

Shepwell Centre

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	131619
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	328623
Inspection date	18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shirley Archibald
Headteacher	Louise De-Hayes
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2006
School address	Bilston Lane Willenhall Willenhall WV13 2QJ
Telephone number	01902 632719
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Age group	11–16
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to a change to the report following a complaint

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shepwell Centre is a medical pupil referral unit (PRU) for students who have a variety of medical, emotional and psychological difficulties as well as, occasionally, for pregnant schoolgirls. A small minority of students receive free school meals and a few are looked after by the local authority. A very small minority have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all students are White British. Most students have experienced periods of not attending school. Students come from a wide mix of backgrounds. Students join the centre at various times during the school year and at different times during the key stages, and usually attend for between six weeks and two terms. All students are dual-registered with their mainstream school with a view to eventual reintegration. Although the number on roll at any one time is relatively low, the number passing through the centre each year is much higher. The centre also offers services to students on the roll of mainstream schools, including home and hospital tuition and in-school support to students who might otherwise refuse to go to school. The head of centre is the only senior leader in post.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Shepwell Centre is an outstanding PRU. It transforms the prospects of students who attend by helping them very successfully to return to learning and secure a brighter future. Students make outstanding progress in their academic work and personal development because teaching, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support given are of a very high standard. Excellent leadership has seen the centre through a very difficult period and turned it around to become among the best of its kind.

Students enjoy coming to the centre very much and, despite the often considerable difficulties they experience, feel sufficiently confident to begin attending regularly. They are convinced that they make 'amazing' progress and this is accurate; it is usually much more rapid than typically found in mainstream schools. This is equally true for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most able. Every student leaving Year 11 gains at least five A* to G grades in GCSEs, and a third achieve at least five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. This is exceptional compared to similar centres. There are no significant differences in performance between subjects because the quality of teaching is universally high, with all lessons being at least good, and many outstanding.

Parents are extremely positive about the impact of the centre on their children's lives. As one typically commented, 'We are thrilled at what has been accomplished.' All parents appreciate the very high level of care and support given to the students and their families.

The head of centre has systematically improved every aspect of the centre through setting very high expectations of what can be achieved and by working with, and developing, staff skills to meet those aspirations. Very regular and detailed attention is paid to each individual student's progress so that performance can be improved, and this is another reason why students do so well. This information is not summarised well enough, however, to present an overview of the subtle differences between groups and within subjects over time. The head of centre recognises that without such information, and with such high performance already, it is not easy to identify where further improvement should be made. Nonetheless, the centre's track record so far, combined with a very good awareness of its great strengths and few weaknesses, means that the capacity to improve further is very good.

The students have a very wide range of curricular options for following their interests and developing new skills because the centre links extensively with other providers and schools. Recently, individual students were able to follow courses as diverse as hairdressing, judo, AS Level ICT and adult literacy as a result. The curriculum provides plenty of opportunities that encourage students to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community, from peer mentoring to supporting people with Alzheimer's disease. One student commented, 'I feel privileged to be a student here.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Summarise the information on progress for the different student groups to show more clearly where improvements are most needed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Attainment on entry and standards overall are well below those found nationally due to the nature of students' difficulties. Nevertheless, in many courses taken, the levels students reach are comparable to those of their mainstream peers. The great majority of students make outstanding progress in the subjects they take. This is true for students of all abilities, including those with significant learning difficulties. Those in Key Stage 3 often make more than one National Curriculum level gain in a term, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Schools comment on the very rapid progress students have made by the time they return to mainstream schooling. For those joining the centre during Key Stage 4, results are equally impressive. From GCSEs and vocational qualifications to adult literacy and numeracy, students in Years 10 and 11 are gaining the qualifications they need to succeed at college or in their chosen careers, usually in less than a year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

For the students, coming to Shepwell Centre is a life-changing experience. Prior to arriving at the centre, the majority have been out of school for some time or have had very poor attendance due to the anxieties and other difficulties they experience. Attendance for the great majority improves considerably and is sustained. The effect on them is best described by the students themselves. For example, one said, 'I did not think I could do this well,' and another, 'My confidence is sky high.' One boy said, 'This place has changed my life.' The great majority return to complete their studies in mainstream school and every single Year 11 student goes on to college, employment or training. The centre tracks students when they leave and the success is long-lasting, with almost all continuing to do well. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They show great care towards one another and a tolerance and respect for the differences between people. There is no bullying, behaviour is excellent and everyone feels safe. Students were keen to describe how everyone gets on and they find the friendliness between different age groups and with staff extremely welcoming. The change in students' ability to go out, contribute and join in with things is remarkable. They have, for example, gained awards for their work locally against bullying and for various community art projects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

There are many strengths in the outstanding teaching at the centre. Teachers have very strong supportive relationships with students and demonstrate great skill in meeting their emotional and academic needs. For this reason, students feel safe and rapidly increase their confidence in being able to learn and contribute in lessons. Lessons are highly motivating, as one lively English lesson demonstrated when students performed a rhyme with actions, which helped them to remember easily how to write about a text. Assessment is very thorough and students know exactly what they are aiming for in the different subjects. Planning for a wide variety of

levels in each group is managed very well, so that students who have recently arrived or those following different courses can progress just as rapidly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

There is a very broad and outstanding range of opportunities for students to study their interests and achieve highly. Great care is taken, where possible, to match what is being taught, to work in students' mainstream school, so that they can succeed when they return. This is a complex process and involves excellent links with schools and colleges. Preparation for working life is of high quality, particularly in Year 11. The successful programme to encourage healthy living pervades many subjects and is integral to the friendly breakfast meeting, where students register and begin the day as a family. Sports and the arts are also very strong, and for the many students who did not like to take part in sport at school the 100% take-up of badminton, boxing, or judo, to name but a few, is excellent. The curriculum is exceptionally rich and provides numerous trips, visits and visitors to support students in their personal and academic endeavours. For example, in 2008, students visited the Mayor's Parlour to receive a civic award for the work undertaken by the centre. Several students have won local and national prizes for their art. At the borough's annual anti-bullying conference, for example, one student won the prize for designing a logo for the next campaign.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Procedures to safeguard students meet requirements. All students, regardless of their difficulties, receive intensive support to help them make such outstanding personal and academic progress. Individual subject targets are set with the students, and a learning mentor works very closely with them to check that they are progressing as expected. These targets are aspirational and students are helped to feel sufficiently confident to meet them. The care taken to gather sufficient information when students join is excellent and ensures that they are learning the right things from the very start. Equally, when they leave, support is given and checks are made to ensure that the placements are successful and their learning and personal confidence, including improved attendance, continue. All of this work is underpinned by very strong links with outside agencies, parents, schools and colleges.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The head of centre has shown exemplary leadership in taking the centre from a low baseline to becoming outstanding during her stewardship. She is supported well by the management committee, although there are no senior leaders to share the work of running the centre. All staff, however, work closely as a team and hold the same high aspirations as the head of centre. In the last few years, very effective self-evaluation has led to improvements in every area, from accommodation to teaching. The result has been a large increase in attendance, the eradication of difficult behaviour and bullying and a significant increase in the rate of students' academic and personal progress. The standard, number and range of qualifications achieved have improved considerably. Reintegration rates have soared and students' post-16 destinations are now consistently successful.

The head of centre recognises that the way individual student information is used makes it difficult to see, in more detail, trends and differences between subjects and groups over time. The centre is poised to begin using information about students' progress more strategically so that improvements can continue to build upon the already high performance.

The centre supports equal opportunities excellently and promotes community cohesion well. Students show sensitive respect, tolerance and understanding towards those with other religions or from different backgrounds to themselves. The most important aspect of this is the way students learn to be more comfortable in themselves and so learn how to mix in the wider society.

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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**

19 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Shepwell Centre, Willenhall WV13 2QJ

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your centre. I very much enjoyed meeting you and seeing some of your lessons. It is an outstanding centre, with many interesting things going on, just as you described. You look after it beautifully and your art work is stunning. The head of centre works hard to keep developing opportunities for you and, for this reason, the progress you make is excellent.

Very skilled teaching helps you to make rapid progress in your lessons. As a result, you do very well in all your subjects, especially English, mathematics, science and ICT. I like the way you really enjoy your work and always try to do your best. You told me that your teachers make lessons interesting and I can see that they help you all do as well as you can. I would now like to see staff look at trends in progress between different groups and subjects. This should help them in continuing to improve the work you do. I am sure that you will discuss this with staff and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

An outstanding curriculum helps you to make excellent progress in your social and personal skills. You were keen to tell me that the centre also keep you safe and looks after you very well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet. Your behaviour is outstanding, especially in the way you value learning and respect others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living. I can see why you find such pleasure in the friendliness of everyone at the centre.

The changes you make in becoming more able to learn, mix with others and prepare for the future are impressive, particularly in the way most of you now attend every day. It is good to know that you feel that staff take your views seriously and that you can make a difference. You clearly value coming to the centre. I think that these things, alongside your excellent basic skills and mature attitudes, will help prepare you very well for the next stage of your education and career.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector