

Bishopton Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111521
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	378315
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Lead inspector	Alastair Younger

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Horne
Headteacher	Peter Ewart
Date of previous school inspection	2 April 2009
School address	Wrensfield Rd Stockton-on-Tees TS19 0AT
Telephone number	01642 393565
Fax number	01642 393577
Email address	p.ewart@stockton.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Alastair Younger

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two working days' notice. Parts of eight lessons were observed, although three of these were short visits, each was taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with staff, the chair of the management committee, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with several pupils. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but the inspector took into account the views of the six parents and carers who returned a questionnaire sent out before the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' progress, school improvement and the safeguarding and care of pupils.

Information about the school

This is a complex pupil referral unit. It operates on three separate sites. Green Gates, for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2; Bishopton Centre for Key Stage 3 pupils and Youth Space for Key Stage 4 pupils. All Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 pupils are either dual registered with their mainstream schools or permanently excluded from school and therefore only registered with the pupil referral unit. The large majority of pupils are in Key Stage 3.

A fourth branch of the pupil referral unit's work known as Aspire brokers placements with alternative providers for about a 100 Key Stage 4 pupils who remain solely on the rolls of their mainstream schools. Unit staff monitor the progress of these pupils and their safeguarding in these settings.

Since January 2011, Green Gates has operated on a site co-located with a special school. Day-to-day management of this provision is by staff from the special school. Key Stage 4 provision moved to different premises in January 2012. This allows the unit to provide functional skills teaching to the few pupils who are unable to thrive in vocational settings.

Boys significantly outnumber girls. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. There are very few looked after children. Mobility is very high. All pupils are considered to have some degree of special educational needs. A few have a statement of special educational needs.

The unit may be subject to changes in the near future as a result of a local authority review of special educational needs provision.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good pupil referral unit. A large majority of pupils enjoy attending. They feel safe and nearly all feel they are making good progress. The unit is well thought of by mainstream schools in the area and is highly respected by the local authority. Much of the unit’s success rests in the outstandingly good relationships it forms with mainstream schools and with alternative providers to ensure that all pupils are given access to an outstanding curriculum that best serves their individual needs.

- Nearly all pupils achieve well. Most make rapid progress; often through the help they are given in improving their reading, which in turn supports their comprehension skills. Most Key Stage 3 pupils are returned rapidly and successfully to school. On the rare occasions when pupils do not return successfully it is frequently because the unit is unable to offer support in school to ease the transition. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils.

- Pupils behave well in lessons and show a good attitude towards learning. They are keen to be involved in activities, pay good attention to their teachers and take considerable pride in their achievements. Pupils’ attendance nearly always improves on that recorded in their mainstream schools. Pupils feel safe and extensive checks are made to ensure that their trust is justified.

- Teaching is good. Teachers are particularly skilled in informing pupils about how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve their work. Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally good and this makes a significant contribution to pupils’ good behaviour and attitudes.

- Leadership and management are good. Good attention is paid to promoting improvements in teaching and learning through a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development of staff. Not enough is done to identify

common features across the three sites to allow the appropriate authority or the management committee to make comparisons and to aid self-evaluation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Devise further ways by which unit staff can support pupils on their return to mainstream schooling to ensure successful reintegration of every pupil.
- Identify greater commonality in the workings and purpose of each setting, so as to enable comparisons to be made in support of self-evaluation and further improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well. They do so because they are well taught throughout a curriculum that meets their individual needs and because they are strongly supported in improving their attitudes towards learning. Parents and carers justifiably express a good degree of satisfaction. All pupils have special educational needs. Most make rapid progress, often from low baselines, which are usually the result of a previously disrupted education. Many pupils have specific learning difficulties, often relating to their reading and writing. Good attention is paid to helping pupils to overcome these difficulties. Many pupils already have good comprehension skills but their progress has often been held back by poor word recognition skills. Good teaching, often on a one-to-one basis for those with the greatest degree of difficulty, usually succeeds in closing the gap between reading, writing, spelling and communication skills.

Many pupils do not attend the unit for long enough for successive formal assessments to evaluate the progress they have made. On the few occasions where comparisons can be made, nearly all pupils can be shown to be making progress above national expectations. During the inspection, pupils were seen to be achieving well in nearly all of the lessons visited. The work in their books and files shows that they are making good progress. Pupils work hard in lessons and take pride in their work. Nearly all Key Stage 4 pupils successfully complete their vocational courses with alternative providers and gain appropriate qualifications before they leave.

An important indicator of achievement is successful return to mainstream education. At Key Stage 3 this is good but there is lesser success at Key Stages 1 and 2. A few Key Stage 3 reintegration attempts have failed because not enough in-school support followed the return to school. A few Key Stage 1 and 2 returns are hampered by schools' reluctance to readmit pupils who have crossed acceptable boundaries before their referral. The unit's work in Key Stage 4 is exceptionally successful in enabling pupils to stay on the roll of their mainstream schools.

