

The Darley Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117704
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	379457
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2012
Lead inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Strong
Headteacher	Mark Snowden
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, a representative of the management committee, local authority and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's evaluation of its performance, the current development plan, minutes of meetings of the management committee and safeguarding documentation. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The responses to eight questionnaires from parents and carers were also analysed.

Information about the school

The Darley Centre is a smaller than average pupil referral unit for Key Stage 3 pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. Most pupils stay at the centre for two terms although some may leave after six weeks. The majority of pupils are boys and most are White British. A few of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school has been awarded Healthy School status, and is an approved centre for the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is good and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
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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 because the majority of pupils return successfully to mainstream provision. All other pupils secure appropriate alternative provision.
- All pupils accelerate their progress in English, mathematics and science and some pupils make remarkable progress, especially in the development of their personal and social skills. Progress in writing is slower than in reading.
- The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of pupils well. It makes a significant contribution to raising attainment in English, mathematics and science and gives priority to developing pupils' personal skills.
- Behaviour is good because staff know pupils very well and are skilled in preventing any outbursts of unacceptable extreme behaviour.
- Partnership with parents and carers is strong, and this together with strong links with mainstream schools, enables pupils to make successful transitions back into mainstream provision.
- Leadership and management are good. There have been effective improvements since the last inspection because leaders and managers review progress towards school development targets frequently and take swift, successful action to address weaknesses.
- Outreach provision is effective in preventing exclusion from mainstream schools.
- Teaching is good overall; however, pupils do not always know what their learning target is for each lesson nor are they given sufficient information about how well they are doing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing by planning more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - ensuring that pupils always know what their individual learning target is
 - providing pupils with information before they begin the activity about how to successfully meet the target
 - giving pupils time at the end of the lesson to review their progress, with contributions from peers and staff.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils arrive at The Darley Centre with low or very low attainment in English, mathematics and science. This is usually because their education has been disrupted. Records show that pupils' confidence and self-esteem are often low and that their personal and life skills are not well developed. During their time at The Darley Centre, most pupils make good progress and narrow the gap between their attainment and that of their peers in mainstream schools, in English, mathematics and science. Assessment data about pupils' progress are used well by the centre to track progress and identify when pupils are ready to return to mainstream education. However, progress in writing is still slower than in reading because there are not enough opportunities to write at length in lessons other than English lessons. Progress in reading and spelling is good because planned interventions are effective. The majority of pupils double their expected progress in reading because plans made for each pupil focus sharply on their individual need. Time is also clearly identified for all pupils to read each day. This means that attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly average.

The vast majority of pupils make good progress in developing personal skills, particularly self-control, which means that they become successful learners in whichever school they attend. They learn quickly to cooperate with each other and work well collaboratively. Pupils learn the value of homework in raising their attainment and most pupils complete homework on a regular basis before they return to mainstream education. The small number of girls and those pupils with a statement of special educational needs also make good progress from their starting points. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good because pupils spend time completing work in the computer suite or using laptops in lessons. Pupils achieve well in developing a healthy lifestyle and are increasingly optimistic about their future. All eight parents and carers who gave their views reflected the inspector's judgement that achievement was good.

Quality of teaching

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress over time is good. Occasionally, pupils make outstanding progress in lessons when discussion is thought provoking and activities are creative. For example, in one lesson when pupils identified the risks involved in consuming substitutes for sugar, salt and fat. Pupils deepened their understanding of the consequences of a particular diet as well as tasting the foods to see if they could tell the

difference. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating, and many of those who were underperforming are catching up.

The best lessons are underpinned by clear and high expectations of what pupils will do and achieve based on good assessment. Schemes of work meet the needs of the pupils well because they are carefully planned to cover the requirements of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and extend knowledge and deepen ideas. Teachers ensure that activities build on prior knowledge and skills and promote collaboration. For example, in one good English lesson pupils first prepared their own plans for a website and then they shared their ideas with their peers, who considered how good the plans were based on their prior knowledge of what features children would find attractive. Pupils' attitudes to race are explored well through discussion and other cultures are celebrated effectively.

