

The Clifton Centre

117 Silverdale, Swinton, Salford, M27 8GW

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders are widely respected within the centre and across the local authority. They have strong support from staff, students, parents and other headteachers. Teaching and achievement are improving.
- The management committee provides a range of extremely relevant expertise and gives strong support and challenge to leaders.
- Students often arrive with challenging behaviour. They are given strong and effective help and support so their behaviour improves quickly.
- The centre is a safe place to learn; a view supported by students and parents. Care is taken to ensure that students understand what bullying is and why it is not good and, as a result, is rare.
- Students' positive attitudes help them to improve their learning. They take pride in their work.
- Teachers and all staff have high expectations of their students. They form positive relationships so that students enjoy learning.
- Students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Standards achieved are rising, particularly in English. Students are gaining more exam success, both in GCSE or BTEC vocational qualifications. In 2014, every student in Year 11 left with some form of accreditation.
- Students' work is assessed regularly. Individual students' progress towards their challenging targets is carefully tracked. This has been particularly effective over time in English so that learning closely meets students' particular needs.
- Staff receive support to improve their teaching. Their wide variety of skills and qualifications provides students with a wide choice of courses. Students follow an individually tailored package that meets their needs and interests.
- Support for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. In particular, it helps students realise the importance of working alongside others, listening to and respecting their views and opinions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of students making more than the expected rate of progress in mathematics is not yet as good as it is in English.
- The information gathered about what students know and can do in mathematics is not yet used as effectively to provide work that meets students' particular needs as it is in English.
- The centre's links with local mainstream secondary schools in order to share, and learn from, one another's expertise is still developing.

Information about this inspection

- A range of lessons covering academic and vocational elements were observed. One was a joint observation with the executive headteacher and one was undertaken jointly with the head of the centre.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, leaders of key subject areas and the centre's family liaison officer, with members of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. Telephone conversations were held with two mainstream secondary school headteachers and an email was received from the local authority's high school headteachers association.
- The views of parents were gathered from the centre's own questionnaire. There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to generate an analysis.
- The inspector met with a group of students and talked to students whenever possible throughout the inspection in order to ensure that their views were heard and taken into account.
- The views of staff were gathered from their questionnaire returns and from conversations held throughout the inspection.
- Students' work was looked at during lessons and a range of work in their books and folders were scrutinised in detail. Case studies provided detailed information on the progress made by specific students.
- The inspector looked at a range of written documents, including information on the progress and achievement of students, teachers' planning and marking, the centre's evaluation of its own effectiveness and development planning and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Clifton Centre is a pupil referral unit for students in their last two years of compulsory schooling who have been permanently excluded, or are at risk of being excluded, from mainstream schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- Although the proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is high, none currently have a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has undertaken a review of its Inclusive Learning Service across the authority. As a result the centre's management committee structure has been changed so that the centre now has its own dedicated management committee.
- The executive headteacher and the head of the centre, both of whom were acting in post at the time of the last inspection, have been confirmed in their posts.
- Three of the four teachers have joined the centre since the last inspection, including specialist teachers to lead English and, most recently in September 2014, in mathematics.
- A very small amount of alternative provision is made for students. None was being provided during the inspection but evidence on its impact and effectiveness was looked at.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics so that the proportion of students that makes more than the expected rate of progress is at least equal to that in English by making sure that the information gathered about what students know and can do in mathematics is used to plan and provide learning that closely meets students' particular needs.
- Promote and extend links between the centre staff and mainstream secondary schools by:
 - sharing the centre's expertise in managing challenging behaviour in order to help students to become quickly and successfully re-engaged with learning on their return to mainstream school
 - providing opportunities for staff to observe the teaching skills of others in mainstream schools, including to share judgements on the quality of students' work and to see what other students are capable of achieving, such as the most able.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have a clear vision and high expectations that focus on getting students who join the centre to re-engage with learning and supporting them so that they can experience success. There is a very positive atmosphere in the centre. This is first and foremost a place where students come to learn. Staff share this vision and show a strong commitment to the centre and its students.
- The key leaders of English, mathematics and vocational studies are focused on improvement and helping every student to do their best. Effective leadership of English has resulted in a high proportion of students making good progress. The recently appointed leader of mathematics is starting to successfully help to raise standards but over time, students still do not achieve as well in mathematics as in English.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Effective monitoring of the quality of teaching, including teachers' marking and planning, gives leaders a clear view of what is going on. This information is used to support the centre's system for staff appraisal and to set targets for the year. The personal and professional development needs and expertise of staff are also carefully identified and supported.
- Leaders take effective steps to find out if there are any differences in the performance of identified groups of students. The centre's data, along with inspection evidence, indicates that there are no significant differences. For example, by checking the impact of the pupil premium, they ensure that disadvantaged students achieve as well as other non-disadvantaged students. This demonstrates the centre's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination.
- The centre's view of its own effectiveness is accurate. Identified priorities for improvement are appropriate. Leaders are now working with a group of other small schools, who offer specialist provision, to identify how students' work might be assessed against the standards expected within the national curriculum in the future.
- The curriculum is broad and enables students to gain an appropriate range of knowledge and understanding. Students follow GCSE courses in English, mathematics, computing and art. Well-appointed specialist rooms provide strong support for vocational studies in catering, hair and beauty, engineering, construction and physical fitness. Individual programmes of learning enable students to be successful in their courses as well as contributing to their physical well-being and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is reflected in the way that students are encouraged to think about and respect the views of others, how they can develop more positive attitudes to learning and adopt a positive role in life in modern Britain.
- Many students are potentially very vulnerable, and safeguarding, which fully meets government requirements, is a high priority. Staff training and support are rigorous. The centre works hard to engage with parents. This sometimes involves the centre's family liaison officer, who is a trained social worker, particularly in engaging those parents who are hard to reach.
- The centre works well with a range of other professionals who are often connected with its students and their families. Care is taken to ensure that joint working is promoted so that students and their wider families receive effective support.
- Close work with external organisations offering advice and guidance on what to do after leaving school, means that a large majority of students successfully transfer to college, while others gain apprenticeships or enter employment. The centre ensures that students continue to receive support for the first term after they leave to ensure that the good progress they have made is sustained.
- Leaders are now focusing on developing better links with mainstream secondary schools in order to reduce the isolation of staff working in a very small setting and for staff across these settings to mutually benefit from sharing their teaching skills and expertise. In particular, there is scope to share the expertise of the centre's staff in managing challenging behaviour with staff in mainstream schools in order to help students to quickly and successfully become re-integrated on their return to mainstream school. Similarly, centre staff do not yet have enough opportunities to observe the teaching skills of others in mainstream schools, or to share judgements on the quality of students' work and to see what other students are capable of achieving, such as the most able.
- The local authority is aware of the many strengths of the centre and adopts a light-touch approach. It has supported the centre's improvement, for example, through the restructuring and promotion of the management committee.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the management committee offer a wide range of highly relevant expertise and professional knowledge, including expertise around safeguarding. They are very committed to the centre. Governors fully support the drive to improve teaching and raise students' achievement. They

