

Clifford Holroyde Centre of Expertise

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104742 |
| Local Authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 308660 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael McDowell |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 7–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 51 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | |
| Headteacher | Miss Elaine Dwyer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 November 2003 |
| School address | Thingwall Lane Liverpool Merseyside L14 7NX |
| Telephone number | 0151 2289500 |
| Fax number | 0151 2289318 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Clifford Holroyde Centre of Expertise provides for students who have statements of special educational need because of their severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The great majority of students are White British. The home language of all students is English. In 2005 the college was awarded specialist status for behavioural, emotional and social development. It also provides outreach services to mainstream schools to help them to work effectively with students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition it offers support, therapy and guidance to girls for whom no other special provision is made.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Clifford Holroyde is outstandingly effective and justifies its status as a specialist special educational needs college for behaviour. It greatly enhances the educational and employment chances of its students.

Achievement is outstanding because teaching is exceptionally effective. Teachers have excellent knowledge of their students. Teachers' expectations of students are very high. They are skilful in stimulating and maintaining students' interest in lessons. They manage behaviour in an exemplary manner. Students, including those from minority ethnic groups, consistently make very good progress from starting points that are much below average. They improve their literacy and numeracy significantly, and make marked gains in all subjects although overall standards remain low. By the time they leave, they have useful basic skills and accredited vocational qualifications.

Personal development is outstanding. Through their good behaviour, students show that they are overcoming the negative impulses that have previously prevented them from learning. Students say that they enjoy going to the college. Attendance is good. Many younger students have 100% attendance this term. There is strong commitment to healthy lifestyles. Students often choose the healthiest option at meal times and are very keen to take part in the many opportunities for physical activity the college provides. They feel safe and know that their suggestions about improvement are taken seriously.

The curriculum is excellent; it meets external requirements and addresses the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties of the students extremely well. It provides effectively for the development of basic skills. It is very flexible and gives students many opportunities to take vocational courses. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a remarkably extensive programme of outdoor and adventurous activities and residential visits. However, the opportunities provided for some students who wish to follow traditional accredited courses in Key Stage 4 are limited.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. Staff make safeguarding the students their chief priority. Child protection policy and practices are clear and updated annually. Students' personal development and academic progress are continually monitored. Targets are set for students in individual education and behaviour plans and these are regularly reviewed. In a few instances, however, targets are not sufficiently sharp to help accurately measure progress. The college works very effectively with agencies concerned with the welfare of the students and their families and acts decisively to protect the most vulnerable.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has become increasingly successful in meeting the needs of its students and enabling them to improve their standards. The leadership understands how the college should develop and has a sense of purpose that all staff share. Performance is consistently monitored and planning for improvement is clear. The college knows its own strengths and weaknesses very well. However, in its self-review it is a little modest in judging some aspects of its work as good rather than outstanding. The leadership's strong commitment to inclusion and to the community is reflected in the excellent and very well managed outreach programme and especially so in the Helena project, through which the college very successfully helps so many girls in the city. It tries very hard to work with parents. Those who replied to the questionnaire hold the college in high regard.

Governance is good and the governors support the school, oversee its performance and hold the leadership to account. Use of resources is excellent. Improvement since the last inspection

is extremely good and the leadership is well placed to continue this. The college provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the range of subjects that offer accredited courses, including GCSE courses, to students in Years 10 and 11.
- Sharpen up target setting in individual education and behaviour plans where the precise standard that the student is meant to accomplish is not made sufficiently clear.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Although standards are well below national averages, achievement is outstanding because students overcome their substantial difficulties and become successful learners. Students enter the college with standards well below those expected for their age. Their literacy skills are in most cases extremely weak. However, the great majority soon begin to make consistent gains. Reading and spelling ages increase at a very good rate and the gap between students' chronological ages and their reading and spelling ages decreases significantly. Students make very good progress towards the measurable, challenging targets set for them. In Year 10, students begin work on accredited courses that address their interests, introduce them to the requirements of the work place, and take account of their need to be active in their learning. These include the NCFE course for entry to uniformed services, and adult literacy and numeracy courses. All students leaving in 2007 gained accreditation in vocational courses after study at a local college.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are exceptional because students overcome, to a significant extent, the difficulties that have previously prevented them from trusting others. Their moral and social development is particularly good. They greatly improve their classroom behaviour and begin to form positive relationships with others. Students come to recognise their inner feelings, and control their emotions and negative impulses. They begin to take account of the feelings of others. They greatly appreciate opportunities the college provides for outdoor education and residential trips. Through these programmes their spiritual development improves as they experience and appreciate at first hand the variety and beauty of the natural world. They are well aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and take advantage of all the opportunities for healthy eating and rigorous physical activity that the college provides. Attendance at college, further education college or workplace is good. Students feel safe and are sure that there is always an adult to whom they can talk if they are troubled. They engage with the college community and the wider community very positively. Students are sure that suggestions that they may make to further improve the college are listened to seriously.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects. Assessment is secure and the teachers understand the capabilities of students very well. They

