

# Clifford Holroyde Specialist SEN College

Thingwall Lane, Knotty Ash, Liverpool, Merseyside, L14 7NX

**Inspection dates** 30–31 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Occasionally, students do not make sufficient progress in lessons because teachers do not always plan to meet their individual needs, the purpose of writing in lessons is not always made clear and teaching assistants are sometimes not deployed as well as they should be to support learning.
- A few students are too often absent.
- At times, the number of physical restraints is too high.
- The systems in place to enable leaders and managers to know for certain where the students are who attend placements off the school site have not been sufficiently robust until very recently.

### The school has the following strengths

- The overall quality of students' achievement is good because teaching is almost always good with some that is outstanding.
- School staff and the outreach team provide high quality care and support for students.
- Students' behaviour is good and occasionally outstanding. Their personal skills develop well throughout their time here.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are continually improving the school by ensuring that students' achievements, the quality of teaching, students' behaviour and the overall rates of attendance are getting better.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed five lessons, one jointly with a senior member of staff. They made a number of short visits to classrooms to hear students read, to talk with them to gain their views and to observe their behaviour. Altogether, around three hours was spent observing students and staff in classrooms.
- An inspector visited alternative education provisions off site and a nurture group run by the Clifford Holroyde outreach team at a local primary school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior managers including the deputy headteacher and outreach manager, middle managers, teachers, members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- Records of teachers' planning were scrutinised, as were other important documents concerning safeguarding, the curriculum, records of students' achievements and their progress, and plans for the future development of the school.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, but the inspectors took into account the recent parental questionnaires undertaken by the school. An inspector spoke with one parent by telephone.
- The school's own analysis of recent surveys completed with students was also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Terence McKenzie, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Marian Thomas

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Clifford Holroyde Specialist SEN College admits boys of statutory secondary school age who have a statement of special educational needs in respect of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many have additional barriers to learning such as communication difficulties. Students can arrive here at any time during their secondary school career.
- Almost all are of White British heritage and currently, for all, their first language is English. Almost all are entitled to support from the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families, and those who are looked after by the local authority) and this is very much higher than for most other schools.
- The school offers an outreach service to support the behaviour of students who remain on the roll of five secondary and 80 primary schools in Liverpool. A nurture unit has been established at Mab Lane Primary School to support nine pupils there for up to half of every school day.
- The Helena Project has been set up at Clifford Holroyde School. This is a nurture scheme that supports teenage girls, each of whom is on the roll of another school.
- Several providers of alternative education are currently used by the school:
  - Oakmere Community College, Cherry Lane, Liverpool, L4 6UG
  - Basetech Training, Great Howard Street, Liverpool, L3 7TL
  - Harmonise Academy, Phillimore Road, Liverpool, L6 6DY
  - Cornerstone Training, Atlas Road, L20 4DY.
- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed within the last year. Significant changes have taken place to management systems in the school since the last inspection. Prior to the last inspection, the school had gained specialist status in respect of special educational needs.

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

- Enable all students to make the maximum possible progress by ensuring that:
  - lessons are always planned to take full account of the different needs of students
  - there is accuracy and a clear purpose in the use of writing by staff and students in each lesson
  - teaching assistants are deployed to support students' learning as well as their behaviour.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by continuing to fully safeguard students in alternative education placements, and ensure that all associated health and safety requirements are met, by always having in place sufficiently robust and up-to-date policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by working with the local authority to implement an admissions policy designed to prevent large numbers of particularly disaffected students being admitted all at the same time, thereby ensuring that the number of physical restraints continues to decrease and the rate of students' attendance continues to improve.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Upon arrival, most students have levels of attainment much lower than those expected for their age. This is generally because they have experienced turbulence in their school careers and almost all have suffered periods of prolonged absence. Once settled here, however, the great majority rapidly make up the lost ground and fill in the gaps in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics.
- According to the information accumulated and analysed by the school, all groups of students including those in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and students placed into alternative education provision, make rapid progress. The observations made by the inspection team support this, as does the scrutiny of students' work. On occasions, however, work is not planned well enough by teachers to fully meet the individual needs and abilities of all students and so they do not make the maximum progress of which they are capable.
- Almost all students are supported by the pupil premium funding. Resources provided through the funding have helped ensure that students remain on site and productively engaged in education, instead of being excluded or involved in protracted serious incidents and restraints. This helps all students to be included and not discriminated against in their education and reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every student has equality of opportunity.
- When questioned, almost all students stated that they enjoy coming to school and taking part in lessons. Some said that this was the first time that they had ever settled into a school. One told an inspector, 'I couldn't read and write before I came here, but now I can!'
- The grades gained by students in GCSE courses and their equivalents are well below those expected from mainstream schools. For the students here, they represent good achievements from their low starting points, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Gaining externally accredited qualifications is instrumental in helping almost all students to move on successfully to further education, training or employment.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and improving rapidly through the relentless efforts of the senior leadership team in applying effective performance management. Some teaching is already outstanding.
- On occasions, teaching requires improvement. For example, sometimes teachers do not think carefully enough about the writing done in their lessons by staff and students. Consequently, some of the handwriting by teachers on the board is difficult for students to read and so mistakes are made. Very occasionally, the use of writing by students in lessons is unnecessary. In both these cases, there are missed opportunities to use computers and other technical equipment to help with accuracy and speed.
- The great majority of lessons are interesting for students and encourage them to contribute and learn. Sometimes, students' progress is slowed when teachers do not use teaching assistants well enough to support students with their learning.
- Staff manage students' behaviour well. Indeed, all adults provide extremely effective support and guidance to students and this encourages the great majority of them to attend regularly, take part in lessons without any fuss and gain useful qualifications.
- The high standard of support offered by adults extends to the outreach work managed by the school. The feedback from the schools in which outreach has been undertaken is very positive indeed and greatly appreciated by the local authority.
- Recently, coordinators for literacy and numeracy have been appointed and their work is helping teachers to provide more opportunities for students to use their skills learned in English and mathematics in all other areas of the curriculum. For example, in most lessons seen, teachers taught students about the key words and language to be used. Teachers planned clear opportunities for students to use these words productively in their speaking and listening, and

when writing. These teaching methods add significantly to the development of students' communication skills