The small minority of girls achieves on a par with the large majority of boys. Pupils known to be entitled to free school meals statistically outperform other pupils but not

significantly so. Other nationally recognised 'groups' of pupils often have a single representative, so comparisons fluctuate widely.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. Pupils, parents and carers agree. There has been a secure trend in the percentage of good and better teaching over the past three years. Nearly all of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, closely tallying with the more extensive results of monitoring by senior leaders. Teachers are particularly skilled in identifying existing knowledge and understanding, filling up gaps and building on prior learning. Good promotion of numeracy and literacy is clearly evident in many lessons in addition to mathematics and English, such as when pupils accurately measure and mark out dimensions when constructing bird boxes in design and technology lessons and consolidate specialist vocabulary in art lessons. Particularly good communication between pupils and adults helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and reach higher levels. In lessons, there is constant verbal feedback and marking and annotation of pupils' work provides further encouragement. Marking is better at Key Stage 3 than it is at Key Stages 1 and 2 because it is nearly always accompanied by an accurate assessment of the level of performance. Skilled questioning of pupils helps to involve them all equally and helps teachers to evaluate understanding and progress. Teachers and classroom assistants manage behaviour well. This is subtle and well founded on excellent relationships. The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to secure pupils' interest and engagement. Teachers carefully choose activities that motivate and engage pupils, for instance by using texts such as 'The Machine Gunners' or 'Where The Wind Blows' in English lessons. When these were observed, teachers expertly capitalised on the sub-text of these stories to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development. A large majority of pupils reports that staff help them to do as well as they can and explain how they can improve their work. Occasionally, in Key Stage 3, expectations are not high enough and at Key Stages 1 and 2 some pieces of pupils' work are not sufficiently well marked.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. Nearly all pupils attend the centre because their behaviour in other settings has been deemed unacceptable. Rapid improvements ensure that successful return to mainstream school is facilitated. Whilst many pupils report that behaviour is not good, 'because that's why we're here', nearly all feel that behaviour in lessons is good. The inspection witnessed very little misbehaviour, other than a small degree of individual stubbornness and minor un-cooperation. Records show that there are occasional instances of more serious misbehaviour, very occasionally resulting in resort to short term exclusions. Bullying in any guise is very rare and always dealt with promptly and effectively. There is no record of any that relates to racism or sexist or homophobic behaviour. Staff are well trained in recognising different forms of bullying and managing it effectively. Pupils are almost unanimous in saying that staff deal with all types of bullying very well. A programme of family support is well implemented by staff to help parents and carers in their efforts to improve their children's conduct. Pupils demonstrate increasingly good attitudes to learning. They take pride in their work and try hard to do their best in lessons. Instances of misbehaviour are very carefully recorded and pupils are fully

involved in assessing their own performance in terms of the choices they make in different situations, their achievement of targets, the respect they show and the efforts they make (the CARE programme). This is accompanied by a good reward system that reflects progress. Attendance nearly always improves on previous patterns and has improved year-on-year since the last inspection because of good, rigorously applied strategies.

Pupils feel safe and parents and carers unanimously concur. This is entirely justifiable. Misbehaviour is very well managed, bullying is rare and the unit has comprehensive and effective procedures to ensure their safeguarding.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management, including governance by the local authority and management committee, are good. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted, discrimination is not tolerated and arrangements for safeguarding are secure. Each setting is skilfully and effectively managed on a day-to-day basis by its leaders. The headteacher demonstrates good ambition and vision and inspires staff. At the moment though, the unit operates more as three discrete units rather than as a single entity. Good promotion of improvement in teaching and learning is characterised by an extensive programme of continuous professional development for all staff which carefully balances different aspects of provision such as teaching, the curriculum, the care of pupils, their behaviour and their safeguarding. A particularly good aspect of this programme is that it offers staff substantial opportunities for improvement and professional development. For instance, it is supporting teaching assistants to become qualified teachers and helping teachers gain higher-level specialist qualifications.

There have been considerable improvements over time. Teaching has demonstratively improved in recent years. Target setting for individuals and guidance as to how they can achieve their targets is now a strength rather than an area for improvement, as at the time of the last inspection. Extensive and effective strategies to improve attendance have radically reduced the number of persistent absentees to the point where overall attendance is closing in on the ambitious target of matching the national average. These substantial improvements demonstrate a good capacity to improve further.

The curriculum is outstanding because the unit provides a broad, balanced and highly relevant personalised curriculum. There is a strong focus on promoting essential basic skills such as literacy and numeracy and there is good promotion of information and communication technology skills. Personal, social and health education underpins much of the unit's work and pervades the whole curriculum. The curriculum for all Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 pupils gives them extensive opportunities to develop practical skills, gives them access to the humanities, strongly promotes physical activity and engenders a high degree of aesthetic appreciation. It complements the mainstream school curriculum, to which they are expected to return to, exceptionally well. Older pupils are given extensive opportunities to access vocational courses in conjunction with an equal opportunity to pursue the route to academic qualifications.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are strongly guided to rediscover a sense of pride in their achievements and a sense of self-worth. They develop a better understanding of how their actions affect other peoples' lives, they learn how to contribute to society and how to get on better with each other and they gain a good understanding of their own, and other peoples' cultures. This last point is well exemplified by a stunning model they have produced to show a part of their community at the start of the Second World War and the innovative programme of multi-cultural breakfasts.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishopton Centre, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 0AT

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited the other day. I came to inspect your pupil referral unit and judge how well you were getting on. What I saw was good on all three sites. I was pleased to find out that you feel safe and that you feel the unit is helping you to improve your work. It was good to hear you saying that your teachers expect you to work hard. I agree.

I saw you making good progress in nearly all of your lessons. You are achieving well across the wide range of subjects in your outstanding curriculum, especially in English and mathematics. You are developing good attitudes to learning and behaving well. This is helping most of you to get back to your mainstream schools quickly. Occasionally though, your return doesn't work so I have asked your leaders and managers to find ways of giving you more support in school in those difficult weeks following your return.

The Bishopton Centre operates on three different sites. I don't think many of you will realise that because each of the three operates in different ways and has different leaders. All three sites provide equally well for you but I am suggesting that there is a push to create a stronger, single identity so that managers can make clearer comparisons of the effectiveness of each site.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger
Lead Inspector

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