

IMPACT KS4 PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104849
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	301386
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Atkinson

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	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Dowd
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Bridson
Date of previous school inspection	7 April 2003
School address	Daleacre Campus Daleacre Drive Bootle Liverpool L30 2QQ
Telephone number	0151 924 4128
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Impact caters for pupils in Years 10 and 11. A significant number have had negative experiences of education, many have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 25 have statements of special educational needs because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The centre provides education on-site with extensive work-based learning provided off-site in partnership with a wide range of training organisations. A small number of pupils are educated at home or receive support from the centre through contact with a number of other agencies. The pupils are predominantly White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language. A large number of pupils are in public care. Attainment on entry is below average because many pupils have missed a considerable amount of schooling due to poor attendance and/or exclusion from mainstream schools. A high proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Impact is an exceptionally effective centre and gives very good value for money. It has an excellent reputation in the local authority, parents are very happy with the education their children receive and readily acknowledge the improvements in their children's behaviour, attitude and achievements. As one parent commented, 'For my child Impact has been the most important thing that's ever happened in her school career.' Pupils' enjoyment of and participation in the wide range of available opportunities contrast sharply with their previous negative experiences. Excellent care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being.

The headteacher's exemplary leadership is key in establishing and maintaining a hugely positive ethos in which pupils feel individually valued and respected resulting in them regaining their self-confidence and self-belief. Her passionate commitment to high standards for every pupil is reflected in how the curriculum is tailored to meet their personal needs. The outcome is that all groups - boys, girls, children in public care - achieve well and, in many cases, do far better than expected when they joined the centre.

As a result of outstanding leadership the centre is exceptionally clear about the direction it must take. The issues raised from the last inspection have been fully tackled. Innovative ways of enhancing and accrediting the alternative curriculum have been implemented and recognised by its very recent Leading Aspect Award. Senior staff undertake their responsibilities very effectively and the centre's self-evaluation indicates that they understand what the centre does well and what could be improved, although they are modest about its overall effectiveness.

Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils really enjoy their learning, work hard and begin to believe in their own abilities again. Pupils make good progress academically and most attain passes in a number of subjects at GCSE as well as a raft of other accredited qualifications. In addition, pupils achieve exceptionally well in a range of vocationally based qualifications and develop good personal skills that prepare them superbly well for their futures. Teachers and support staff work very successfully as teams, have high expectations and provide sensitive support that motivates pupils and gives them the determination to persevere, even when things get tough. The effect is most noticeable in the outstanding progress that pupils make in their personal development and behaviour. It is no surprise that pupils develop outstanding relationships with adults and transform their attitudes towards learning and their prospects for the future. As one pupil tellingly commented, 'I'll be gutted to leave Impact'.

The curriculum is good and improving because of the developments in off-site provision leading to wider choices for all pupils. It broadens their horizons by widening their access to community activities and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are very good systems for tracking the personal development and attendance of pupils. However, although pupils' academic work is assessed and marked accurately, pupils are not given clear enough advice about what they need to do to improve their work and reach the next level.

The centre has outstanding links with other agencies and staff work collaboratively and imaginatively in providing solutions for individuals' complex circumstances, needs and aspirations. Pupils have tremendous respect for the centre's staff and place a very high value on the very positive ethos that is created where they feel safe, secure and at ease in sharing their anxieties and problems. The centre provides a good diet for pupils and complements this through a good

range of opportunities for physical exercise, resulting in pupils making more informed choices about healthy lifestyles. Attendance is satisfactory. For the majority of pupils the improvement in attendance and punctuality is tremendous and only a small minority remain as habitual non-attenders.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils clear advice on what steps they need to take to reach the next level in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils join the centre with low levels of literacy and numeracy, negative attitudes towards learning and a history of underachievement due to poor attendance and difficult relationships. They make good and rapid progress in English, mathematics science and information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, pupils achieve well in GCSEs and, although not all realise their full potential, they make up a lot of lost ground. The outcome is that they give themselves better chances of taking advantage of the available opportunities in employment, training and further education. Pupils' art, design and media work is high in quality and the standards achieved exceed previous expectations by a long way; for example, the film made by pupils on the community's views of the work of Anthony Gormley was recently presented to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and the Arts in London.

