

Chadwick Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133398
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	316112
Inspection date	20 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Debbie Ormerod
Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Smith (Acting head)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Owen Road Skerton Lancaster LA1 2BL
Telephone number	01524 384926
Fax number	01524 849791

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is part of the Lancashire Pupil Reintegration Service. It opened in 2006 and is located on the site of Skerton High School in Lancaster. It serves a wide surrounding area of social and economic disadvantage which includes the towns of Morecambe, Carnforth, Garstang and surrounding rural districts. It has spaces available on site for up to 24 students. The overall capacity of the PRU is for up to 80 students placed in the Centre, at the local further education college, in the respite centre, or with private local providers. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. All students are of White British heritage, all speak English at home. The numbers of boys and girls are broadly equal. Most older students have been permanently excluded from school, though many of the younger students attend as part of 'step-out' or respite programmes. An acting headteacher has been in post since June 2008. The PRU holds the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Chadwick Centre provides students with a satisfactory and improving education. It gives satisfactory value for money. The centre has clear strengths in the dedicated individual care it provides for all its students, ensuring that their personal development and well-being are good. This results in students' spiritual, moral and social development being good. However, the centre does not yet place enough emphasis on helping students to be prepared for living in a culturally diverse society. Care, guidance and support are good. Adults display calm and friendly role models for students, which most are quick to identify with. Consequently, relationships between staff and students are good, and students unanimously say they trust their teachers. The centre takes its responsibilities for safeguarding students very seriously, and staff have a powerful effect on students' feelings of security and safety.

Students' academic attainment on entry is lower than normally expected due largely to disruptions to their education as a result of their particular difficulties and poor behaviour. However, once at the Chadwick Centre, students settle into daily routines, improve their attitudes to learning, and make satisfactory progress. Several parents are pleased to note the positive personal and social changes the centre helps their children to make. Students' standards when they leave the centre are below average.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers quickly get students involved in practical tasks, challenging them to take responsibility for their own learning and to think for themselves. These lessons move forward rapidly and students learn well. Some other lessons lack this pace and challenge because teachers spend too much time talking and explaining, and controlling the inevitable impatience that this brings. In these instances, learning is slower than it might otherwise be.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is improving as the centre is becoming increasingly able to secure good quality alternative provision off site which meets the needs of the students more accurately. This provision has yet to show its full impact on students' standards and the progress they make. Students like the range of enrichment activities the centre offers.

Although in a state of change, the overall leadership and management of the centre is satisfactory. The centre has, for almost a year, been led by an experienced acting headteacher. She is receiving good support from two internal temporary appointees. Together they have ensured that provision continues to improve its effectiveness by facilitating good links with many professional agencies. This enables students either to be successfully reintegrated with mainstream education, or to gain accreditation which will allow them to access training or employment. The centre's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. However, because the leadership of the centre is temporary and uncertain, its capacity to secure further improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more lessons than at present challenge all students, and have the pace to sustain their interest for longer periods.
- Ensure that students are made more aware of the multicultural diversity of the world in which they live.
- Stabilise the leadership and management of the PRU to ensure that recent improvements are sustained.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. The students start from a lower than average base because of disruptions to their previous learning, and the nature of their difficulties. These difficulties lead to overall standards remaining below average. Nevertheless, students make satisfactory progress over the time they are in the PRU. They make great strides forward in improving their patterns of attendance and develop more willingness to learn which leads to successful return to mainstream education. In 2008, unvalidated data indicates that standards were below average for students gaining 5 A* to C grades at GCSE, and low for students gaining 1 A* to G grades at GCSE. Very small numbers of students were entered for national tests at Key Stage 3 because most Year 9 students were successfully reintegrated with mainstream education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students respond well to the well structured and very supportive environment they find in the centre. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good because staff give them many opportunities to consider the effects of their actions on others. Students' understanding of cultural diversity is relatively weak. Students are generally well behaved and enjoy coming to school, as is shown by their much improved attendance and significantly reduced exclusions. Several parents note this, and the comment 'my daughter has become a better person since attending Chadwick' is typical. Students are polite and tolerant. Through weekly one-to-one sessions, they say they are able to build good relationships with teachers. These relationships are based on clear boundaries of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and what students see as unstinting support to help them overcome their difficulties. Students say they trust their teachers.

