main strength of the provision is the staff’s commitment to enabling residents to manage their own behaviours. Staff are highly skilled at defusing situations simply by a look or comment, which enables students to think about what they are doing and consider different ways to manage the situation.
- The houses are decorated to a high standard and are well maintained. Residents personalise their own bedrooms, depicting their individual interests. Privacy and dignity are effectively respected at all times. A range of comprehensive risk assessments helps to keep young people safe. However, the residence did not do a fire drill in the summer term. Plans are in to ensure that a robust fire safety practice drills are carried this term. Residents are clear on the evacuation process, which means they are able to evacuate safely in an emergency.
- Residents say they are safe and feel safe. They have excellent opportunities to talk to staff

about any concerns or worries. Key worker sessions work very well and enable staff to talk to young people about sensitive issues in an honest and compassionate manner.

## What inspection judgements mean

<b>School</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>

<b>Residential provision</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104739
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC040728
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	426048

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	43
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	8
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr F Shotter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M E Christian
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2338650
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