

Woods End Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131134
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	341098
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Merrill
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley Durham
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons or parts of lessons and a sample of off-site provision. He held meetings with staff, groups of students, a representative of the local authority and the chair of the management committee. He observed the centre's work and looked at documentation including the centre development plan, a wide range of policies, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of students' progress, including individual education plans. Staff and students completed questionnaires and eight parental questionnaires were also read.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the centre's work, looking in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of senior management including the management committee
- the quality of the provision including teaching and the curriculum
- the achievement of students and whether they re-engage with their learning.

Information about the school

Woodsend Centre operates two integrated elements, a home tuition service and a pupil referral unit. The home tuition service currently provides education for 14 students aged five to 16 who have short or longer term medical or mental health issues which prevent them from attending mainstream school. A small group of part time Key Stage 3 students receive small group tuition on a separate site with the intention that they will return to mainstream school. Students attending part time at the centre are aged 14 to 16 and have long-term medical or mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression or school phobia. The centre prepares them for the transition to further education or employment. Almost all students are of White British heritage. Seven have statements of special educational needs, mainly for emotional and social needs. A few are looked after by the local authority. A small number are eligible for free school meals. The centre has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Since the last inspection there have been improvements in all outcomes, including rates of attendance, the successful re-integration of students into mainstream schools and the post-16 destinations of the oldest students. The quality of teaching is good and there is a stable staffing structure and a senior leadership team, ably led by the headteacher. This team monitors and shares responsibility well for the centre's work both on and off-site. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate in its judgements. The work of the management committee is good and responsive to the needs of the centre when previously it had not been. All of these factors contribute to the centre's good capacity for improvement. The curriculum has been extended well since the time of the last inspection. Care, guidance and support, including safeguarding, are outstanding. The centre's links with parents are excellent and its work is highly valued by parents. A typical comment was 'A huge thank you to the Woodsend Centre for their continued support. I cannot nor would not want to fault this school: excellent!'

The overwhelming majority of students overcome significant barriers to learning and re-engage with their learning. They behave well and many become very focused on their examination coursework. At the centre they are offered a second chance to study a good range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, design and technology (DT), media, art and religious education. Some practical aspects of the work in science and DT are more difficult for the centre to offer and there is scope for further improvement in this respect. Students are taught well individually and in small groups. Teachers use assessment information effectively to cater for individual circumstances and all staff provide good support for them in lessons. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the students' learning though they are not used to their full potential in all parts of lessons and in helping to assess students' progress.

The high quality of care, guidance and support is evident in the way staff are alert to the needs of students. They make excellent use of other agencies to provide medical and mental health support. Safeguarding of students is of the highest priority and the focus is always on what best can be done to help them on their way to living a happy, productive life in society.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop ways of teaching a wider range of practical elements in science and DT to increase students' opportunities for learning at first hand.
- Extend the role of teaching assistants so that they make a full contribution to the

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assessment and learning of students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

There is a very wide range of attainment among students when they start receiving the support of home tutors or staff at the centre. Those who have refused to attend school in the past have often missed a significant amount of their education. The overwhelming majority, most of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. There is no variation in performance between different groups of students. Some often have to overcome significant anxieties before they are able to go beyond one-to-one tuition in their home and join a larger group at the centre or at the additional site.

All students gain in confidence and with the support of staff begin to contribute again in lessons. After initially being very reluctant, they start answering questions, offering ideas and giving opinions. They show a renewed interest in doing well, begin to enjoy lessons again and to take pride in their folders of course work. Their behaviour is rarely less than good and they become more independent in their ways. Some older Key Stage 4 students travel to the centre by public transport and all use equipment such as computers with increasing independence.

During the last three years, there have been improvements in the levels of attendance so that attendance this year is only slightly below average. Given the previous non-attendance of many, this is a good indicator of how the centre re-engages the students with learning. Students are set challenging targets that encourage them to aim high and they respond well. Almost two thirds of last year's leavers gained five GCSE passes and a quarter gained five passes at grades A – C, including English and mathematics. All but one went on to courses in further education.

As a result of good teaching in personal, social, health and citizenship education, students gain an excellent understanding of how to keep safe in their personal life, for example in avoiding unsafe situations when using the internet. They make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the centre through the centre forum. They gain good skills to help them in their working life, for example gaining confidence to work in teams when they take outdoor and adventurous activities off-site.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

A fundamental aim of the centre is to give students the opportunity to continue the courses they have begun at school and to gain qualifications. Staff have high expectations while at the same time giving them the support they need. Teachers deliver courses to suit the particular circumstances of their students. They use well the information from testing and assessments to make sure the work is appropriately pitched. Marking of students' work is good with clear indications of the levels the students are achieving and with advice and points for improvement.

