



# Windlehurst School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 131889  
**Local Authority** Stockport  
**Inspection number** 293879  
**Inspection date** 22 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Michael McDowell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Windlehurst Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Hawk Green, Marple
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Stockport, Cheshire SK6 7HZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4274788
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	33	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 4845091
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Roberts
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kevin Lloyd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Windlehurst is a mixed school but no girls are currently on roll. It offers places to 33 boys aged 11 to 16 who have statements of special educational need because of their emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. A minority have additional learning needs including specific literacy difficulties. They are all British and almost all are white. Recently, the complexity of learning difficulties that pupils present on entry has increased and their behaviour is more challenging. The school has recently found it difficult to recruit teachers who can fully meet the academic and special needs of pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

Following the last inspection in 2001, Windlehurst has improved but has not moved on sufficiently to become a good school. As experienced teachers have left the school for other posts, the overall competence and confidence of the staff to deal with the special educational needs of pupils has been weakened. The effect of this is made more acute because the school has begun to admit more challenging pupils with more complex learning difficulties. These pressures have led the headteacher and senior managers to spend too much of their time in the day-to-day management of behaviour rather than in developing and implementing plans for improvement.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who enter with low standards of attainment make progress in line with their capabilities. The majority leave school with a small but increasing number of GCSE and entry level certificates. Teaching and learning are also satisfactory. Specialist teaching and well-resourced teaching rooms contribute to pupils' examination success but a minority of teachers lack assurance in managing behaviour. The school considers its curriculum is satisfactory. However, it is inadequate because it does not meet the needs of pupils who require daily pastoral time to improve their behaviour and become more successful learners. Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils understand the rules of the school and appreciate the rewards that good behaviour brings. They come to trust the adults in the school: relationships are good. Most pupils, however, still lack full self-control and behaviour is only satisfactory. Attendance, despite the efforts made by the school, is unsatisfactory. Provision for the care and guidance of pupils is satisfactory and effective steps are taken to keep pupils safe and healthy. Those asked said that they enjoyed most lessons and that they were not in fear of bullying. Pupils are well prepared for economic independence. However, only a minority of pupils help out around the school or in the local community: too little emphasis is placed on nurturing and developing the idea of service to others. Pupils are not offered a collective means to express opinions or put forward ideas to improve the school. There is no school council. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school monitors its performance and is broadly accurate in describing its strengths and weaknesses. It is taking steps to train staff so they can take on more of the burden of behaviour management. It assesses pupils' achievement but does not continuously track their progress or lead to the setting of challenging enough targets. School review is insufficiently broad based with little involvement from staff, parents and pupils. The governing body has increased its oversight of the school since the last inspection and is now committed to the task of rigorously holding it to account.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement by tracking their progress and personal development much more rigorously and then using this information to set challenging individual targets.
- Raise attendance by increasing the stake that pupils have in the school, for example, by developing a school council.
- Improve the curriculum so that sufficient time is given each day to directly address the emotional and behavioural needs of pupils and to develop important ideas such as service to the school and others.
- The headteacher, governors and staff should consult with parents, pupils and professional partners to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school and give high priority to carrying out plans for its improvement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

On entry, the standards of most pupils are below average. They make satisfactory progress. By Year 9, almost all have made adequate gains in English, mathematics and science, although only a minority reach the levels expected for their age. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make satisfactory progress in GCSE and entry level courses although what is achieved is, in some cases, limited by poor attendance. In 2006 the proportion gaining one or more A\* to G grades in the GCSE examinations improved on the previous year and was in line with similar schools nationally. Those taking these examinations in 2007 are on course to gain satisfactory grades in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Pupils in Year 11 who attend part time at local colleges do well in the work-related courses. A significant proportion of pupils joining in the last two years have more challenging behaviour and a number have specific literacy difficulties. Their attitudes to work are poorer and their rate of learning is slower than that of others. The school is taking steps, through the provision of additional training, to prepare teachers and teaching assistants to better meet the needs of these pupils and ensure that they make as much progress as possible.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Younger pupils are lively, restless and sometimes careless of their own safety. They do not fall in readily with the wishes of adults. Relationships become more positive over time. Older pupils understand the consequences of poor conduct. Because of the use by staff of sanctions and the presence of the headteacher and senior staff, behaviour both in lessons and outside of the classroom is sufficiently controlled to allow teaching, learning and the daily life of the school to carry on without serious interruption. However, pupils occasionally show that they lack self-control by making a fuss about the sanctions imposed when they have done wrong. About half of the pupils attend well. The remainder, particularly

