

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Clifford Holroyde Specialist SEN College

Thingwall Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L14 7NX

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 December 2024

## Outcome

Clifford Holroyde Specialist SEN College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Clifford Holroyde is a caring and nurturing school where pupils feel safe. Prior to joining this school, many pupils have attended several schools and have experienced long periods of disrupted education. Coming to the school marks a turning point in their lives. Pupils reported that they are happy and valued by the school. Most pupils rise to the school's high expectations and achieve well. Almost all pupils go on to education, training and employment when they leave Year 11.

Many pupils have exhibited challenging behaviour in their mainstream schools. Staff work hard to build trusting relationships with pupils from the moment that they join the school. This helps pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour remain calm and refocus. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They show positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, swimming, rowing and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. These opportunities help to build their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy taking part in community initiatives, such as selling Christmas trees to the public during the weekend, serving at a local church soup kitchen and baking and selling cakes. These activities help to develop their independence and prepare them for adulthood.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school is ambitious for its pupils. Since the previous inspection, the school has broadened the range of subjects that pupils can study. Pupils spoke positively about the

opportunity to study a modern foreign language and take music lessons. Most subject curriculums are designed to enable pupils to build their knowledge in a logical way as they move through the school.

Many pupils have significant gaps in their learning. These can be due to a range of significant experiences, including trauma, high anxiety and poor mental health. The school carries out careful checks, when pupils join, to identify their social, emotional, mental health and academic needs. Staff are also alert to any other additional needs that pupils may have and identify these swiftly. This enables the school to tailor curriculum pathways and therapeutic approaches to address each pupil's individual challenges.

In the main, staff deliver the curriculum well. They revisit important content regularly. Pupils receive appropriate support in class. Most staff use assessment strategies well to check what pupils know and can do. This helps pupils to build their knowledge and remember more over time.

Pupils being able to read well is a key priority. The school has introduced a new programme to improve pupils' reading. Many staff have received appropriate training to deliver this. Pupils now have more opportunities to read in school than they had previously. However, the school's strategies for supporting pupils who struggle with reading are still in the early stages of implementation. This means that a small number of pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. This affects their ability to access the wider curriculum.

The school has created clear routines that are understood and followed by most pupils. This helps pupils to settle quickly into lessons. Pupils' mental health and well-being are central to the school's pastoral care. This leads to the behaviour of many pupils improving over time. The school is typically a calm and orderly place.

Attendance is a high priority. Before joining the school, many pupils had very poor attendance. For some pupils, the journey to school can be a negative factor in them attending every day. The school uses a range of strategies to encourage regular attendance. This has led to an improvement for some pupils. Despite these efforts, the absence rates for some pupils are still too high. Consequently, these pupils miss out on vital learning.

The school places a strong focus on developing pupils' character and resilience. Pupils learn about healthy and respectful relationships. They find out about different faiths and beliefs. This helps to foster tolerance and respect for others. A recent trip to a local theatre raised pupils' awareness of local risks, such as gang and knife crime. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. They benefit from work placements. This enables them to be well prepared for their next steps.

Staff work together as a close-knit, highly committed team. They enjoy working at the school. Staff appreciate the support that they receive for their well-being and workload.

Governors offer support and hold the school to account effectively. They have a clear understanding of what needs to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's plans to develop a minority of pupils' reading fluency and confidence are not fully in place. This means that those pupils who find reading difficult do not access the curriculum as well as they could. The school should continue to implement its reading strategy so that these pupils catch up quickly with their reading.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Consequently, they miss too much learning and develop gaps in their knowledge. The school should continue to work with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2014.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104742
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347899
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Cadwallader
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Griffiths
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.clifford-holroyde.co.uk">www.clifford-holroyde.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school makes use of five unregistered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and with representatives of the alternative providers that the school uses.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. No responses were received to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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