The curriculum is very well tailored to students' individual needs. For example, English and mathematics are taught from a level of basic literacy to top grade GCSE to suit the student. Opportunities in ICT are very good. In physical education, staff make very good use of other facilities to make up for what cannot be offered at the centre. Not only are some very reluctant students persuaded to take part in physical exercise but they take courses to GCSE level and even join a residential visit to North Wales, something that would have been unthinkable while at a mainstream school. Art therapy is also offered for individuals and is taught by a visiting specialist. In other subjects such as science and DT, staff look for ways to overcome shortcomings in the availability of laboratory and cooking facilities and have introduced courses to get round difficulties. For instance, courses in graphics, textiles and resistant materials have been introduced in DT. Appropriate work experience is available for Year 11 students, though at the time of the inspection some still lacked placements. One student is successfully taking an accountancy course at a local college and one student is successfully taking a media course at a local college.

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The high priority given to care, guidance and support is evident in the very good use made of outside agencies such as the education welfare service, careers advice, speech and language specialists and a school nurse. A form tutor system operates so that students feel confident they have someone to turn to. Another example of excellent practice is the recent innovation to teach Key Stage 3 students at an additional site. This has the best interests of the students at heart in that it is providing them with small group activities in a setting that is on the road to a return to mainstream classes. Moving these younger students straight to the centre was found to have disadvantages because some began to view the centre as somewhere they might stay for the next three or four years without achieving the principal goal of returning to mainstream education. All students have a personalised support plan and after Year 11 their progress and welfare remain a priority for the careers advisor, who keeps close contact with the students through their next moves.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has driven forward improvements since the last inspection and is unceasing in pursuit of the best opportunities for students. She has successfully established a senior leadership team that is involved well in school self-evaluation and improvement. Regular monitoring of provision, through lesson observations and scrutiny of work and lesson plans, is helping the team to identify where improvements need to be made. A relative shortcoming in monitoring has been an over emphasis in the past on focusing more on teaching than learning.

The management committee, whose brief covers two other pupil referral units, is ably led by the chair and after re-structuring since the last inspection has established a sub-group with specific responsibility for monitoring and challenging the Woodsend Centre. Staff and parental representation on the sub-group is good and this structure is working well.

The centre is successful in reducing discrimination and providing equal opportunities for all students, including the most vulnerable. All matters of safeguarding, including risk assessments and the safe recruitment of staff, meet government requirements, are given very high priority and are highly effective. The staff are very successful welcoming and involving parents in the progress their children are making. In addition, staff also promote links with the local community well so that residents nearby are familiar with

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the work of the centre, thus helping to develop community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

All eight responses to the parents' questionnaire were entirely positive and all contained additional comments endorsing the work of the centre. In addition, one letter was received from the parents of two former students and the inspector spoke to one parent by telephone. Their views fully support the outcomes, quality of provision, and leadership and management described in this report. There were no negative comments. This comment from one parent summarises the views of many, 'The headteacher and staff at the centre have been my child's lifeline and I cannot thank them enough.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woods End Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 8 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 32 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Woodsend Centre, Manchester, M41 8RN

I am writing to let you know the outcome of the inspection of the Woodsend Centre. I enjoyed my visit very much. The home tuition service and the centre are giving you all a good education and the staff are offering you much that will help you in the future.

- You are really gaining in confidence in what you do and putting a lot of effort in. You are all becoming mature students and making good progress in your studies. This is so pleasing to see.
- The way the headteacher and staff do so much to help and support you so that you can get the best out of your education is excellent.
- There are many valuable opportunities to help you at the centre and off-site. Talking to you and reading the questionnaires you filled in, I can see that you really appreciate what the staff are doing for you. Part of my job is to make suggestions about how the centre can improve. These are two things I have asked the staff to do:
 - to do all they can to give you practical, hands-on activities in science and DT
 - to involve the teaching assistants as much as possible in your learning and in assessing how much progress you are making while at the centre.

Best wishes for the future. Make the most of the opportunities that the centre gives you, so that you can do well in your education and future life.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Frank Carruthers

Lead Inspector

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