

Hawkswood

Antlers Hill, Chingford, London, E4 7RT

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, together with other staff, members of the management committee, and with the support of the local authority, has enabled this new unit to get off the ground. It has become firmly established as a viable and effective local resource for students with significant emotional needs.
- The unit is highly successful in enabling most students to become interested in their education again and keen to do well. Consequently they make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching is good and promotes good learning. Support staff provide good levels of help to students during lessons.
- Staff create a strong sense of community in the unit which makes students feel that they belong.
- Students feel exceptionally safe within the caring environment and behave well.
- The wide range of learning experiences promote students' personal development exceptionally well. Subjects such as art help them to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. Studying psychology enables them to develop a better understanding of themselves. Participating in visits out of school, drama, and the Sports Leadership programme contribute to students' social development highly effectively.
- Information from checks on the quality of teaching has been used well to improve lessons and ensure that students are learning well. Consequently, their achievement is good.
- Members of the management committee provide good oversight of the unit's work. They ask challenging questions of senior leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Work is not consistently set at the right level of difficulty for different students. Marking does not always give students enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- The range of support for students' mental health is not as comprehensive as it could be. This makes it difficult to re-engage some students.
- The management committee lacks representation, and hence expertise, from the mental health sector.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons. Most of these were seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, a few shorter visits were made to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as the quality of learning or provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Meetings were held with the head of the centre, the executive headteacher, who is also the local authority representative, the lead officer for safeguarding and the Chair of the Management Committee. Brief discussions were also held with members of staff with responsibilities for re-integration and special educational needs.
- While the inspector checked the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, for responses from parents throughout the inspection, not enough parents had logged on to provide an analysis. However, two parents came to the unit to meet with the inspector and share their views and a third parent communicated their views through a letter.
- A range of documentation was examined. This included: information on students' performance; the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; improvement plans; safeguarding and behaviour policies and records; reports and minutes for meetings of the management committee, and records and documents relating to the performance of teachers.

Inspection team

Gulshan Kayembe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The unit is relatively new, having come into being in October 2011 following re-organisation of pupil referral units locally. The unit's remit is to provide education for students at the fragile and delicate end of the mental health spectrum, including self-harm, depression, anorexia and psychosis.
- This is the unit's first inspection.
- The management arrangements include an executive headteacher who manages this unit and the secondary and primary referral units in Waltham Forest. He is supported by a range of key personnel who provide support and oversight of areas such as safeguarding and finance.
- The unit makes provision for up to 32 students in Key Stages 3 and 4. There are significantly more girls than boys.
- All students have special educational needs as well as mental health needs. About 15% have a statement of special educational needs and the remaining students are supported at school action plus.
- Many students attending the unit have missed considerable amounts of their schooling due to their complex needs.
- The main aim of the unit is to re-engage students with their education and address their mental health needs so that they can be reintegrated back into mainstream schooling as quickly as possible.
- Most students are dual-registered, which means that they are on the roll of the unit as well as the school which referred them.
- Students represent a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including minority ethnic groups with no one group being a majority. None is at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students entitled to additional support through the pupil premium (the extra government funding given to schools on the basis of the numbers known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after, or whose parents serve in the armed forces) is relatively small and comparable to that seen in schools nationally.
- The unit does not currently make alternative provision for pupils. It has the capacity to do so on a case-by-case basis through the use of local colleges and other providers.
- Teaching at the unit is a combination of internet-based live tuition and face-to-face teaching in the classroom by instructors. The live on-line tuition is purchased through an external company.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by making sure that:
 - work is set at the right level for students of different abilities in the same lesson
 - students are always given clear and specific written guidance when their work is marked to help them to move forward more quickly in their learning.
- With the support of the local authority, develop the level of mental health expertise at all levels of the unit by:
 - developing more comprehensive help and support for the mental health needs of students, especially to help improve their attendance and achievement
 - securing a representative from the mental health sector to join the management committee and improve its ability to monitor, question and support the quality and range of mental health care provided within the unit.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the time students arrive at the unit, they are several years behind where they should be in their learning, some by as much as five or six years. In most cases, this is due to poor attendance and a loss of interest in learning because their mental health needs have become a far more pressing matter. A very small number of students start at the unit with very low levels of literacy.
- The unit starts by getting students to feel at home in the centre and to feel comfortable and safe. This is done by demonstrating understanding about their mental health and special educational needs and providing effective support, in most cases, to address these.
- Students make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Their progress is particularly good in mathematics and science. It is better in these two subjects than in English. This is partly because many students begin with better levels in English and have more ground to make up in mathematics and science. Hence, some of the basic mathematics and science skills they lack are picked up rapidly as their learning begins to accelerate. Nonetheless, progress in English is good.
- Arrangements were only recently finalised for the unit to receive pupil premium funding for the very small number of students eligible to benefit from these funds. The unit has good plans to use the funding to purchase additional resources and support for literacy, particularly to accelerate progress in reading. The impact of the use of these funds cannot, therefore, be evaluated at this time.
- Students make good progress in other subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), history and religious studies. Their writing benefits from the good opportunities to write in a variety of ways and for different audiences in different subjects. Most students have good oral skills and express their views and ideas well. Numeracy is also used, where relevant, in different subjects.
- ICT is used exceptionally well for learning as the majority of subjects are taught through the live online system. Students respond very well to this and enjoy learning in this way.
- Students' art work is expressive and makes a strong visual impact. Much of the work is of high quality and provides an excellent outlet for students to communicate their feelings and emotions.
- The unit is very successful in re-integrating students back into mainstream education. Most remain at the unit for between one to two terms. Most make a year or more of progress in the short time they are here. All groups of students achieve equally well and there are no differences based on gender, ethnicity or type of special educational needs.
- Those students who complete their Year 11 at the unit achieve GCSE qualifications which enable them to move onto relevant post-16 courses, training or, in a very small number of cases last year, employment. All students are helped to move onto their next stage of education or training successfully.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and enables students to achieve well. Some teaching is outstanding.
- Students engage very well with the live online teaching. They use the electronic system effectively to feed in their comments and responses to questions, and they readily ask questions.
- During online teaching, staff provide good levels of support, such as clarifying a difficult idea or making sure students understand the task or questions posed by online tutors. They also ensure that any technical hitches are dealt with swiftly. Overall, there is good partnership between the online tutors and the unit's support staff.
- Lessons taught by staff at the unit during face-to-face lessons are also taught well and in a lively and practical way. This ensures that students' interest is secured and well maintained.

- Lessons are planned well and structured carefully so that students build new knowledge securely on previous learning. They are given clear criteria to work towards so that they know what they need to achieve by the end of the lesson. Sometimes, however, learning is a little slower because work is either too easy or too hard for some students, while being pitched at the right level for others.
- In the best examples of teaching, work is individualised for each student in the class. This was seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson where each student had a different set of algebra problems to solve. These were set at the right level of difficulty based on the teacher's very effective assessment of where each student was in their learning. The work was challenging but achievable for each student and support staff provided skilled help to ensure no-one got stuck on any one problem.
- The tasks students are given in lessons are interesting and relevant. They therefore engage students well and actively. Students enjoy collaborating and working with one another and the opportunity to do so is a positive feature of both the online and face-to-face lessons.
- Teachers question students effectively. In some cases, the quality of questioning is excellent as it probes students' thinking and poses the kind of questions that clearly reveal the depth of students' understanding of complex ideas.
- Most work is thoroughly marked. The range of assessments and reports on students' progress are comprehensive. However, the written comments on students' work do not always provide specific, clear or comprehensive enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are very positive about Hawkswood and how it has helped them to change their lives, and their parents agree. Students' attitudes to learning are good and they are motivated to do well.
- Students are exceptionally well looked after and cared for and are, therefore, very safe. They have every confidence in the staff at the centre and speak very positively about how well they are supported.
- In lessons, students are lively and engaged. There is friendly competition to answer questions or get all the work right. Very occasionally, some lose interest if the work is not pitched at the right level. However, most of the time, students are well motivated to learn.
- Students are adamant that there is no bullying in the unit and they see the unit as a safe haven where they can be themselves. They are interested to know more about, and hence understand better, their own mental health needs. It was students themselves who asked to have lessons in psychology, for example, and the unit has been able to provide these. Students know how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet.
- With the help and support for their mental health and, sometimes undiagnosed, special educational needs, most students become interested in education again. This is reflected in the significant improvement in their attendance for most students.
- With the valued support of local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the unit provides a reasonably good level of mental health therapy and support. However, this is not extensive enough to capture all needs and to enable all students to become emotionally well enough to improve their attendance and re-engage with their education. Consequently, the attendance of a very small number is low and affects the overall attendance at the unit which therefore remains below average. The school takes appropriate action to ensure that these poor attenders are referred for home tuition so that their education can continue.
- Students get on well with one another and provide good mutual support. Differences amongst them such as race, gender and mental health needs are irrelevant. They are brought together by the difficulties they have encountered in the past due to their mental health and special educational needs and the healing process they undergo while at the unit.

- The re-integration process is well developed. Students have effective support to ensure they move back to mainstream schooling successfully.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership to staff. She has managed without a deputy headteacher in recent months and has made very effective use of the skills amongst other staff members to help her to maintain good quality education within the unit. The unit has the capacity to be even better as staff roles develop and improve, and responsibilities are shared more widely.
- Staff work as a strong, unified team and have a clear sense of purpose. The strong vision for the future development of the unit is shared by everyone, including the executive headteacher, members of the management committee and school staff. There is a clear ambition amongst all staff to provide the best possible support and education to the students at the unit.
- The headteacher and executive headteacher monitor the quality of the unit's work thoroughly. Instructional staff are given clear feedback on their performance and what they need to do to improve. Nearly all are working towards gaining qualified teacher status. This, together with the ongoing training and coaching staff receive, is contributing well to continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and hence achievement of students.
- The headteacher has developed a strong partnership with the company providing the online tutoring. This is particularly useful in enabling her to provide the company with feedback on the quality of teaching from online tutors. Working in partnership, much work has been done to adapt the online teaching to better meet the needs of the unit and improve students' learning.
- Students' progress is thoroughly checked and additional support provided where necessary. Good attention is paid to equality of opportunity so that no group underachieves. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority support from the executive headteacher and his team is good. It was more intensive when the unit first opened but has eased off now and is more 'light touch'.
- The unit provides students with a good range of subjects, given the small numbers, and includes drama workshops through external drama professionals. It works in close cooperation with the local secondary schools so that Key Stage 4 pupils have access to GCSE coursework and can continue some subjects at their host school if these are not taught in the unit. The opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee is well organised and informed about the work of the unit. Members take a keen interest in the progress that students are making and in ensuring that reintegration rates are high. Some members, including the chair, visit regularly to see how well the unit is working and other members are beginning to become more active visitors. The management committee examines how well students are performing and how effectively they are taught. They look closely at the learning and progress of different groups, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium. As money has only been recently allocated for these students, they are involved in the discussions on how this will be spent next academic year. Pay decisions are linked closely to the performance of staff. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The management committee has wide representation but does not have a professional from the mental health sector. This limits its ability to check on the quality of the unit's mental health provision or make suggestions on how this could be improved. Overall, though, the management committee is effective; it oversees the finances well and ensures that all legal requirements are met.

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	137677
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	400343

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Linda McCaffrey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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