Students enjoy their healthy meals, and are clear about the benefits they bring. Several were quite disparaging about 'junk' foods. They have a very positive perspective on their own community within the Chadwick Centre. This can be seen in their willingness to take responsibility by tidying rooms, and willingly cleaning up after enjoyable food technology lessons. They actively raise money for those they see to be less well off than themselves. By the time they reach Year 11, many students are thoughtful and trustworthy, and well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers use a common format for planning work in lessons, and this ensures that students are clear about what they are going to learn. Teachers have a calm and measured approach which, when combined with appropriately refreshing humour, often makes learning more enjoyable. The best lessons have well planned short, sharp, tasks, delivered at pace, which challenge students to think for themselves. These lessons motivate students to learn well. They find the work interesting, and become immersed in finding solutions to practical problems.

Teachers use praise and encouragement well, and give immediate verbal feedback on how well students have achieved. In other lessons, teachers talk too much and do not get students working quickly enough. Tasks are tightly controlled by teachers and work lacks real challenge. When students are not quickly required to think for themselves, they rapidly become restless and lose focus. In these lessons, students' learning inevitably slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for Key Stage 3 students is strongly centred on the National Curriculum, and makes sure that their basic skills of English and mathematics steadily improve. This ensures that students return to mainstream education without having lost additional ground. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is growing in flexibility to better meet the ambitions and aspirations of students in Year 10 and 11, most of whom do not return to mainstream education. The range of accreditation students are able to gain is growing, and enables most students to take up places in further education, work or training when they leave. Some Year 10 students are preparing for early college transfer onto hairdressing courses at the start of Year 11 and are taking several exams early to facilitate this. The full impact of these strategies on students' achievement has yet to be seen.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The centre meets the current government requirements for safeguarding students. Staff know students well, and are trusted by them. Weekly one-to-one sessions, well liked by students, are integral to ensuring that students' well-being and personal development are at the forefront of all that goes on in the centre. A reliable and accurate academic and pastoral assessment and tracking system gives teachers clear information on what students know and can do. This allows them to plan lessons which cater well for individual needs. Students know their levels, and are aware of their academic and behaviour targets. They are keen to succeed and find the rewards system fair. Links with outside professional and other agencies, and with secondary schools, are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

During the long term absence of the permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher, the centre has been capably led by an experienced acting headteacher. She has received good support from staff temporarily appointed internally. This temporary leadership team has successfully raised staff morale and gained a clear picture of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. Because of this, the centre has been able to instigate a whole school planning format, moved rapidly to initiate improvements to students tracking, and improved students' attendance. Challenging targets, based largely, but not exclusively, on what is expected nationally, are set for individual students. Older students in particular are well motivated and often reach their targets. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. Students learn to contribute to their own centre and recognise the importance of relating well to each other. Their wider understanding of cultural and religious diversity is not promoted sufficiently. The centre focuses on its own students and staff, and works well with the parents of the students to consolidate learning both academic and pastoral. Leaders are well aware that more needs

to be done to ensure that students understand the socially and culturally diverse society in which they live.

Members of the management committee give good support, and their breadth of knowledge and understanding ensures a good level of challenge. Staff work hard to give every student an equal opportunity to learn and flourish by relentlessly tackling discrimination in all its forms head on. With the centre becoming increasingly effective, it shows satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Chadwick Centre, Lancashire, LA1 2BL.

Thank you for welcoming me to the centre. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what you are doing. It was very helpful to get your opinions about the centre. I judged that adults are providing you with a satisfactory and improving education.

There are some good things about the centre, and these are:

- the good care and support which you receive from the adults in the centre
- the success you experience in getting jobs, or moving on to college
- the good improvements you make in your attitudes and behaviour so that many of you can return to school.

I have asked the adults who run Chadwick to improve some things to make the centre better, and these are:

- ensure that more lessons move forward quickly, and challenge you to think for yourselves
- give you more opportunities to learn about the different cultures and beliefs of people from different ethnic backgrounds
- put the leadership and management of the centre on a permanent footing so that the successes you are having can be sustained and improved.

Hearing your views has helped me to reach my judgements. May I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector