

CYCES The Together Trust

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	356/6025
Unique Reference Number	106162
Inspection number	331352
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Caroline Broomhead HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

CYCES (Child and Youth Care Education Service) provides education for 40 boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 16 with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Some also have additional complex needs. Of the 40 on roll, 22 attend part time by agreement with their placing authorities. Nearly all the pupils have statements of special educational needs and almost half are looked after by local authorities. All have histories of disrupted schooling and are unable to access a place at a maintained school. CYCES is run by The Together Trust which provides residential care, foster care, adoption, social work and educational services. CYCES is located on the main Together Trust campus in Cheadle, where building work is currently taking place and is expected to be complete ready for September. The school also offers education at another site in Ashton; this was not visited as part of this inspection. CYCES was last inspected in June 2006.

Evaluation of the school

CYCES is a good school which provides a good standard of education for its pupils, most of whom attend regularly and enjoy coming to school. The school has made improvements to the quality of its provision and taken steps to address regulatory failings identified at the last inspection. The school now meets nearly all of the independent schools regulations. In order to comply fully with safeguarding requirements, it needs to ensure that all staff receive child protection training.

Quality of education

The curriculum has improved and is now good. It is based on the National Curriculum and all subjects are taught with the exception of a modern foreign language. There is a clear entitlement for all pupils to participate in a range of curriculum activities which are flexibly tailored to meet their needs and are relevant to their interests and aspirations. Individual timetables enable pupils to make a smooth transition from part-time attendance to full time and from individual tuition or home tuition to working within groups. For example, pupils within the 'nurture' group may spend part of their time joining their year groups for activities such as dance. Those in the 'Access' group, for part-time pupils who find it very difficult to cope with normal school settings, will gradually move into year groups in the main school as their confidence, emotional security, and willingness to engage in learning

improve. These flexible arrangements work well and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and academic progress. Provision for personal, social and health education is a strength and a key factor in promoting pupils' emotional development and well-being.

Curriculum planning is becoming more detailed. Schemes of work for every subject are being located on the school's intranet to support teachers' planning for groups and individuals. The modular approach to the curriculum is very effective in motivating pupils and enabling them to complete units of work, particularly for those who are only at the school for a short time. The school offers a good range of accreditation which successfully challenges all abilities. From Year 7, pupils can achieve unit awards and as they progress they move on to achieve Entry Level and GCSE qualifications in a broad range of subjects, depending on their ability.

There is a good mix of academic and more practical or vocational activities which the pupils enjoy. The school has extended its range of specialist facilities since the last inspection. It makes good use of its science, food technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and art areas to enable pupils to undertake practical activities. Evidence of the popularity of art can be seen in the high quality displays and examples of ceramic creations around the school. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, recognising that success in these is essential for enabling pupils to access the wider curriculum and for moving on into adult life. This is further enhanced by the careers programme and opportunities to take part in work experience placements. The pupils have many opportunities to take part in physical activities such as fell walking and canoeing as well as competing in football matches with other schools.

There is a strong focus on community-based learning, which helps pupils to relate to others in the wider community. The school has excellent partnership arrangements with other organisations to offer pupils a wide range of activities, for example, go-karting or learning to break dance at a local professional studio run by The Message, a voluntary organisation which offers outreach to young people in Greater Manchester.

Senior managers have accurately judged the quality of teaching and assessment as good. The features which contribute to the good, and sometimes excellent, classroom practice include careful planning which is based on a detailed knowledge of pupils' individual needs and personalities. Teaching staff are experienced in working with pupils with complex behavioural, emotional and social needs and know what works well in the classroom and how to avoid disruptions and distractions. Their good subject knowledge is combined well with the use of a variety of practical and visual resources to capture interest. Teachers give clear instructions so that pupils know what is expected of them and demonstrate high standards when showing pupils how to perform a task, such as in cooking. Careful attention is paid to promoting pupils' awareness of health, safety and hygiene in all practical activities. Teaching assistants provide very effective support which extends pupils'

concentration and builds their confidence. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and learning and work hard to enable pupils to experience success in small steps throughout the lesson. The crisp pace gives time for pupils to complete tasks without getting bored. Where teaching is less strong, it is because the pace is too slow and pupils are not sufficiently involved from the outset.

Assessment is satisfactory and improving. Teachers are tracking pupils' attainment and progress against their completion of units of work and external course requirements. Baseline assessment has been established in all subjects along with a new electronic system for recording termly attainment data. In time this will enable the school to track pupil progress more easily and provide an accurate basis for setting targets for learning. The new format for teachers' planning shows the expected learning outcomes for all pupils, most pupils and some pupils, but this is not consistently in use yet. The pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points, particularly when they attend full time. They are keen to learn and want to do well, but their involvement in setting targets and reviewing their progress is limited.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Evidence of pupils' enjoyment is seen in their improving attendance, their willingness to contribute in lessons and other activities, the pride taken in their work and their positive relationships with others. In this calm environment the pupils learn to respect themselves and others. Their behaviour is good; they are usually polite and courteous and have a positive attitude to school. They are well aware of the school's high expectations, its code of conduct and their responsibilities in school. The system for gaining rewards is understood well and pupils carefully watch their position on the 'league table' which is displayed in the hall, knowing that being in the top ten will mean a special day out for them. They feel safe and value the support and help they get from staff. Relationships with staff are excellent and any incidents are managed in a quiet, reassuring manner, always protecting the dignity of pupils. When pupils become anxious or find it difficult to remain in class they take some time out of the lesson and then return when they have calmed down. This results in minimal disruption to other pupils' learning. Over time, they grow in self-esteem, self confidence and tolerance of others. In assemblies pupils proudly receive their certificates and awards. They also learn about people's individual differences and reflect on their own personal development since they came to the school. Through involvement in drama productions, they are able to understand lives from different perspectives as shown in the award-winning film made by the pupils entitled 'The Undertakers'.

Pupils learn about different faiths, beliefs and cultures through, for example, discussions about topics of current interest, taking part in community activities such as the Christmas Carol Concert and exploring different forms of art from different parts of the world.

Religious education is taught on a regular basis to one group of pupils and the school is currently developing plans to bring more structure to this aspect of the curriculum for all groups. The pupils enjoy taking part in community activities such as charity fund-raising events and learning about the needs of the homeless, all of which help them to understand more about the world they live in. However, the school recognises that more could be done to raise their awareness of life in a multicultural society. There is good provision for pupils' economic well-being. For example, pupils take part in a wide range of work experience placements matched to their individual interests.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The day-to-day care of pupils is good and they feel safe and secure. There are good levels of supervision and pupils respond positively to the high expectations which staff have of them at all times. Rules and boundaries are made clear. The staff are well trained in managing behaviour and consistently adopt a positive, non-confrontational approach in dealing with any incidents or disruption. The designated officer for child protection and most, but not all, of the staff on site have received the required level of child protection training.

The pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles by taking part in a range of physical activities and choosing to eat the plentiful fruit and water which is freely available throughout the school day. Some pupils join the breakfast club on arrival, particularly if they have travelled some distance to get to school.

The school goes to great lengths to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Close liaison is maintained with care staff, parents and carers.

The Trust has clear, overarching policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils which include requirements to conduct risk assessments, carry out health and safety checks of premises and equipment, ensure that fire procedures and equipment are in order, and record any incidents, accidents or other reportable events. In practice, these tasks are carried out as expected but staff are not always vigilant when completing the corresponding written records and some details are omitted. Senior managers are aware that a more structured approach is needed to reviewing and monitoring all key policies and procedures. The school has a three-year Access plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The Trust has established rigorous procedures for recruiting and vetting staff which mean that no-one commences work at the school until enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau have been completed. Equal care is taken when employing the services of supply staff from agencies and when considering applications from volunteers.

School's premises and accommodation

As the school is located in pleasant surroundings within extensive grounds on the campus of the Together Trust headquarters, there is plenty of space for pupils to enjoy outdoor sports. The premises themselves are adequate for the number of pupils who attend full time and the pattern of attendance for part timers. When the new additional building is complete, this will release some of the current pressure on classrooms.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school prospectus is being revised. The current version does not meet requirements because it does not provide details of provision for pupils with English as an additional language. Also it does not inform parents that information about the school's policies on bullying and health and safety are available on request.

The school sends regular reports to parents and carers about pupils' progress, but these vary in the level of detail they contain.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's arrangements for handling complaints meet requirements. There were no formal complaints registered in the previous 12 months.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all staff receive training in child protection in line with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))

- ensure that parents are aware they can request particulars of policies relating to bullying and health and safety (paragraph 6(2)(h)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- extend the range of opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of life in a multicultural society
- provide opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience modern foreign languages
- involve pupils in setting their learning targets and assessing their own progress

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			√	
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School details

Name of school	CYCES The Together Trust		
DCSF number	356/6025		
Unique reference number	106162		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1992		
Age range of pupils	8-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 10	Girls: 8	Total: 18
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 21	Girls: 1	Total: 22
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 30	Girls: 7	Total: 37
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 17	Girls: 6	Total: 23
Annual fees (day pupils)	£33,787		
Address of school	The Together Trust Centre Schools Hill Cheadle Cheshire SK8 1JE		
Telephone number	0161 283 4832		
Fax number	0161 283 4747		
Email address	sgrimley@togethertrust.org		
Headteacher	Mr Steve Grimley		
Proprietor	The Together Trust		
Reporting inspector	Caroline Broomhead HMI		
Dates of inspection	13–14 May 2009		