plan lessons thoroughly and set work that takes account of individual capabilities and is sufficiently challenging. Teachers are extremely skilful at engaging students who have previously shown great reluctance to learn. They use a broad range of teaching styles and manage students' behaviour in an exemplary fashion. They maintain very good relationships with students while insisting that they work hard and do their best. Teachers make clear to students how well they are doing and what they must do in order to improve. Resources are used very effectively. Teaching assistants are confident and know their role. They play a vital part in classroom management and supporting learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum fully meets the individual needs of students. Provision to address their emotional and social difficulties is extremely good. However, sufficient emphasis is also placed on developing basic skills. A programme to directly address the weak reading skills of students has recently been successfully introduced and excellent facilities are provided to develop students' information and communication technology skills. Full advantage has been taken of increased flexibility in National Curriculum regulations to offer alternative educational and training experiences to students in Year 11 who find it difficult to sustain academic learning in the classroom. Opportunities to gain experience of work and to pursue vocational qualifications are extensive. Enrichment of the curriculum, especially through outdoor and adventurous activities and residential trips is exceptionally good. Presently, however, too few accredited courses are provided at GCSE foundation level or above for the more academically inclined students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The college provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its enrolled students and, through its outreach work, for many other boys and girls in the city. All staff members are fully committed to the welfare of their students. The safeguarding of students has the highest priority. Child protection policy and practices are clear and reviewed annually. Students' personal development thrives in the safe, supportive environment that the college provides. Work with outside agencies to ensure the welfare and safety of students at risk is of the highest calibre. The college is vigilant in protecting vulnerable students. Students' progress is monitored thoroughly. However, the targets set in individual education plans occasionally lack the specificity that would make progress towards them measurable. Students are very well prepared for life after school. Those who are reluctant to engage in formal education are identified and given suitable alternative learning opportunities. The outreach programme enables students in many primary and secondary schools to remain in education. Users of the service rate it very highly. The innovative Helena Project supports girls throughout the local area whose social, emotional and behavioural difficulties put them at risk. The college is exceptional in instigating and supporting this project and the outcomes are extremely successful. The college shows great expertise in the theory and the practice of behaviour management. It tries very hard to work with parents. Those who replied to the questionnaire hold the college in high regard.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership is exceptional and the management of the college is excellent. There has been great success in raising standards - most recently in literacy. A further significant success of the leadership has been in transforming the college premises from a building that was worn and inadequate into a very well maintained setting that is warm, welcoming and carefully adapted to purpose. The college focuses highly successfully on the personal development of students. It has worked effectively to reach out into the community to share its expertise. All staff members share the leadership's commitment to the best interests of students. Links with outside agencies and other education providers are highly effective and reflect the strong commitment of the college to inclusion. Great efforts are made to involve parents in their children's education but, despite this, many parents are unresponsive. Those who offer an opinion rate the college very highly. Measures to safeguard students are in place and meet current requirements. Governors are very supportive. They know the strengths of the college and they effectively oversee the use of resources in a very efficient way.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Clifford Holroyde Centre of Expertise, Liverpool, L14 7NX

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your college to inspect it. In particular, I wish to thank the class representatives who met with me and so courteously shared their views.

I learned that you like your college very much. Some of you think that you may now be ready to try some harder and more challenging work in your lessons and I have passed this on to your teachers. You greatly enjoy the residential trips that the college organises and would like more of these if possible. You would also like these to be more available to students in Year 11. Some of you would appreciate more opportunities for trampoline training. You feel safe and confident at college and know staff members to whom you can talk if you have worries. You are very well informed about healthy lifestyles and try to put your knowledge into practice.

From my visit I found that yours is an excellent college. You are very well taught and the college takes great care to keep you safe. You are given a clear idea about how you can improve your work and your behaviour and relationships. Your achievement in school work and in becoming the best person you can be is outstanding. Your college is excellently led and managed.

To help your college to become even better I have asked your headteacher to provide more opportunities for you to gain success in examinations including the GCSE. I have also asked her to make sure that your targets in your individual education plans make it absolutely clear what you are being asked to achieve.

Thank you once again for your helpfulness and I wish you very good luck in your future lives and careers.