Wirral Hospitals School and Home Education Service Community Base

Inspection Report

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	**School address**	157 Park Road North
School category	Community special		Claughton
Age range of pupils	2 to 17		Wirral CH41 0EZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	**Telephone number**	0151 488 7680
Number on roll	128	**Fax number**	0151 653 8342
Appropriate authority	The governing body	**Chair of governors**	Mrs C Muspratt
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	**Headteacher**	Miss A Cunningham

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
2 to 17	16 February 2006 – 16 February 2006	277302

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Wirral Hospitals School and Home Education Service provides education for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream school for health reasons. It takes place in three locations. The Joseph Paxton Campus is the main base and provides part time education for pupils between the ages of 10 and 16 who have difficulties, such as school phobia, emotional insecurity, or eating disorders. A second establishment is at Adcote House. This provides six week assessment for pupils with severe psychological problems. Most pupils in these two settings have been reluctant to attend their mainstream schools. All pupils, except those in Year 11, remain on the roll of their original school as the main aim is for them to return to mainstream education. The ability level of pupils is wide, but when they enter the school many are underachieving because of disrupted education. There are a small percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need. The number of pupils attending varies throughout the year and, because pupils return to their mainstream schools, mobility is high.

The school oversees the education of pupils or sixth form students who are short term patients at Arrowe Park Hospital. It also manages the local authority's service for pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers, and the home tuition service. In the last two years the school has had a change of headteacher and relocation to different premises.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. It is highly effective in meeting the emotional and social needs of all its pupils, and meets the wide range of academic needs of its pupils well. The good teaching, the breadth of expertise of the staff, the teamwork, and the very positive ethos and care are underlying strengths. As a result, pupils from a low starting point make significant gains in their personal development, attendance and academic progress. All parents feel that the school is providing good education and that pupils begin to enjoy and value education. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The school has improved at a very fast rate since the appointment of the current headteacher. All areas for improvement from the last inspection have been achieved, as well as moving into the new accommodation. The provision has been greatly enhanced by the new building, but space remains limited at Adcote House, where it restricts the curricular opportunities. The school was modest in judging some aspects of its performance. However, inspection evidence indicates that this is a school that evaluates its own performance very thoroughly and knows its strengths and weaknesses particularly well. The high standards set by the management team, the clear vision for the future, and the rapid rate of improvement show that the school has the capacity and enthusiasm to improve further. The school provides good value money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the role of the curriculum coordinators in monitoring standards and teaching in their subjects.
- Make better use of the information from assessment to set academic targets for pupils.
- Ensure that the planning, the setting of academic targets, and the record keeping at Adcote House are consistent with those in the rest of the provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils throughout the provision achieve well. The majority come, into both the Joseph Paxton Campus and Adcote House, with negative attitudes to education. They are reluctant to attend school because of social or emotional difficulties. As a result, they are attaining levels below those expected for pupils of a similar age, especially in literacy and numeracy, and with gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects. They receive support and understanding from staff, a calm and secure environment to work in, a personal education programme and good quality teaching. In the Joseph Paxton Campus the quality of the very good accommodation and resources has a significant effect on achievement. Due to all these factors pupils' attendance improves and they re-engage in learning. Many make rapid progress; they reach the levels which would normally be expected for pupils of a similar age and attain general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in a range of subjects. The school

has rightly identified that some of the younger pupils do not make as rapid progress as the older ones. They are currently investigating this in relation to pupils' attitudes and the effect of the part time provision.

Pupils who attend Adcote House for a short period of time, although limited in their opportunities by the restricted space, achieve well because of the wealth of support they receive from the health and psychological teams who work with them. This helps them to overcome and manage their difficulties and thus re-engage in learning. Many return to their schools or transfer to the Joseph Paxton Campus.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development, behaviour and attitudes are excellent because pupils develop a respect for themselves and for others. They act responsibly and safely, which is sometimes in contrast to their previous experiences. There are significant improvements in levels of attendance as pupils begin to enjoy their education and want to achieve. Pupils feel safe and secure, free from bullying and discrimination, and know that any problems that occur will be supported and dealt with fairly. Pupils' personal development, confidence and self esteem improve significantly from the time they enter the school. As a result, a high number of younger pupils return to mainstream education having developed the skills to cope. Good emphasis is placed on social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, as well as developing positive relationships. Older pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school, as they are provided with many opportunities to understand the significance of economic and work related skills, including work experience and college link courses. Of those pupils who stay until the end of Year 11, the majority take up further training or courses, or employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's monitoring of teaching and learning across the provision also indicates it is good. Pupils, especially at the Joseph Paxton Campus, are taught by subject specialists and in specialist subject rooms. This has a positive affect on achievement. The majority of teachers have a long association with the school, know the pupils very well, and are dedicated in helping them overcome their difficulties and achieve their best. One parent sent a letter to the inspection team in which she thanked all the staff for the way they communicated with the pupils. Teachers have developed a consistent approach to lesson planning and teaching methods, such as by sharing lesson objectives with pupils, and recapping and evaluating learning. However, at Adcote House the planning, and the evaluation of learning and targets, is not as good as it is at the Joseph Paxton Campus. Teachers have developed a good level of expertise in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching and learning, such as by using interactive whiteboards and by confidently encouraging pupils to use

