

# Windlehurst School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131889
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	341244
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terence McKenzie

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margaret Burns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Abercromby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Windlehurst Road Hawk Green Marple SK6 7HZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited five lessons and an assembly. He held meetings with governors, the headteacher, other staff and a group of students. He observed the school's work, looked at assessment information, the school improvement plans, safeguarding documents, key policies and eight questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- how well teachers plan, prepare and deliver lessons to meet the individual needs of students
- how well students attend and manage their behaviour at the school and college
- how well students contribute to the school and the community
- how well the school managers are making changes to improve the school.

## Information about the school

Windlehurst educates students with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties and currently all students are boys. Some have additional learning needs, including autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia. The nature of their needs means that many students have missed a great deal of their education before starting at Windlehurst. Most students are entitled to free school meals and all are transported to and from school by taxi with some journeys taking more than 30 minutes. Since September 2009 the school has additionally occupied a site at Stockport College where the Key Stage 4 students are now permanently accommodated. No student speaks English as an additional language. The previous inspection, and the subsequent monitoring visit by Ofsted in 2008, identified concerns about the school and its inadequate progress, but since then many positive changes have occurred. The governing body was reorganised in September 2008 and a new headteacher appointed in June 2009.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Windlehurst has greatly improved under the leadership of the new headteacher and is a satisfactory and improving school. It is beginning to meet its declared aim of providing personalised learning to students and is becoming successful in encouraging most to attend school regularly and improve their behaviour. Recent changes to the curriculum and the better resources available to Key Stage 4 have enabled students to settle quickly into classes and learn effectively. Consequently, students now make more progress in lessons than they did previously. However, despite the recent improvement, students' attainment remains below the level expected nationally. Views expressed by parents and carers are supportive of the school as are those of the staff and students. Many students were keen to highlight the caring nature of the staff and the good communications that exist between school and home which are appreciated by parents and carers. One comment expressed a common view, 'Staff are very approachable and deal with concerns very quickly.'

The transfer of Key Stage 4 students to their new base in a local college has had a dramatic and positive effect on the school. These students take advantage of the college facilities and, as a result, are keener to attend. They are learning how to control their behaviour in this public environment. At the Windlehurst site, Key Stage 3 students report that they feel safer since the older students have moved base and their behaviour and attendance is also improving as a consequence. However, behaviour outside lessons is often noisy and unruly. The school helps students to develop aspects of healthy lifestyles although some parents and carers would like the school to do more in this respect. Staff are acquiring the expertise needed to reduce students' stress and anxiety when confrontations arise.

The school has recently improved the areas of learning for all students but is not yet making the best use of support staff. In Key Stage 3 there is a topic-based curriculum. The opportunities for students in Key Stage 4 are almost limitless in the college setting and their achievements, currently satisfactory, are improving.

Staff understand that the school must continue to improve and they are positive about its future under the leadership of the headteacher. Senior staff help to lead developments and all are supported well by the governors and local authority advisers. Senior managers have successfully addressed the urgent priorities identified by the headteacher. They are aware of the need to build on the successes of the recently introduced accredited courses with better systems for monitoring progress and recording students' attainment. Leaders are using evaluation processes to good effect to identify and act upon new developments and the school is well placed to undertake further rapid improvement.

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The headteacher understands that teachers' use of assessment information to help set more meaningful targets for students in their individual education plans and in planning for lessons is inadequate. Teaching is satisfactory because lesson time is used well. Students show interest in their work and engage productively.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement assessment strategies that provide clear information about students' attainment and progress.
- Use assessment data better to plan lessons and when setting targets for students in their individual education plans. .
- Ensure that more effective use is made of learning support assistants.
- Improve students' behaviour outside of lessons in Key Stage 3.
- Continue to set priorities through the school improvement plan and ensure that targets for improvement are as concise as possible.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Students arrive at Windlehurst at different stages and ages with different starting points. Students' learning and progress are improving rapidly. Most students make satisfactory progress as seen in their work and when observing their learning in lessons. Students achieve satisfactorily because they enjoy their work and behave well. They often make valuable contributions in lessons and appreciate the good relationships that exist with staff. They settle quickly and engage with learning, helped by the successful classroom control strategies. High levels of staffing on both sites ensure that students are supported but teachers have not yet fully understood how to direct learning support assistants to the best advantage of students.

The standard of students' work evident in lessons and in their work books is lower than is expected for students' ages but recently some Windlehurst students have obtained good grades at GCSE. A recent innovation is that most students in Key Stage 3 can now demonstrate achievement through the Unit Award Scheme. Many use a computer program to chart the development of their basic skills. Students with additional learning difficulties receive extra help with literacy and numeracy enabling them to achieve satisfactorily, in line with others. At the college, Key Stage 4 students can choose from a wide range of vocational and other courses. This is helping them to further their future economic well-being through the development of workplace skills.

Students feel safe and unthreatened on both school sites. There is very little bullying and they trust the adults to look after them and deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. The introduction of the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme for the younger students is helping them to understand their emotional and behavioural difficulties and staff are using this new approach to enable students to learn about other aspects of health education. For example, during an assembly, all students were observed working cooperatively with adults on a quiz about healthy eating.

Students at both sites are demonstrating improved social skills and understanding of

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others. This is because the recently introduced wider curriculum enables younger students to learn about other people, religions and cultural traditions. At the college, older students are learning to mix with a wide variety of different people.

