

# Warrington School

Independent school inspection report

---

DCSF registration number	877/6009
Unique reference number	135557
Inspection number	345988
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Boyle

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

---

Age group: 11-16

---

Published: 05 February 2010

---

Reference no: 090070

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2009



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, 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

Warrington is a new independent day special school owned and run by Continuum Care and Education Group. It was registered and opened in April 2008 to provide full time education and care for up to 18 students with social, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. The school is based in refurbished premises on an industrial estate in the Warrington area of Cheshire. At the time of the inspection there were eight students in school between the ages of 11 and 16. All have a statement of special educational needs. Students have often been out of school for many months prior to admission; most have a history of disrupted education as a result of exclusion from one or more educational establishments. All who attend the school are referred by their local authorities. Some attend from home and some are looked after children. The school's aim is to provide 'excellence, equality and high achievement for all, by unconditional positive regard for everyone.' This is the first education inspection of the school.

## Evaluation of the school

Warrington school provides a good quality of education and care for its students. It is particularly successful in re-engaging troubled students in learning through carefully planned individualised learning programmes and through high levels of adult support. The school is highly sensitive to the varying emotional, social and personal needs of the students and it provides carefully arranged learning environments that are nurturing, supportive yet challenging. As a result students generally make good progress particularly in their social and personal development. Students value being treated as equals and appreciate the respect they receive from everyone in the school. The school has suitable procedures for safeguarding its students. It meets its aims and all of the regulations for independent schools. The head teacher has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has a clear vision for its future development.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is good. The quality of the curriculum is good; it is suitably flexible to meet the differing needs and interests of the small number of students who access the provision at any one time. It focuses well on providing a range of experiences and accredited courses designed to meet the specific needs of each student, all of whom have experienced failure in other educational establishments. The policy that underpins what is taught and how it is taught, outlines a clear rationale for the curriculum and is suitably linked to national guidelines, including the National Curriculum. The good range of accredited courses including Oxford and Cambridge Registration (OCR), Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and EDEXCEL (the awarding body for BTEC courses) contribute to students' enjoyment of learning and helps them achieve well as they increase in confidence and self-esteem. The students have the opportunity to follow an increasing range of vocational courses in school, including hair and beauty, horticulture and craft and design technology (CDT). Particular attention is given to promoting basic skills through literacy and numeracy lessons and through carefully planned intervention programmes for some who have gaps in their learning. This ensures all students access the curriculum at an appropriate level and are able to pursue other areas of interest. By engaging in practical and vocational courses, the careers programme and school based work experience programmes, students gain an understanding of the world of work and are suitably prepared for the next stage of learning and their future economic well-being. Whilst work experience off the school site is not part of the curriculum, it is being investigated by the school. Most students leave the school with one or more recognised qualifications. Some go on to college placements and others go into full time employment, as a result of the careful planning and the good coordinated support provided by the school. A programme of personal, social, and health education (PSHE) including lessons in citizenship contributes well to students' emotional and social needs and helps build a foundation for learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. The use of off site pre-arranged venues for teaching some of the more troubled students on a one-to-one basis is a key feature of the school. Careful baseline assessment including assessment for dyslexia, and consultations with referring agencies, help staff prepare individualised learning programmes which aim to nurture students' confidence and self-esteem and re-engage them in learning. Students increasingly participate in class based lessons in core subjects and in subjects of their choice. They benefit from being taught by a team of experienced staff, some of whom are specialists in the subjects they teach. Those who participate in vocational courses enjoy the practical aspects of these courses and have the opportunity to attend college linked courses. The majority of lessons are taught well. However, some are overly directed by teachers and in these students have few opportunities to work independently and show initiative. Resources for learning are satisfactory in most subjects, however, resources for some practical elements of science and art are limited. Relationships between students and staff are good. Students say they value being treated as equals and appreciate the respect they receive from everyone in the school. Teachers have high

expectations of students and set them challenging targets. The majority of students achieve their targets particularly those relating to their social and personal development. Their satisfactory and often good academic progress is reflected in the range of nationally recognised accreditations they achieve by the time they leave school.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The provision for spiritual moral social and cultural development is good. Staff treat students with respect and make every effort to eliminate situations where they may fail or become frustrated. This is achieved through careful research into their previous experiences at school and at home. Students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their positive attitudes in class and around the school and through good attendance, which for many is much higher than in their previous schools. Students are encouraged to have their say on how the school could be improved. Their views are sought through questionnaires and through the student council. Social and cultural development is promoted very well through the many off-site visits. These visits include those to sporting and leisure centres and cinemas, and to places of historical interest, such the Mersey Ferries, the Albert Docks, the slavery museum and the museum of science and industry.