laptops in all subjects. Over the last two years a well structured assessment system has been used and is providing detailed information about pupils' progress in the different aspects within subjects. The school is now well placed to make more use of the information to set individual academic targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Despite the part time nature of the provision, the school provides a good range of curricular opportunities for most of its pupils. The timetable, and the opportunities provided over a period of time, are creatively organised so that pupils cover most subjects of the National Curriculum. Full time education is now provided for Year 11 pupils and there are good opportunities for Year 10 pupils to participate in independent study. However, parents of other pupils are particularly keen for their children to have access to an increased number of hours. For example, one parent stated that their daughter was much better in herself and was enjoying her time at the centre, but felt it was shame that she was only spending a short time in such an excellent establishment.

The curricular needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for through appropriate alternative accredited courses. The curriculum is enriched well by other activities, such as visits outside school, visiting speakers, social experiences and lifeskills courses. These support the pupils' personal development very well and have a particular affect on self confidence. There are well established and relevant personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, along with an active citizenship programme where pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the community, such as by fund raising for the Red Cross.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The provision for this is excellent. As well as the dedication and support provided by the staff of the school, there is an outstanding range of and access to support from outside agencies. All these different disciplines work very effectively together to improve the emotional well-being of each pupil. As one parent stated, her child 'was made to feel very special at her introductory visit, this made her very excited at attending Adcote House; she has settled very well'.

Guidance and support has been further enhanced by the recent appointment of a learning mentor at the Joseph Paxton campus who provides pupils with additional advocacy, which they value. In keeping with the caring ethos of the school high priority is given to health, safety and child protection. There are very strong links and support from the Connexions Service so that the pupils are very well prepared for leaving and the next stage of education or training. Parents are very appreciative and complimentary about the care and guidance given to them and to their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. Since taking over in 2004 the headteacher, along with the senior management team, have used self-evaluation to honestly identify the strengths of the provision and areas for further development. Use of this with staff and governors has resulted in a realistic school improvement plan, action in priority areas and has provided a clear way forward in the past and for the future. The majority of the weaknesses perceived by management and staff two years ago have been addressed. This is in addition to managing the organisation and moving to the new building. There is a very appropriate list of future developments identified in the school development plan. These include the increased role of curriculum coordinators in monitoring their subjects, and the restructuring of middle management and staffing due to impending retirements. Governors have also improved their expertise and awareness of their roles. They are very well informed about the needs of the school and help the management make the best possible use of the finances and resources.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19

Overall effectiveness

	School Overall	16-19
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

	School Overall	16-19
How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards[1] reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

	School Overall	16-19
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

	School Overall	16-19
How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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[1] Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we recently visited you to find out about your school, what you did and how well you being helped with your learning and overcoming any difficulties you may have. We would like to thank you all for being friendly, polite, well behaved and welcoming.

We agree with your parents that you attend a good school. Here is a list of all the things that we liked about it:

- how well your headteacher and teachers know and care for you

- that you are taught by good teachers, and have access to a very wide range of support from outside agencies

- that your behaviour, attitudes and attendance improves, and that you begin to enjoy learning

- that the school building and the resources at the Joseph Paxton Campus are of very high quality

- how hard you try to get on well with everyone and build positive relationships.

This is what we have asked your school to do now, to make it even better:

- make sure that teachers who have responsibility keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects

- make more use of the information from assessment to set academic targets for you

- ensure that the quality of planning, the setting of academic targets, and the record keeping at Adcote House are as good as those in the rest of the provision.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at school.