

Clifford Holroyde Specialist SEN College

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

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have driven improvement since the previous inspection. They make sure that students are very safe and well cared for both on and off site and have taken steps to further improve the quality of teaching.
- From usually low starting points, students make rapid progress when they join the school because they feel happy and safe there.
- Students achieve well and some achieve outstandingly well. Students have historically done particularly well in mathematics and science. Although they often find English harder, the lead teacher is making sure that the subject is enjoyable and rates of progress are improving with most students gaining good qualifications by the time they leave.
- Teaching is typically good and an increasing proportion is outstanding. Teachers go to great lengths to find activities and tasks which will interest and engage the students so that they want to learn.
- Relationships between staff and students are very strong. In this small school, all students are very well known to staff. Students are shown respect and begin to learn to return it. They know that the staff care about them and want them to do well and appreciate the efforts they make on their behalf.
- As a result, behaviour in lessons and around school is generally good and rarely disrupts learning for other students. Students make great strides in their personal development because of the excellent care, guidance and support they receive.
- The outreach and therapeutic services the school provides are extremely highly regarded by the schools and parents of the pupils and students it supports.
- Teachers, teaching assistants, leaders and governors work as one highly committed team to offer students ever higher quality teaching, learning and support to ensure their rates of progress match those of other students nationally. The school is extremely well positioned to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able students are sometimes not challenged to achieve enough in lessons.
- The school does not check assessments of students' learning with other schools in all subjects in order to ensure accuracy.
- School-based students at Key Stage 4 do not have sufficient access to work-related learning.
- The attendance rates for a minority of students, often those who join the school at later stages, remain stubbornly low despite the school's efforts to engage with them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed seven lessons in the school, taught by six teachers. Two of the observations were undertaken with the deputy headteacher.
- Additionally, an inspector visited two of the alternative education providers to observe the work of students there. He was accompanied by the lead support worker for the alternative engagement programme.
- A meeting was held with a group of students to find out their views about the teaching and learning and their views on behaviour and safety. Informal discussions also took place with students in lessons and around the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, subject leaders, the head of the outreach team and the School's previous Improvement Partner. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with an officer of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work in their books and took account of the views of students, staff and parents in the school's own questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the parental online questionnaire (Parent View) to be able to see them.
- There were 23 staff inspection questionnaires returned and taken into account.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Students attending Clifford Holroyde all have statements of special educational needs relating to their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The provision is for boys only.
- A very large majority of students are entitled to receive the pupil premium. This is additional funding for students who are eligible for free school meals and for those looked after by the local authority. The proportion of looked-after students is very high.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and there are no students for whom English is an additional language.
- The school manages an outreach service providing advice and support to mainstream primary and secondary schools in the central and eastern areas of Liverpool.
- The school also offers a city-wide therapeutic service. It provides staff to manage a nurture group based in a mainstream school.
- The majority of Year 11 students attend a number of different off-site alternative engagement provisions including: Cornerstone, CST North West, Harmonize Academy, Oakmere College, Pinehurst Training, Riverside, Princes Trust and Active TT.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the attainment levels of students by the time they leave school by:
 - ensuring the most able students are challenged to make the best possible progress they can in all subjects by providing extension work in lessons and in marking books consistently well
 - continuing to improve the rates of progress of students in English to the same level as those in science and mathematics
 - providing Key Stage 4 students who are educated within the school with more work-related learning activities
 - improving links with mainstream schools to check the accuracy of assessments of students' work
 - continuing to try to engage hard-to-reach students to improve their attendance rates.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- One of the most striking things about Clifford Holroyde is the total commitment of every member of staff to improving the life chances of boys in the school.
- For many years the headteacher has provided exceptional leadership and this has been further strengthened by more recent appointments of senior and middle leaders and some new teaching and support staff. Together with the governing body they all share a very clear ambition to ensure students make at least good progress in both their personal and academic development.
- The deputy headteacher has influenced significant improvements in the quality of teaching since his arrival at the school so that it is at least consistently good and an increasing amount of teaching is outstanding.
- Subject leaders assess all students on admission and check their progress very well. This is not yet done in all subjects with external partners, although there are plans to develop assessments through the local authority's school networks. This is designed to strengthen the accuracy of the school's assessments and help teachers to plan next steps for their students.
