

# Secondary Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135656
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	341684
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

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>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	68
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Andain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Rohit Naik
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, observing nine teachers including two at alternative provision off-site. They held meetings with the chair of the management committee, officers of the local authority, the leadership team, staff and groups of students. They sampled students' work and looked at documentation, including policies on safeguarding, the centre development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of students' progress, including individual education plans. Inspectors spent approximately 55% of their time inspecting students' learning. Staff and students completed questionnaires and 11 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also read and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the centre's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well students re-engage with their learning
- the effectiveness of procedures to promote better attendance and good behaviour
- how well teaching, including that which takes place off-site, meets the needs of students
- the impact of the centre's leadership team on outcomes for students
- all aspects of safeguarding and provision to secure the welfare of students.

## Information about the school

The centre opened in September 2008 in a former primary school after a re-organisation of provision by the local authority. Staff and students moved to its current location, a former residential special school, at the start of this school year while the buildings are being refurbished. The centre is a short-stay unit for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who have been excluded from mainstream schools or who are in danger of exclusion. Most students attend the centre for approximately 12 weeks. They are assessed and appropriate provision is sought for them; examples include different secondary schools, secondary support centres and special schools or alternative providers supervised by the Alternative Provision Team. More than half of students attend the centre full-time, while the remainder are taught full-time by other providers off-site. Almost all students are of White British heritage. A small number are looked after by the local authority. All students have individual education plans. The current leadership team consists of an executive headteacher and an acting headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the process of selecting a substantive headteacher was well underway. The majority of the teachers currently at the centre are employed on temporary contracts.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

The centre has made good progress since its establishment and provides a satisfactory education for its students. They re-engage with their education and make satisfactory progress in their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Their behaviour improves significantly, they begin to take on greater responsibility for their own actions and overall, the behaviour of the students is good. The great majority are found appropriate placements in mainstream schools, special schools, or alternative provision if they are in Key Stage 4. Only a small minority remain at the centre for more than two terms. These positive outcomes are a measure of the effectiveness of the centre.

The students' personal development, for instance, their ability to cooperate with others and their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, is satisfactory. They report that they feel safe at the centre and say bullying is rare and not a concern for them. It is the good quality of care, guidance and support for students that helps to give them new direction in their lives. Some procedures, for example, the individual support given to vulnerable students, are outstanding. Although the attendance of the great majority of students improves while they are at the centre, there remains a minority of persistent absentees. This is a stubborn problem despite the good efforts of staff and is a greater concern when the students are taught off-site than when they are taught at the centre.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. As a result of effective monitoring of teaching by senior staff, teaching at the centre has improved and was good in most lessons seen during the inspection. This has not always been the case, however, because of past and present staffing difficulties. The quality of teaching by alternative providers off-site is more variable and so far has not been subject to equally effective monitoring by senior leaders. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The centre provides a good range of subjects. However, the range of curriculum provided by alternative providers off-site is not as comprehensive, although some offer specialist subjects such as the performing arts to a good standard.

Under the direction of the interim leadership team and an effective management committee, the centre is playing an increasingly important role in the local authority's provision for students. The performance of the leadership team since the centre opened has been good and self-evaluation procedures are accurate. However, the appointment of a substantive headteacher is imminent and new teaching staff are due to start shortly. Its capacity for sustained improvement is therefore judged to be satisfactory.

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

- Reduce the level of persistent absenteeism, particularly in relation to those students

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who are taught off-site, by rigorous monitoring and a system of rewards to motivate students to attend.

- Develop the monitoring of off-site provision to ensure there is consistency of expectations among providers and good quality learning for students.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students respond well in lessons to the support they receive from staff. The great majority take a full part in discussions and give their opinions. This was especially evident when Year 10 students were considering the consequences of the inappropriate behaviour of a young teacher in a novel they were reading. They showed good levels of maturity in their responses. Students benefit from the individual support they receive from learning support staff and, as a result, concentrate well to remain on task in subjects such as mathematics. They begin to enjoy their education again and develop a renewed pride in their work because staff have clear expectations for them.

There is a wide range of attainment among students, both girls and boys. Most are below expected levels because they have gaps in their skills and knowledge from past disruption to their education. All have individual education plans and make good progress towards their personal targets. Their progress towards targets in basic skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Students who are more-able or who show specific skills and talents develop these well, for example, through specialist provision off-site.