Lessons make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils by, for example, displaying the high quality photographs from the science resources. Questioning is used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding because staff know individual pupils' learning abilities well. However, teachers do not always make clear to pupils what their learning target is, which means that they find it difficult to measure how well they are progressing. Occasionally, insufficient time is made available at the end of the lesson for pupils to review their progress. In addition, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to be successful. Expert teaching assistants support learning well by developing strong relationships with pupils, positively encouraging them and by providing good verbal feedback. Parents and carers agree with the inspection findings that teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

When pupils arrive at the centre their often negative attitude to learning can initially hinder their progress. However, after a short time, as a result of the expert care and guidance given to them by the staff, pupils begin to settle and are able to spend more time learning. Pupils are helped to understand that they need to improve their behaviour so that they can begin to achieve more and return to mainstream school. The centre is effective in giving the pupils strategies to use to enable them to improve their self-control, as well as giving them the time to come to terms with any emotional problems they may have. The centre staff achieve this through their patience and tolerance and through one-to-one discussions or art therapy sessions. Parents and carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the centre and they do because they feel valued and trust the staff. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves quickly. There are a few outbursts of challenging behaviour but these are infrequent. A minority of pupils say that behaviour is not always good but other pupils say that they help each other to moderate their behaviour because they know it is better not to lose control.

Some low-level disruption exists in satisfactory lessons and when boundaries are not made clear, but these are usually managed well. As a result, pupils say they feel safe. The number of exclusions is low. Attendance is good because there are high expectations and rigorous and swift follow up to any absences. Most pupils vastly improve their attendance when they attend the centre. Pupils learn to manage risk in their own lives well because lessons focus on safety including learning to ride and maintain their bicycles and ensuring that the vast majority of pupils can swim. Parents and carers and pupils strongly agree that the school deals with cases of bullying effectively. Attitudes to work and the response to visitors and staff are usually respectful and conduct around the centre is orderly and safe.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has successfully built an effective cohesive team that shares a common vision. Staff model good relationships, fairness and self control and this impacts well on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Skilful support staff and strong partnerships with other professionals complement the very small team of teachers. Staff now use the tracking system well to identify and address any potential areas of underachievement. It has already been identified that writing is an area for improvement. However, lesson monitoring has not yet led to sharper learning targets or identified that there is a need to increase opportunities for pupils to write for specific purposes in a range of subjects. Self-evaluation involves everybody, and the pace of change is quick because staff are open to ideas and ensure that they undertake a considerable amount of professional development. For example, all the teachers are undertaking the same accredited course, as are many of the support staff. As a result, and the good progress that has been made since the last inspection, the capacity to sustain improvement is good.

Premises staff make a significant contribution to an attractive well-kept environment and administrative staff begin the warm chain of welcome that exists throughout the building. The management committee has been extended so that it better meets the needs of the centre, and the headteacher has ensured its members have been supplied with the full range of information upon which they now make sound decisions. Through robust incident monitoring, leaders are able to follow up and take positive action to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination. The design of the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well as it prioritises the development of personal skills, and promotes their cultural and moral awareness effectively, consolidating and progressing pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and science. Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust, regularly reviewed and meet statutory requirements.

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	Good	These features are of reasonable quality. A good 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	Good	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.



1 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Darley Centre, Scunthorpe DN16 2TD

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when I inspected your centre. I enjoyed talking with you and visiting lessons. I was impressed by your good behaviour. Thank you for taking the time to give me your views of the centre. It was clear from talking together and the questionnaire replies we received from you and your parents and carers that you feel safe.

I found out that the centre is good because you are making good progress in learning and in your personal development because the staff are skilful in helping you to understand and come to terms with any problems you may have.

I have asked the teachers to do two things to make the centre even better. They are to ensure that you always know what you are learning and give you information at the beginning of lessons about how to be successful and to make sure you practise your writing in all lessons and not just in English lessons.

I know you will try to do all you can to help the staff and encourage each other to do the right thing.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Hilling-Smith
Lead inspector

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