

# The Canterbury Centre

Canterbury Gardens, Eccles New Road, Salford M5 5AG

**Inspection dates** 19–20 January 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Good                 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good                 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Good                 |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Good                 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, good leadership by the headteacher has ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved.
- The centre is very effective in re-engaging pupils who are most in need in learning and in helping them to manage their health problems. Parents value the centre highly; as one commented, 'It's been a godsend.'
- The staff know each pupil extremely well. They are adept in sensing pupils' emotions and in knowing how to alleviate their concerns.
- Pupils gain significantly in confidence as a result of the support and encouragement of staff.
- Pupils behave well. They feel safe because of the nurturing, non-threatening atmosphere.
- Pupils' attendance improves markedly. This is a significant achievement for many who have often not attended school for years.
- Staff skilfully tailor subject and support packages to meet pupils' specific personal and academic needs. They are quick to adapt to pupils' changing situations and to build on their interests and enthusiasms.
- Pupils make good progress over time. Some do remarkably well, reflecting an improvement in their mental and physical wellbeing.
- Pupils are carefully prepared for leaving the centre.
- In 2015, all Year 11 students left with at least one qualification and either took up a college place, an apprenticeship or employment.
- Safeguarding is of high quality. All staff are vigilant in identifying issues that affect each pupil's progress and welfare.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils make as much progress as they could because teachers do not always consistently follow the school's assessment policy. Learning is superficial when adults miss chances to question and probe pupils' understanding.
- The management committee is not rigorous enough in challenging senior leaders about how well the centre performs.
- Leaders and managers have not clarified well enough how proposed actions to bring about improvement will make a difference to pupils' personal and academic achievement. As a result, it is difficult to judge whether what has been done is effective.

## Full report

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

- Enhance the progress of all pupils, by:
  - ensuring that all staff follow the school’s assessment policy so that pupils know what to do to improve the quality of their work
  - repeating the training for all staff in the skills of effective questioning to encourage pupils to review their learning, to give extended answers and to organise their thinking.
- Strengthen the quality of governance by heightening the management committee’s effectiveness in holding senior leaders to account.
- Refine improvement planning and aid the subsequent evaluation of success by specifying exactly what the impact of proposed action will be for pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the last inspection, leadership and management have been strengthened. The headteacher has worked successfully with staff to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement. She has sought and acted positively on advice to ensure that the centre has efficient systems to judge the quality of teaching and learning and to track pupils' achievement. The analysis of performance information has given, for the first time, a clear overview of pupils' outcomes and a secure basis for the setting of targets for improvement. The findings have also confirmed that there are no significant differences between groups and that variations in outcomes are best explained by pupils' emotional and physical health.
- Staff morale is high. Parents and staff are highly complementary about the welcoming, friendly atmosphere 'that begins with the headteacher'. Teachers refer to having 'the best job' and feeling well-supported. They praise the headteacher's calm demeanour while acknowledging her firmness in setting out the centre's purpose. The headteacher's guidelines now assist members of the In Year Fair Access Panel in their decision-making about placements for pupils in most need.
- The management of staff performance has been used well to improve the quality of teaching. Over the last two years, teachers have become increasingly aware of their accountability for pupils' progress. Coaching and guidance from staff at a national support school have heightened teachers' skills, including their awareness of how to question pupils and give constructive feedback. Joint observations of teaching and learning with the headteacher and scrutiny of pupils' work highlighted inconsistencies in how agreed policies, such as the assessment policy, are being followed and point to a need for these teaching skills to be revisited.
- All staff undertake regular training to update their knowledge of safeguarding aspects and to extend their understanding of conditions and issues that affect the pupils, including autism, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and dyscalculia. As a result, the centre can support pupils with a very wide range of needs and is increasingly able to offer guidance to other schools, not least in how to safeguard staff and pupils. Parents and former pupils are high in their praise for the way the centre 'is a godsend' and 'a life changer'. They value highly how 'the staff are there for you'.
- All pupils have their own bespoke curriculum which is effective in re-engaging them in learning and for some, re-integrating them into mainstream schooling. Individual programmes not only include GCSE subjects, taught by specialist subject teachers, but also many activities that explicitly promote pupils' social skills, emotional and physical health, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils, for example, undertake a nine-week programme in mindfulness to aid self-help, and participate weekly in a range of physical activities at another centre. In addition, pupils take part in outdoor education – visiting local places, and in activities that lead to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Some pupils also engage in additional experiences, such as gardening. A strong element running through all programmes is the promotion of British fundamental values.
- The effective curriculum epitomises equality of opportunity for all to succeed in a supportive, non-threatening environment. Individual programmes enable pupils to gain qualifications when many, particularly those receiving home tuition, have given up on this possibility. Provision is also made to enable pupils to attend mainstream schools/colleges to take particular subjects and/or work-related courses. Growing links with local businesses, an emphasis on developing skills that employers value, regular advice on career options and work experience, all reflect the high priority given to preparing pupils for adult life.
- The centre is accurate in its overall evaluation of its effectiveness and where improvements will make a difference. The impact of recent changes in subject leadership roles and responsibilities has yet to show in the quality of provision or outcomes for pupils. The evaluative reports compiled last term by the English and mathematics leaders are a useful start in alerting the management committee to pupils' achievement and current issues regarding changes to the requirements of the GCSE examination. While these reports accurately identify areas of concern, such as pupils' spelling skills, they lack the specific detail needed to bring about measurable improvement. Similarly, the centre's improvement plan outlines clear intentions but does not identify the difference that planned actions will make to pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher and management committee are ambitious for the centre, particularly in developing its work with families to help their children, and in providing more support for pupils' mental and emotional well-being. They are rightly looking at how staffing and the new building can be best used.

## ■ The governance of the school

- Governance has improved and is now of good quality. New members of the management committee have brought particular skills and expertise, which gives members confidence in holding centre leaders to account. Although the committee is monitoring the centre's progress in carrying out the improvement plan, the minutes of meetings do not indicate a rigorous or critical probing of how well pupils' needs are met.
- The management committee is in the early stages of holding the centre to account in giving best value for money. The local authority has been supporting the management committee in its preparations to take on fully the management of the budget. A good step was the guided review of the impact for pupils of the use of pupil premium funding.
- The management committee ensures that all statutory requirements are met and is thorough in all matters related to pupils' welfare. The chair of the committee draws on her specialist expertise in ensuring that all safeguarding measures are up to date and arrangements are effective in keeping staff and pupils safe. This aspect of the centre's work is exemplary.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved to good since the last inspection and has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Staff want pupils to achieve well. Parents comment warmly on how teachers and support staff 'go beyond what is expected' to support them and their children in 'getting back into learning'.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' progress have grown significantly since the last inspection as a result of using systems to assess pupils' starting points and to track their learning. Teachers now have a well-informed overview of each pupil's academic and emotional profile. They use their good knowledge of each pupil to plan lessons which take into account each pupil's level of attainment.
- Parents like the end-of-term reports which give a clear picture of how well their children are meeting their targets in each subject. However, it is not always clear from this exactly what pupils are not doing well enough. Similarly, inconsistencies in how teachers are following the policy for teaching and learning, especially in how they give feedback to pupils, mean that some pupils are not constantly giving of their best. Although pupils know their targets, and what they may achieve in GCSE grades, not all receive clear indications on what precisely will improve their work or what they need to do to reach the next grade.
- The work of the support staff is more focused than at the time of the last inspection, especially in supporting pupils to plug gaps in their reading, spelling and mathematical knowledge. All staff have been active in encouraging pupils to read more by offering reviews of books they have read and widening the choice of reading material available.
- Many support staff are adept in reading pupils' emotions and sensing when pupils may be in some distress. Their constant use of praise, such as 'brilliant, you can do it', and their chivvy comments are key in keeping pupils on task and willing to complete the task. When such high-quality pastoral interaction was matched by support staff's good subject knowledge, pupils' progress was marked.
- Teachers plan activities carefully, linking aspects of the GCSE requirements to pupils' interests. For instance, in English, Year 10 pupils visited an exhibition related to Gothic literature and looked at aspects of feminism and genetic modification while studying Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Pupils said how they had liked this because it made writing and discussions so much more meaningful.
- In several lessons, pupils' interest was caught by having to sequence cards or manipulate items. At such times, teachers and support staff checked on pupils' understanding and gave pointers if pupils were unsure. In a biology lesson, using paper versions helped Year 11 pupils to understand the effect of a plasmid in a cell in the DNA chain.
- Pupils' learning was at its best when teachers were clear about what pupils were to achieve and questioned, reviewed, prompted and demonstrated for them. This was very effective, for instance, in one-to-one tutoring sessions in English and also in ensuring that Year 11 pupils grasped mathematical steps to work out gradients using straight line graphs. However, learning was slower when opportunities were missed to challenge pupils through questioning them on what they understood or the skills they had used.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The centre is highly effective in promoting pupils' personal development and welfare. It has sustained the strengths identified in the last inspection, especially in safeguarding and pastoral care. Most pupils make marked strides in improving their attendance and learning. However, the fragility of their self-confidence and independence as learners keeps this aspect just short of being outstanding overall.
- The staff know each pupil very well and have a keen understanding of the psychological, medical, physical, emotional and social problems that affect them and their families. The daily sharing of information about each pupil's personal and academic progress ensures that concerns are dealt with quickly. Families and other agencies are contacted promptly and/or tailored action taken to resolve issues. Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional specialist support, one-to-one tuition or experiences aimed at boosting pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- A key factor in the centre's success is the calm, warm but firm approach of all staff. As a former pupil said, the centre 'nourishes and nurtures'. From high initial anxiety about coming to the centre and what will be asked of them, pupils gradually ease into the daily routines. When pupils and staff come together at the start of the day, break and lunchtimes, there is a positive social atmosphere. Pupils go to lessons when asked, pay attention and quietly get on with the tasks set for them. Staff are skilful in resolving instances when pupils refuse to do something by introducing an alternative or working with the pupil.
- Pupils tend to show little emotion and response, and many prefer to work alongside rather than with others. They rarely put themselves forward. Nevertheless, many have taken huge steps forward in getting on with others and realising what they can do because of the positive way the staff encourage and praise them, and because of the wide range of experiences available. Staff are skilled in gradually getting pupils to try new experiences as they see pupils' confidence growing. Parents of pupils who come to the centre for short periods of home tuition talked of their delight in the way the centre has helped their children to leave the home and form a positive relationship with their tutor.
- Pupils are very tolerant of each other. They understand the reason for the centre and accept that other pupils have their own particular concerns which affect how they feel towards others. Those who have been bullied in previous schools say that at the centre they have no need to worry as there is no bullying and they feel safe and secure. Pupils come to trust the staff, especially their keyworker, and feel able to talk about their concerns and worries. Pupils said how they have learned to use different ways of coping when panic or anxiety sets in, such as finding somewhere to be alone or using strategies introduced as part of training in mindfulness.
- Pupils gradually come to participate in group and physical activities and, with encouragement, try new experiences. For example, pupils have been on residential visits, taken tram rides and taken up ice-skating. They take advantage of the weekly chances to meet with the careers adviser and the school nurse. In addition, they benefit from regular sessions in personal, social, health and economic education, careers and citizenship which cover a wide range of issues including keeping safe, sexual health, e-safety, racism, government and justice.
- One pupil was keen to show her badge identifying her as a school councillor. The council has initiated fund-raising events and floated other suggestions for action, including a school farm.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good given that many are highly anxious about schooling. Occasional short-lived incidents arise from pupils' inability to cope or are triggered by seeming slights caused by others.
- Pupils who have settled at the centre are generally polite, willing to engage with adults and to take part in lessons. Pupils' respect for the centre's rules shows in the total absence of damage to displays on walls, work books and equipment.
- Many pupils have lengthy journeys by taxi from home to the centre but accept the importance of regular attendance if they are to learn enough to achieve good qualifications. Currently, Year 11 pupils' attendance is the highest at 91%. In the last school year, some pupils voluntarily came into the centre in holiday times to work with staff to ensure they caught up on missed curriculum content. Similarly, pupils this year are asking how the centre can help them when doing work at home proves impossible.

- For nearly all pupils, their attendance is far higher than at their previous mainstream schools. Where attendance drops this is usually linked to health problems.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for all pupils are now good overall because of the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This reflects the success the centre is having in helping pupils to take a renewed interest in learning. The centre's information from tracking pupils' progress and attainment show that differences in outcomes are due to well-being and attendance.
- Initially, pupils' marked lack of self-confidence and frequent reliance on adults to point out what, how and where, means progress is slow. Once pupils feel safe and secure in being at the centre, their academic progress takes off. For some pupils, progress comes in fits and starts reflecting frequent changes in their mental and physical well-being resulting in breaks in attendance. Similarly, the progress of those having home tuition varies considerably but over time is good, especially for those who have gained enough confidence to come to the centre for some sessions. Given that some pupils have not been in school for many years, they do exceptionally well to gain qualifications which stand them in good stead for the next phase in their life.
- On starting at the centre, pupils' attainment is usually much lower than expected for their age. In English, the centre's information on pupils' reading and spelling ages show a gap of often three or four years. This gap narrows due to good-quality intensive, individual support for pupils but remains a factor in why some pupils do not do better in English overall. Many pupils are happier to use the computer and spell-checker facility rather than write by hand. Immature handwriting and errors in punctuation are common weaknesses in their writing across a range of subjects. Pupils also show varying skill in organising their writing. That said, all pupils make good progress over time. In 2015, all Year 11 pupils gained a qualification in English. The six who took the GCSE examinations gained a pass with a few gaining a good quality pass. The lack of completed required coursework meant that some who joined the centre in Year 11 were not entered for GCSE but took the entry level examination.
- A higher proportion of Year 11 pupils sat and passed the GCSE examinations in mathematics. The Year 10 pupils who also gained a pass are now working to gain a higher level in Year 11. In lessons and in completed work, pupils showed an understanding of mathematical procedures and formulae but even the most-able pupils were less confident in tackling problems and in explaining and justifying their methods.
- Pupils are often reticent to acknowledge their achievement and unwilling to have their work displayed. However, work in books and portfolios is generally well-presented with examples of high-quality art work, detailed research and creative ideas. Pupils who had been at the centre last term showed generally good progress in meeting their targets across the curriculum. A few had exceeded their targets, having made more than expected progress often due to an increased work-rate and heightened confidence as a learner. Completed homework helped to plug gaps and to consolidate learning.
- All those leaving Year 11 in 2015 gained at least one GCSE or its equivalent and over half did better than expected in one or more subjects. In 2014, a higher proportion gained good passes, with one or two A/A\* grades. The centre's records show that this was a group of pupils who were at the centre for a longer time, had high levels of attendance and were very keen to do well.
- In 2015, all Year 11 leavers moved into college, an apprenticeship or employment. This echoes the pattern in previous years and reflects the centre's effective programme to prepare pupils to move smoothly and confidently into the next phase of their life. Employers' comments after pupils undertook placements were very complimentary about their attitudes and preparedness to work. Former pupils continue to do well: several are now taking university degrees.

## School details

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|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 135952   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Salford  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 10002210 |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Pupil referral unit  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Maintained pupil referral unit   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 28   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Management committee   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Jacqui Hughes  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Julie Owen   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0161 921 2550  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.canterbury.salfordpru.org.uk">www.canterbury.salfordpru.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:Julie.owen@salford.gov.uk">Julie.owen@salford.gov.uk</a>               |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | October 2013   |

## Information about this school

- The centre is one of a very small number of pupil health referral units in the country. It caters specifically for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils in Salford who have medical problems, most frequently related to poor mental health. These pupils have had significantly disrupted education in mainstream schools, often with non-attendance over a long period. The centre also delivers home tuition and monitors the provision of education for pregnant girls of compulsory school age.
- The number on roll at the centre varies significantly throughout the year. At the time of the inspection, there were four Key Stage 3 and 15 Key Stage 4 students who were attending the centre each day, and eight pupils who were receiving home tuition. Two pupils were in the first week of attending the centre. Girls outnumber boys three to one.
- Most pupils are White British with a small but growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The vast majority have been referred by the local authority's In Year Fair Access Panel and have links with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). A few pupils are placed at the centre on discharge from a secure unit. Referrals also come from hospitals and the local authority's special educational needs department.
- Two pupils have a statement of special educational need or an educational, health and care plan (EHCP).
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. The centre has two pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- When the centre was inspected in October 2013 it was judged to require improvement. A monitoring inspection was carried out in January 2014 when the centre was judged to be taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning sessions including one-to-one home tuition sessions. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils covering a range of issues which included their progress, learning in lessons, how safe they feel and their views about the centre.
- The lead inspector met with two parents and contacted two by telephone to gain their views about the centre, and took into account the views expressed in responses to the school's survey in 2015. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to complete a meaningful analysis.
- The lead inspector met with the Chair, vice-chair and two members of the management committee, and also with a representative from the local authority. She also held a telephone conversation with the executive principal (a national leader of education) of Oakwood Academy (a national support school), about the support given to bring about improvement.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and staff with particular responsibility for safeguarding, child protection, attendance and home tuition.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents including the centre's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the management committee, safeguarding documents, records of pupils' progress and attainment, curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work across the curriculum.

## Inspection team

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Sonja Øyen, lead Inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ann Gill                   | Ofsted Inspector |



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