Students have traditionally interacted well with the local community through regular events such as the Guide Dogs initiative. A periodical school newspaper is delivered to local residents as well as students' friends and families and it receives positive feedback from people living close to the school. Charitable events such as sending gifts to children in Romania enable students to consider other communities further from the school. Students understand more about different communities through the Key Stage 3 wider curriculum.

Attendance is satisfactory overall and for many students it is good. In the past too many students have been excluded but behaviour of older students has improved remarkably with the move to the college. At the Windlehurst site, however, students' behaviour is too often unacceptable on corridors and in the playground.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> 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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Teaching is satisfactory because the adults have clear expectations about students' behaviour and engagement in class and relationships in classrooms are always good. During lessons the adults take care to ensure that students remain on task and make the best use of time. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the range of subjects they deliver and the small class sizes enable the adults to maintain close scrutiny of students' progress through effective use of question and answer. Some teachers use marking very effectively to help students understand how well they are doing and how to improve.

Overall, the use of assessment to support teaching and learning is inadequate. In the best lessons students are given clear information about the nature and purpose of tasks. The headteacher is urgently considering how to improve assessment processes but teachers lack assessment information that enables them to plan work more accurately to meet students' needs. The school has not yet standardised the use of individual learning targets for students and there are few systems for students to be able to evaluate their own progress or understand how to improve. In most lessons all students receive identical levels and styles of support from learning support assistants rather than having these planned to meet their individual needs.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is undergoing exciting redevelopment. Younger students now have an enrichment programme delivered through the wider curriculum and all have opportunities to learn in areas of personal interest while ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are improved. Older students remain focused on the development of basic skills through, for example, the adult literacy and numeracy courses. However, a wide range of vocational and other options exist that lead to accreditation at entry level certificate and GCSE.

Despite recent additional funding and personnel, resources at the Windlehurst site remain unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the external fabric of the school building is in poor repair and does little to encourage students to respect and care for it.

Windlehurst provides satisfactory care, guidance and support to students and helps them as individuals through, for example, good liaisons with home and external agencies. All are provided with individual education plans that include targets for students. However, these are not well-enough focused and not reviewed frequently enough. The school works hard to encourage a small number of persistent absentees to attend and a home-school liaison officer is employed who works with social welfare officers and others to maintain and improve attendance.

The management of students' behaviour in lessons is better than was previously reported but staff have not yet successfully learnt how to manage it in corridors and around the school. Windlehurst is working towards reducing the incidence of exclusion and is aware that in the past it has been used too readily as a punishment.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<p><b>The quality of teaching</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>4</p>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors work hard on behalf of all students and none is discriminated against. The school works effectively with parents and carers and ensures that as much regular contact is maintained as possible. There is a close and productive relationship with the local authority and this has provided support to the school that includes an executive headteacher to mentor the school headteacher. Additional experienced governors have also been introduced together with a liaison officer who was appointed to ensure good communications between the headteacher and governors.

Governors are active and effective in the life of the school and have the required skills and experience to help move the school forward. Governors have been careful to build productive relationships with the staff at all levels and they help ensure that all required safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. All necessary risk assessments and health and safety measures were satisfactory at the time of the inspection. Governors trust the vision and judgement of the new headteacher and are prepared to ask challenging questions of the school managers.

The headteacher has great ambition for the school and has already introduced significant and effective changes. While there remains much to do at Windlehurst, there is a renewed sense of purpose. The new leadership is committed to ensuring that students' standards of work and behaviour will continue to improve rapidly and the school is providing better direction to staff and raising expectations. Consequently, classroom standards are better and the outcomes enjoyed by students have improved. Senior managers work effectively with the headteacher in establishing the school's priorities for improvement. They have helped staff overcome resistance to change and engaged them productively and effectively in new partnerships such as with Stockport College. The senior team are tackling previously identified weaknesses through developing the community cohesion strategies contained within the wider curriculum and at the college.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>



<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

### **Views of parents and carers**

Replies to the inspection questionnaire were received from just under one third of the students' parents and carers. The majority were pleased with the quality of education and care provided but very few comments were added. A small number thought that the school could do more to support students' healthy lifestyles and behaviour was not identified as a major concern at either of the school sites. The inspectors found students' behaviour and the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles to be satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Windlehurst School 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 26 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	13	7	88	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	25	6	75	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	75	2	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	43	3	43	1	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	38	5	63	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	13	7	88	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)	3	43	3	43	0	0	1	14
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	38	4	50	1	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	50	3	38	0	0	1	13
The school is led and managed effectively	4	50	3	38	1	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	50	4	50	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



Inspection of Windlehurst School, Stockport, SK6 7HZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you at the school and the college. I very much enjoyed meeting you and was impressed with those who talked to me. Most of you were a credit to yourselves and to the school.

These are some of the things I found out from listening to you, talking with your teachers, reading the questionnaires from your parents and carers and watching your lessons.

Windlehurst School is a satisfactory school which cares about you and wants you to succeed.

You think a lot of the adults who teach you and you respect them.

Your behaviour in lessons is good but it could be much better in the corridors and on the playground at Windlehurst.

You and the adults that teach you are excited by the changes occurring at Windlehurst and at the college.

The headteacher is determined to make even more changes to make the school better for everyone.

I have asked the school to work on the following areas.

Develop a system that provides clear information about your progress of learning and attainment.

Get the teachers to use this information when planning so that work in lessons can be more effectively matched to your abilities.

Make sure that better use is made of the learning support assistants.

Improve your behaviour outside of lessons in Key Stage 3.

Make sure that the school's targets for improvement are as concise as possible.

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