- In outstanding lessons, teachers pay close attention to the needs of individual students and their standards. For example, in an outstanding English lesson the teacher set individual tasks for students and helped them progress as efficiently as possible at their own pace. In an outstanding science lesson, the teacher utilised many teaching and learning strategies to ensure every student grasped the difficult concepts being presented. The constant reviews of learning by both teachers were highly effective and students in these classes learned very rapidly indeed.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students' good behaviour is linked to the high quality of care received from the staff who foster excellent relationships with them.
- Sometimes, behaviour in lessons is outstanding. This is when there is plenty of interesting things for students to do and teachers have planned carefully to match tasks to their individual levels of ability. When behaviour is not good in lessons it is because the pace slows, teachers spend too long talking and there is not enough for students to do.
- Students feel safe in school and when attending alternative education. However, inspectors found that the school did not have a complete record of the attendance of a very small number of students at an alternative provision.
- Students report that although issues occasionally flare up between them, bullying and harassment are rare. Staff are always on hand to help resolve difficulties. Students understand the rewards and sanctions applied by the school. When questioned by an inspector about the behaviour management by staff one said, 'It's fair. You have to pay for your mistakes but everybody understands that!'
- The great majority of students attend well. A very few are persistently absent. Managers understand the reasons for absence of each of the non-attenders and much is done to persuade them to attend regularly. Nevertheless, the efforts of school managers are not being relaxed in attempting to persuade the hardest to reach of all families to send their children to school regularly.
- The great majority of students develop their personal skills well during their time here. Most begin to accept responsibility for their behaviour, they join in with lessons and achieve well. The successes they gain in learning and through being able to relate better to others raises their self-esteem. They gain in self-confidence.
- The school is also instrumental in helping students not on the roll here to gain in their self-esteem and self-confidence. For example through the Helena Project, that supports girls from other schools at times of difficulty in their lives. Similarly, through the work of the outreach team, very young pupils in a local primary school are successfully helped to overcome their learning difficulties.
- Through the gains in their personal development, students take part in an even wider range of activities. Most become capable of undertaking organised trips and visits, including outdoor education, through which they can gain a qualification. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Almost all aspects of leadership and management are good or better because so much has been done to improve the school since the last inspection. However, leadership and management require improvement overall because, at the beginning of the on-site inspection, leaders and managers were unable to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the inspection team that they always know the whereabouts of a very small number of students in an alternative education placement. This was because the systems designed to place students in off-site education, to

monitor their health and safety and to confirm their attendance were not sufficiently robust.

- The robust performance management systems introduced by the headteacher have ensured continuing improvement in teaching. Consequently, lessons are rarely less than good and sometimes teaching is outstanding. Students' achievements are good and their rates of progress are improving rapidly.
- Recently, the senior team has changed the way students' behaviour is managed and this has led to great reductions in the number of serious incidents and restraints, and the elimination of exclusions.
- Nevertheless, there have been times in the recent past when there have been extraordinary increases in student restraints and these have been linked to the sudden influx to the school of an unusually high number of particularly disaffected older students with extremely challenging behaviour.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and other managers have demonstrated remarkable success in encouraging many of the hardest-to-reach students to attend more regularly than they ever did before. This has largely been due to managers increasing the range of opportunities provided by the curriculum and ensuring that individual pathways for learning are provided. However, a very small number of students remain persistent absentees and the school is determined not to relax its efforts in attempting to encourage them to attend.
- The headteacher and senior team are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and accurately gauge the quality of its performance. They have a good understanding of how future improvements should be made and these mainly mirror the findings of the inspection team.
- The information available indicates parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the efforts of staff in helping their children to moderate their behaviour and gain qualifications.
- The local authority supports the school well through the provision of the advisory service and the funding associated with the work of the outreach team.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - In most respects, the governing body is very effective, providing good support and challenge to the school. However, governors were unable to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the inspection team that as much as possible had been done to ensure the safeguarding of a very small number of students at an alternative education placement. Governors had not ensured that all of the required policies and risk assessments had been acted upon by the school's managers. All of the requirements for safeguarding are now met but the systems employed by the governing body in this respect should be subject to external review.
  - Governors are skilled and experienced in understanding the information produced by managers about students' achievements. They question the headteacher, other managers and individual teachers and hold them each to account, so that good progress is assured. Governors have scrutinised the arrangements for the performance management of staff and supported the headteacher in establishing clear targets for improvement for each. The headteacher, in turn, has undertaken appropriate performance management by the governing body and the associated targets have been closely linked to the planning for the future development of the school.
  - Through the pupil premium funding the governors have provided additional facilities that have been successfully used as a much better alternative to students being excluded. Funding has also contributed to resources for staff to manage students' behaviour and prevent the occurrence of serious incidents.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104742
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	426049

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terrence Sweeney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elaine Dwyer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2289500
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