know the centre well and provide support and challenge for leaders, in equal measure, as they strive to improve standards.

- Though their active involvement, they have developed a good understanding of the range of subjects taught, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the centre's provision. They work with the local authority to set challenging targets for the executive headteacher and also have a good understanding of the process of setting annual targets for staff. They know the links between teachers' performance and pay.
- Their understanding of financial issues includes a good awareness of the pupil premium and the way it is focused on meeting individual needs. They know that this has had a positive impact on students' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Many first enter the centre with very challenging behaviour but individual behaviour plans and improvement targets quickly help them to develop much more positive attitudes. As a result they settle down so that they are able to learn and make progress.
- Students' commitment to learning is reflected in the work they do in their books. Staff have high expectations but the students themselves take a pride in their work. They are pleased when they are able to show success and across the whole unit students successfully re-engage with learning.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the centre is good, although on occasions a few students are not always fully motivated to learn. Students generally get on well with each other and with staff, who work hard to build positive relationships. They are encouraged to learn the importance of positive attitudes if they are to be successful in the future.

Safety

- The centre's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students and their parents say that this is a place where they feel comfortable and safe. This is supported by careful risk assessments for any activities that are undertaken, as well as robust training in safeguarding for all staff.
- Staff carefully record any incidents that occur, including the use of safe restraint, in which they are all trained. Incidents are logged and the parents of students involved are consulted. Care is taken to analyse incidents to see if there are any patterns or other lessons that can be learned.
- Students say that, in this very small setting, there is no bullying. At the same time, they are aware of what bullying is and the different forms it can take. There is a strong focus on e-safety and being safe in using computers and social networking sites. This message is also reinforced with parents.
- Attendance is low compared to secondary schools but has improved significantly since the last inspection. Although a few students are often absent, most attend very regularly. The centre's work to ensure attendance is effective. Phone calls home every day when a student does not arrive, along with family liaison officer visits to parents and support from the education welfare officer is helping to ensure more attend regularly. The proportion of students who are regularly absent has reduced significantly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers, the training officers who lead vocational courses, and all centre staff develop positive relationships with students. They work hard to get students to realise the importance of learning and are usually successful. Teachers and their teaching assistants work together effectively, creating good learning teams who support learning effectively.
- Teaching is consistently good and, as a result, students make good progress, including that in English and mathematics. Overtime, the information gathered about what students know and can do in English has been used to very good effect to make sure that learning closely meets students' particular needs. High teacher expectations, careful monitoring of progress and challenging targets have, as a result, raised standards in English since the last inspection. Students said how much they had enjoyed a visit to the theatre to see *Romeo and Juliet*, in some cases this being the first time they had ever been to a theatre.
- The new teacher of mathematics has already started to address students' identified needs that had previously left standards trailing behind those in English. A common approach to monitoring progress, setting challenging targets and measuring achievement is already leading to rising standards in mathematics. However, these changes are recent and have not yet impacted fully on ensuring students

achieve as well as they do in English, over time.

- Teachers and training officers show great patience in supporting students. They help students to develop a 'can-do' attitude, often in sharp contrast to a lack of self-belief shown when they first join the centre.
- A strong feature of teaching is the effective way in which students are asked questions. Not only does this help staff to know whether students understand their learning but it also encourages students to think about the views of others and how they might differ and discuss their ideas in greater depth.
- Learning is planned with great care and, in the very small groups, this supports a very individualised approach to teaching and learning. The needs of each student are carefully taken into account and they are given strong support to be successful. This is a powerful element in helping them to experience success in learning, sometimes for the first time.
- The centre's marking policy is applied well by all staff. It includes opportunities for teacher, peer and self-assessment, and sometimes for students to make comments on teachers' marking. Teachers make supportive comments and, where appropriate, suggestions for how progress towards individual targets might be better. However, occasionally, students are not always given the time they need to show that they have understood teacher's comments, or to make corrections.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' low starting points when they join the centre often reflect previously broken educational backgrounds. Some students leave after a short time but during this time they make good progress in their learning. Those students who attend the centre until the end of Year 11 also make good progress, including in English and mathematics. Standards, by the end of Year 11 are still below those found nationally but, from their individual starting points whenever they join, they make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- Across the centre, there is a wide variation in ability because of the wider issues, primarily emotional and behavioural, that leads them to join the centre. After initial taster sessions, every student negotiates their own programme that fits their needs. From this, they start to fulfil their own potential. While this might focus, for some, on promoting vocational skills, with accreditation being gained in BTEC qualifications, other students develop a more academic focus. The range of GCSE courses available enables students to progress successfully into further education following a traditional academic programme. Not only are more students able to take GCSE examinations but the grades they achieve are also rising while the numbers gaining BTEC success remains impressive. In 2014, every student in Year 11 left with some form of accreditation. Students are proud of their success in their vocational learning, and also produce good quality work in art and computing.
- In English, virtually every student is making the progress expected nationally from their starting points, with a high proportion making better than expected progress. In this subject, there is a strong focus on achieving a GCSE qualification. A new examination board, which better meets the needs of the students, is being followed, with literature joining language as an examined area.
- In mathematics, the proportion of students making expected or better than expected progress has been lower than in English, and so, over time, standards in mathematics have lagged behind those in English. However, centre data and inspection evidence now points to rising standards. A stronger focus is now placed on fulfilling students' academic potential through higher expectation and greater challenge.
- The needs of the most able students are identified and addressed in a way that supports them to make rapid progress and go on to achieve academic success, sometimes for the first time. They achieve well.
- Disadvantaged students in the centre achieve well. The additional funding provided by the pupil premium is used very effectively, primarily to fund additional one-to-one support for improving reading, writing or mathematical skills. It is not easy to statistically measure the impact of the pupil premium for individual students overtime as students often leave to be re-integrated into a mainstream school, while others join following permanent exclusion. However, inspection evidence and the centre's own analysis shows that there is no significant difference in the achievement and progress of disadvantaged students compared to other non-disadvantaged students during their time at the centre.
- The highly individualised approach to learning also means that disabled students and those with special educational need are well supported. All make good progress from their individual starting points. Progress of students, both in learning and in behaviour, is monitored very regularly and when needed additional support is provided to get the student back on track.

- The alternative provision followed by a few students is monitored well and shows good progress being made in courses leading to BTEC qualification.

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

Unique reference number	135504
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	448041

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Sarah Walsh
Executive Headteacher	Debbie Ramsay
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2011
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