Through daily lessons in citizenship, the students' social and moral development is good. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Although there are only limited opportunities for students to take on responsibilities in the centre and in the wider community, because of the nature of the temporary accommodation, they nevertheless develop self-worth and responsibility for their own behaviour satisfactorily. The attendance of the great majority of students is regular and constitutes a vital factor in students getting back on track. A few persistent absentees are missing vital opportunities to improve their future skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

A key strength in the quality of teaching is the consistent approach that all centre staff take. This is evident in lesson planning, in how well the staff use assessment information, in the format of lessons and the way in which they review how much learning has taken place at the end of lessons. As a result, the work is challenging, students are given clear expectations and take a full part in reviewing how well they have done in each lesson. These factors are the result of concerted efforts by senior staff to develop good practice, especially given the staffing problems they have faced since the centre was established. Expectations, however, are not always as high in off-site provision. There is good practice, but it is inconsistent across different alternative providers. Stimulating teaching was observed in the performing arts by one provider but this was not matched by another, in which expectations for students were not high enough and there were missed opportunities for students to develop basic literacy skills while researching the internet.

This discrepancy between provision at the centre and off-site is also evident in the quality of the curriculum. At the centre, students have regular lessons in science, citizenship, physical education, art and design, and information and communication technology in addition to English and mathematics. Provision by alternative providers is more variable and does not always cover the needs of all students.

Provision for the care, guidance and support for students has some outstanding features. For example, when students start at the centre, they spend the first few weeks in a nurture class where their attainment and needs are assessed. They are given close attention and helped to settle in very quickly. This is excellent practice and helps to

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speed up the readjustment the students need to make in order to make the most of their time at the centre. Students benefit from the work of the 'safer schools' police officer, helping them to develop a positive relationship with the police. Transition arrangements with associated schools and alternative providers are good. A recent temporary appointment has been an attendance administrator to help track students' attendance and punctuality, whose impact has been valuable, although persistent absenteeism is still above average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Both the executive headteacher and acting headteacher have had a positive impact on providing direction for the centre despite significant obstacles. They have been supported by a strong management committee with excellent representation across agencies and schools. Partnerships with schools have been developed well, for instance, through membership of the Fair Access Panel, which helps to find students appropriate placements. The safeguarding of students' welfare is of paramount concern to the leadership team. All matters of safeguarding, including risk assessments and the safe recruitment of staff, are robust and meet government requirements. Work with other agencies, such as social services, is very effective in reducing the risks to students. Partnerships with parents and carers are strong and daily contact is made so that all parents and carers are kept aware of their children's welfare and progress. The centre satisfactorily reduces discrimination and provides equal opportunities for all students, including the most vulnerable and the very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Satisfactory steps have been taken to promote community cohesion, but have been limited by the move to temporary accommodation at the start of the current school year. The students' understanding of the ethnic diversity in British society and of life in other countries is developed satisfactorily in lessons of citizenship.

*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

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<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</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>2</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

Eleven questionnaires were returned by parents and carers. Two spoke to inspectors. Almost all responses were positive, indicating a good level of satisfaction with the work of the centre. One wrote: 'My son actually enjoys attending this school' and another commented 'I am so proud of my son and all the effort the staff have made'. Inspectors agree with these positive views and consider the centre makes a valuable contribution to meeting the needs of these young people and helping them to re-engage with their education. A minority viewpoint questioned the need for students to go through the process of assessment at the centre and considered excluded students should be given an immediate fresh start at another secondary school. Inspectors consider the process of assessment at the centre to be vital to the future benefit of students.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Secondary 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 inspection team received 11 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 68 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"><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.**



5 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Secondary Centre, Liverpool, L25 6EF

On behalf of the inspection team, I am writing to let you know the outcome of the inspection of the Secondary Centre. We enjoyed our visit very much. The centre has made a successful start since it opened last year and is giving you a satisfactory education. The staff are offering you much that will help you in the future.

- It is clear that your behaviour improves while you are at the centre and you are more keen now to do your best.
- The staff give you a lot of attention to help you to know what you need to do to improve your work and to make the most of your education.
- The staff work hard to find the right places for you to go to after you leave the centre.

Talking to you and reading the questionnaires you filled in, we can see that you appreciate what the staff are doing for you. As one of you said in the meeting we held with you, 'Staff are all for the kids'. You all agreed you are better able to control your emotions now. Part of my job is to make suggestions about how the centre can improve. These are the important things I have asked the staff to do and you can help with the first one.

- Make sure the staff do all they can to encourage you to attend regularly because attendance is so important if you are to do well at the centre.
- Check the quality and range of things you do when you are taught off-site so that you are taught well, given good challenges and there is a balance of subjects.

Best wishes for the future, especially when the centre goes to the refurbished buildings. Make the most of the opportunities that the centre gives you, so that you can do well in your education.

Yours sincerely

Mr Frank Carruthers

Lead Inspector

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