Students learn about their own and others' faiths and cultures through visits to places of worship including the cathedrals in Liverpool, the city's mosque and its China town. Visitors to the school also enhance social and cultural develop and include regular visits from a local chef who helps students to prepare and cook foods from different countries. The well-organised pastoral care system ensures all students have access to counselling and therapeutic intervention support from professional staff. There are increasing opportunities for students to take part in community projects. For example, some have attended courses on the 'Respect' programme run by Cheshire fire service, where they learn about building self-esteem and community safety. Others took part in a programme at the 'Peace' centre where they engaged in activities to promote team building and coaching others. Through the PSHE programme, students have lessons in work related learning which help them prepare for job applications and future employment. Moral development is promoted well through the behaviour management programme and weekly focus sessions provides a forum where they can discuss topical or personal issues. Students' behaviour is generally good and the individual behaviour management programmes encourage them to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learn how their actions can have an impact on others. Through the citizenship programme they learn about public institutions and services in England.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for the welfare health and safety of students is good. All procedures for safeguarding students are in place, and meet the regulations. Risk assessments

and fire evacuations are carried out regularly and fire equipment is tested regularly. Students are taught how to check for potentially hazardous situations in lessons such as food technology, physical education and CDT. There are very good links with other agencies and parents to coordinate the care and welfare of students. Bullying is dealt with effectively and students report that they feel safe and well looked after in school. Suitable procedures for first aid are in place and a number of staff are suitably trained in first aid procedures. Provision to encourage healthy eating is reflected in the range of healthy lunches that students prepare for themselves and visitors. Students are offered free pieces of fruit at morning break time. The health education programme is enhanced through workshops offered via the Connexions careers service and advice on personal health and safety and substance misuse. Through regular visits to sports and leisure centres and through physical education lessons students have access to regular exercise. The school has a three-year plan to increase accessibility for disabled persons.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietors have put in place suitable procedures to ensure that all staff, including temporary staff, have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. A central staff register has been compiled in line with the latest statutory requirements. All staff have the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

### School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation ensures safe and effective learning. This former two storey industrial building has been suitably refurbished to provide small group teaching accommodation for up to 18 students. There are a number of specialist rooms including those for food technology, information and communication technology room, hair and beauty, CDT and a student common room. The ground floor has access and facilities for disabled people. The facility for recreation including outdoor play space is limited. However, the school makes regular use of local recreational centres such as the park and sport centres, particularly for physical education lessons.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has strong links with parents. Initial contact is through an admission interview followed, if necessary, by a home visit. Open afternoons are available to parents and carers but they can also attend at other times by prior arrangement. The parents and carers receive written reports on their children's attainment and progress twice yearly and they also receive feedback through annual review meetings. Parents and others may receive daily or weekly feedback on behavioural programme. The school's prospectus has recently been updated and contains all the information necessary to meet the regulations. Parents and local authorities who

responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection are, on the whole, very supportive of the school.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has clearly written and fair complaints procedure which is available to parents and fully meet the regulations.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations')

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- Provide opportunities for students to have work experience beyond the school environment.
- Plan opportunities in lessons for students to work independently and show initiative.
- Increase resources for practical aspects of science and art.
- Provide recreational space at the school where students can play during their breaks and lunch times.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of students		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students		✓		
--	--	---	--	--



## School details

Name of school	Warrington School		
DCSF number	877/6009		
Unique reference number	135557		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	April 2008		
Age range of students	11-16		
Gender of students	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 8	Girls: 0	Total: 8
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 8	Girls: 0	Total: 8
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day students)	£31,824		
Address of school	Unit 2 Forrest Way Gatewarth Industrial Estate Warrington Cheshire WA5 1DF		
Telephone number	01706 644471		
Fax number	01706 644559		
Email address	angela.norris-heyas@greencorns.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Ange Norris-Heyes		
Proprietor	Continuum Education		
Reporting inspector	Sheila Boyle		
Dates of inspection	19-20 January 2010		