Year 11 pupils, do not and attendance is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils who attend school frequently said that they liked coming to school and enjoyed the lessons. They spoke with some affection of their teachers and seemed sure that they could turn to them if necessary. They are not worried by the bullying which occurs occasionally. They are confident that if they report it something will be done. They enjoy school because it welcomes them and gives them chances to join in sport and games that are usually denied them. Most pupils take the opportunity to stay healthy through eating sensibly and taking vigorous exercise. They make good use of the newly built multi-use games area at break times. Pupils respond well to the emphasis on developing workplace skills and economic independence. A few pupils help in the community; for example, by coaching primary school children in football but service to the school, or to the broader community is not given sufficiently high priority.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers understand their subjects well and lesson plans build on previous learning. There are examples of exemplary practice. The most successful teachers avoid confrontation but do not turn a blind eye to inappropriate behaviour in order to avoid possible conflict. As a consequence, the pupils know where they stand. They give up their habitual attempts to divert the lesson or focus attention upon themselves and begin to enjoy the experience of learning. Teachers monitor their pupils' work and assess standards. A small minority of teachers do not yet have sufficient experience and confidence to consistently hold pupils to account for their actions. Also, the intervals between recorded assessments are too long to make these useful in keeping pupils on track. Challenging targets are set in individual plans but insufficient use is made of these to direct and motivate pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The required subjects of the National Curriculum are taught in each key stage but the school takes too little account of behaviour needs of its pupils. The school day is too constrained by subject requirements. No time is allocated at its beginning or end in which individual pastoral care and guidance, clearly called for by the nature of pupils' difficulties, can be provided. This tends to make it much more difficult to develop plans and strategies to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. There are good opportunities for pupils to prepare for their future economic well-being through work experience and college placements but proven measures, such as setting up a student enterprise, are not attempted. Overall, the good basic opportunities to learn in subjects that the school provides are not enriched sufficiently by pupils having enough chances to develop learning and personal skills outside the classroom and the school day.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Staff are strongly committed to the pupils and always try to act in their interests. They have good relationships with them. Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting learning and in managing the behaviour of pupils. Pupils say that teachers make clear what they should do, but not always how well they are doing and what their next step should be in order to improve. Targets, including those in individual plans, are not used sufficiently to promote good learning or personal development. The school promotes the safety and protection of its pupils well. The needs of vulnerable pupils are appropriately safeguarded. The relevant procedures for vetting staff are made and recorded. The school does its best to promote good attendance; however, a minority of families fail to fully respond to these efforts.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Since 2002, the school has broadened opportunities for pupils to follow accredited courses, to gain experience of work and to attend local colleges. However, more recently, stability suffered and momentum was lost when experienced teachers left. Recruiting suitable staff was difficult. Teachers were appointed who are specialists in their subjects but inexperienced in working with very challenging pupils. The headteacher and senior team have, consequently, concentrated on supporting behaviour management rather than on strategic matters and school improvement. The headteacher and the staff share a commitment to ensuring that the pupils become positive, contributing members of society but this is not yet a sufficient focus of the school's work. The school monitors its work but the information it gathers about the quality of teaching and learning, or from tracking pupils' progress and personal development, is not collated. Staff, parents and pupils contribute too little to self-review. The school has felt it necessary to develop a curriculum that mirrors that of mainstream secondary schools. It has done this but the curriculum does not take sufficient account of the need to provide time each day to directly address pupils' special educational needs. Governors support the school and oversee its work. The recently appointed chair is very experienced and clear about the duty of governors to hold the school to account. The leadership has satisfactory capacity to take the school forward because of the improvements already made in pupils' achievement on accredited courses, in pupils gaining experience of mainstream education through inclusion in classes in mainstream schools and in broadening their understanding of the world of work. At present the school offers satisfactory value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	4
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school. Those of you who talked to me said that you liked the school and enjoyed many of the lessons. You accepted that sometimes there was bullying but you felt that you could trust your teachers to deal with it and that you certainly were not afraid to come to school because of it. One or two of you felt that teachers should be a little more strict and not give so many chances to those who behave so badly in class that they spoil the lesson for the rest. Others of you felt it was very important that staff should quickly come to know how you wish to be treated when you are angry or 'wound up'. You said that you liked the staff.

During my visit I found that:

- most of you make progress in your work and your lessons are interesting
- your teachers make clear what you are to do but you are not always sure about how well you are doing
- some of you do not concentrate enough in class to get the best out of the lesson
- you have some opportunities to meet with your form tutor but not enough
- you do not have a school council and you have limited opportunities to help others.

In order to improve I have asked the school to:

- check on your progress more often and keep you up to date with how you are doing so that you will do better
- raise attendance by increasing your stake in the school by, for example, setting up a school council
- make more time in each school day for you to meet with your form tutor and staff: this should help you in learning to control your behaviour and make the things you are asked to do more relevant
- talk to you and your parents and those involved with the school about what it does well and what needs to be improved.