Pupils achieve well in vocational courses and in their work-related learning. The evaluations on pupils' achievements by external providers who run the vocational and work-based programmes consistently show the enormous progress that pupils make in learning new skills and acquiring the attributes to succeed in the work place. Many pupils achieve the Certificate in Young Enterprise and the centre has been consistently highly placed in the North West regional competition. The main barrier to pupils achieving higher standards is that a substantial number join the centre during Key Stage 4 and not at the beginning of Year 10. In response the centre is now offering an extended programme after Year 11 for those pupils who would benefit most.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils express outstanding enjoyment of their time in school because they are secure and feel valued. Their calm, respectful and responsive behaviour is excellent. This is because they make substantial and rapid gains in their self-esteem and enables them to admit when they find something difficult, and to seek help from their peers as well as from their teachers. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils follow the excellent role models for moral development provided by their teachers and support staff. Art, music, media studies and enterprise activities support good cultural development. Group activities and off-site placements where pupils mix with a range of people from different backgrounds support very good social development. The community volunteering project and charity activities offer excellent opportunities for pupils to make a contribution, and experiences offered by working with older people, or those who have different needs, also offer opportunities for reflection which support good spiritual development. The range of vocational courses, the strong emphasis on basic skills, and pupils' exceptional progress in developing confidence and interpersonal skills mean

that they are much better prepared for their future economic well-being than when they entered the unit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff enjoy very good relationships with pupils and establish a positive classroom ethos where pupils work conscientiously and sustain a good level of concentration. As a result pupils enjoy lessons, behave well and make good progress. Lessons are invariably very well planned and structured, with high expectations and tasks that are pitched at the appropriate level. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as a team to ensure that pupils receive sufficient support to overcome many of their difficulties. Praise and rewards are used appropriately to recognise effort, progress and achievements but teachers do not give sufficiently clear advice on what pupils need to do to reach the next level towards their target grades. A significant strength is the manner in which staff manage challenging behaviour, although this is not always fully exploited and occasionally leads to lessons where pupils are insufficiently involved in the learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned so that the combination of core subjects and vocational learning is tailored to engage each pupil and give them the confidence to start learning again. As a result, the curriculum is very well adapted to meet the individual needs of pupils, with a strong emphasis on key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The menu of available courses is very carefully coordinated to ensure that the experiences are of sufficiently high quality, and pupils' performance is rigorously monitored. The school has arranged formal accreditation for practically all the on-site and off-site activities, so that pupils are able to gain GCSE or equivalent qualifications whilst their work is primarily focused on meeting their personal development needs. The curriculum offers extensive opportunities for pupils to develop collaborative skills, as well as to reflect on their own and other people's experiences. In this way it makes a very good contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development. Vocational subjects identify progression routes to employment opportunities which are raising pupils' aspirations and the way that they value learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding personal care because the adults understand their needs extremely well and as a result pupils respond by behaving as well as they possibly can. Several parents commented on how these improvements have substantially improved the quality of life at home. All procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are securely in place, both on the Impact site, and wherever they work with external providers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in public care receive excellent additional support to enable them to access the curriculum and to benefit from the broader personal development which the centre offers. Each pupil's progress towards agreed targets for their behaviour, attitudes and personal development is very carefully monitored, and adults provide excellent feedback on how well they are doing and how to improve. Adults give outstanding guidance if pupils struggle to

sustain the usual very high standards of behaviour. In the great majority of situations this is highly effective. Attendance is rigorously monitored, and there is a systematic response to any absence which is closely tailored to the needs of the pupils and their families. Pupils get highly effective guidance which enables a very high proportion to make a successful transition to the next stage of training or employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the last inspection the headteacher and the management committee have strengthened the leadership team. This team is effectively addressing the school's priorities and having a significant positive impact. Teaching is more consistent. The accommodation is vastly improved and the off-site provision is skilfully coordinated and monitored for its quality and effectiveness. As a result, there is a very positive ethos where pupils feel they are back on track and can see a brighter future for themselves. This has resulted in a stronger focus on monitoring pupils' personal development and working very closely with outside agencies to further improve the opportunities and outcomes for all pupils. The management committee is very effective in supporting the strategic direction of the centre, monitoring the finances and the curriculum and challenging the leadership team to demonstrate the very highest standards. The morale of the staff is very high and professional development opportunities are excellent, resulting in the centre's very good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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

Inspection of Impact Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit, Liverpool, L30 2QQ.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to visit Impact. We were very impressed by your behaviour and attitudes towards academic and vocational work. You all seemed to enjoy school and were rightly very proud of your achievements since arriving at Impact. We soon discovered from our discussions with you and the staff why you have done so well.

- The head is a brilliant leader who sticks up for you and gets the very best facilities for the different types of learning you are offered.
- The staff work very well as a team to look after you and are always prepared to listen and support you.
- You have many opportunities to follow courses in things that you are most interested in.
- You are expected to work hard and behave sensibly and maturely - and you do.

It is very evident to us that you are now more ambitious and confident than you were, and the staff and your parents told us of how much improvement you had made and continue to make. We know that the staff at the school want you to be successful and they are the main reason that you have such a good time at Impact. We discussed with the headteacher how Impact could improve and we agreed that you need more advice about how to reach the grades that you are aiming for in your different courses.

However, the most important thing is that you continue to be as positive, enthusiastic and optimistic as you were during our visit. You made us realise what can be achieved through hard work, big efforts and listening to good advice.