- Teachers and leaders quickly identify students who require additional support. They effectively ensure there is no difference in the performance of different groups of students and analyse data rigorously to take action where necessary to raise standards. All students are given an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The very large majority of the students are entitled to the pupil premium and this is used very effectively to provide additional support staff, to increase off-site enrichment visits and to upgrade technology resources.
- The use of alternative education providers has undergone a wholesale review since the previous inspection to be sure all students attending them are making good progress, attend well, are being prepared well for their futures and are safe.
- The curriculum in the school has a strong focus on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons. Topics in all subjects are carefully chosen to engage boys in their learning and, wherever possible, to link them to their real-life experiences. However, school-based students at Key Stage 4 have insufficient opportunities to practise work-related skills.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Students are taught to respect British values in their personal, social and health education lessons, through visits out into the community in the outdoor education programme, by fund-raising for charities, taking on responsibility as members of the school council and by reflecting on their own and others' performance and behaviour in lessons.
- The school works closely with a range of external agencies to share information and ensure the boys' well-being both at home and school, particularly for those boys who are in public care. Together they provide advice and support to parents and the school works hard to engage parents in their children's learning.
- The outreach team which operates from Clifford Holroyde is very highly respected by the large number of schools to whom they offer training, advice and guidance and is much appreciated by the parents of the children they support in their primary and secondary schools, including the school which hosts the nurture group, staffed and managed by outreach team members.
- The local authority provided useful advice following the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching and ensure safeguarding requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The small, but highly effective governing body is a major contributor to the school's success. Governors are actively involved in monitoring students' achievements through visits to lessons and work scrutinies. They request presentations from subject leaders and interrogate the data on student progress presented by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
 - Governors ensure safeguarding meets statutory requirements, including making visits to alternative engagement providers. They monitor teachers' performance and ensure any pay increases are linked to consistently good practice.
 - They manage the school's resources efficiently and check that pupil premium has closed the gap for eligible students.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There are rarely disruptions to learning caused by poor behaviour. Staff use their in-depth knowledge of each individual student to support them to stay in lessons or return to lessons as quickly as possible.
- Relationships are a strength of the school. The commitment of the staff to ensuring each boy can develop personally and academically shines through. The boys recognise this for themselves and really appreciate the care taken of them and the respect shown to them and increasingly learn to show respect to others.
- As a result, students have positive attitudes to their learning. They understand how important it is to do well at school and are aspirational for their futures.
- There is no graffiti on books because boys are proud of their work. They look after the school and enjoy growing vegetables and flowers and keeping the gardens in good order.
- Students understand and respect the reward system and learn to evaluate their own and others' behaviour and learning. They value the restorative justice approach the school uses and believe it is fair.
- The school council is very active and student representatives make decisions such as the charities chosen for the boys' fund-raising activities. Most recently the council has asked to have a uniform with blazers and ties so that they look like students in neighbouring high schools. Council members are now about to start costing this and will undertake a survey to ensure their views are shared by all stakeholders.
- During their time in school, through a variety of positive behaviour strategies and, where appropriate, therapeutic approaches, boys become much better at learning to manage their behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and elements are outstanding. The school's leaders have worked hard to make sure the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully rectified.
- The use of alternative education providers has been reviewed, risk assessments updated and all placements are monitored rigorously to make sure students attend and make good progress.
- Across the school, students were adamant that there is no bullying although many said they had experienced bullying in other settings. They were very clear that bullying is not tolerated. During the inspection, students in Year 9 were producing leaflets for varying audiences following anti-bullying week. They demonstrated a high level of knowledge and understanding, particularly about the risks of cyber-bullying.
- The majority of students attend well and most of those who are referred to the school at later stages improve their attendance significantly over their previous placements. However, there is still a core of difficult-to-reach students, often referred for admission in Years 10 and 11, who adversely affect attendance figures. The school adopts a wide range of procedures to engage them in learning, including the alternative provision.
- However, other students who have been out of school for some time before entry comment highly favourably on the positive difference the school makes to their lives and for many it is a safe haven. One student commented, 'I wouldn't change anything about this school; it's perfect.'

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has taken action since the previous inspection to further improve the quality of teaching and has ensured there is no longer teaching which requires improvement.
- The impact of teaching on students' learning and progress over time is consistently good and some teaching is outstanding leading to outstanding achievement.
- Teachers know the boys very well because in this small school they teach every boy in their specialist subject. This enables teachers to plan lessons using their subject skills and expertise to motivate and engage the boys to stay on-task and complete pieces of work. For example, in a science lesson with Year 9 students, the enthusiasm of the teacher for his subject was very evident. As a result of his careful planning to match presentations, resources and activities to the abilities and interests of the individual students, together with his high expectations for what each could achieve and the fast pace of the lesson, every student in the class made excellent progress in understanding the effects of acid rain and how we contribute to causing it.
- Occasionally, in some lessons, the most able students were not challenged enough to achieve more but

support is usually well judged to encourage students and help them to succeed in the tasks set. This avoids students assuming new things will be too hard to do and giving up before trying.

- Marking helps students to know how well they are doing and they are all clear about their targets. However, the marking sometimes misses opportunities to suggest the next steps students might take to improve their work or to try something more difficult.
- Teachers try to plan lessons which are relevant to the boys' everyday lives. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, students were learning about the interest they might pay overtime on pay day loans and were horrified to work out how much they would need to repay on even a small loan.
- Teaching assistants have improved their skills in supporting learning since the previous inspection. The majority are now very effective, probing students' knowledge and understanding and helping them to have the confidence to try new things for themselves.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students start at Clifford Holroyde at different times and stages in their education. A significant number have been out of school for periods of time before admission and almost all start with work which is below and sometimes well below those of most students nationally.
- Students who start in the earlier years make rapid progress but there is still a high proportion of students admitted at Years 10 and 11 whose progress is restricted.
- Nevertheless, all school-based students who left the school in July 2014 were able to obtain one or more GCSEs, and the majority obtained five GCSEs mainly at lower grades. The proportion of students achieving five Grade A* to C GCSEs has increased.
- Students typically have made better progress in mathematics and science than in English because they find language-based subjects more difficult. However, steps have been taken to identify students who require additional support with their reading and writing to help them make the progress expected of them. Boys are given opportunities to express their thoughts and views in all lessons to improve their speaking and listening skills. For instance, in a food technology lesson, Year 8 boys described the taste and texture of fruits they were making into a smoothie and learned a different meaning of the word 'tart'.
- The gap is beginning to close between students' progress over time in English with mathematics and science and the outcomes in achievement of external awards when they leave school were comparable last year. Students produced and had published a delightful book of their own poems and pieces of writing and were rightly very proud of this achievement.
- The most able students make good and some make outstanding progress but could occasionally be challenged to work more independently in order to achieve more and work towards even higher levels of attainment in external qualifications.
- The large majority of students at Clifford Holroyde are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium and this is used well and ensures there is no difference in their progress from other students.
- Boys who remain in the school setting throughout Key Stage 4 do not always receive sufficient practice in work-related learning skills because of the focus on helping them to attain external awards. However, for many of the Year 11 students, alternative engagement programmes with off-site providers are more appropriate. They acquire vocational skills which are well matched to their needs and interests and which prepare them well for their future lives, sometimes creating workplace opportunities when they leave. Most of these students return to the school for English and mathematics lessons to ensure they achieve the basic skills they need. Their progress both on and off site is checked exceptionally well.

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	104742
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	452014

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terrence Sweeney
Headteacher	Elaine Dwyer
Date of previous school inspection	30 October 2013
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