

The Coningsby Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101706
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	355054
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

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	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Cox
Headteacher	Linda McCaffrey (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector observed all eight full-time teachers and monitored performance in eight lessons. Discussions were held with representatives of the management committee and the local authority and with staff, parents and students. The work of the Centre was observed and the inspector scrutinised the improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and management committee meetings, a range of other documentation and one completed questionnaire and one partially completed questionnaire from parents and carers. The Centre's own questionnaires were used to provide more substantial evidence about the views of parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following.

- How effectively management structures at all levels ensure high quality provision for all pupils.
- The impact of systems to judge attainment on entry, set challenging targets and track pupils' progress across all aspects of the provision on their achievement.
- How good pupils' behaviour, attendance and exclusion rates are, and how effectively the school monitors these outcomes.
- How effectively the curriculum meets the very wide range of pupils' needs whilst including an appropriate mix of academic, vocational and work-related provision.

Information about the school

The Coningsby Centre provides education for pupils who have been permanently excluded, or are at risk of exclusion from, their mainstream school and those with short-term and long-term medical needs. In addition, home tuition is provided as required by the local authority, and the Centre offers in-school support for pupils who are reintegrating into a mainstream school. The provision includes a satellite centre for looked-after children. During the inspection, seven pupils were located at this site. Over half the pupils are from Black backgrounds, with about three quarters being boys. The number of girls has increased over recent years. A few pupils have a statement of special educational needs, but all referred pupils were on school action plus in their previous schools. There have been major changes in the management structure since the last inspection and the provision is presently led by an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher appointed in March 2007. The local authority is presently carrying out a review of its provision for excluded and vulnerable pupils. There is a considerable turnover of pupils entering and leaving the provision throughout the year. The Centre holds Healthy Schools status.



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: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

The Coningsby Centre provides a good education for its students. All staff provide excellent care, guidance and support and, in a very safe and secure environment, the vast majority of students make excellent improvement in their behaviour and self-esteem from a very low base. This enables them to attain qualifications in a range of GCSE subjects and, if appropriate, alternative, nationally recognised English and mathematics accreditation. Through these all students are able to move successfully into further education, training or the world of work. Most students have satisfactory attendance and behave well. Parents and carers are pleased with the Centre and the positive effect it has on their children, not just in terms of their academic progress, but in the improvements it makes to their lives at home and outside school. Each individual's personal development needs are considered with great care, so that support and school work are very closely tailored to meet them. This ensures that all have equal opportunities for success in school and for a better, more productive future.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A particular strength underpinning all lessons lies in the excellent relationships teachers establish with their students. However, in a few lessons, teachers' planning does not identify with sufficient precision the needs of individual students and how these will be met. In such lessons, students do not always reach their potential. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It has a very clear focus on personal development and basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). It provides a very good balance between academic, vocational and work-related programmes, particularly for students in Years 10 and 11. Good continuity in provision ensures that looked-after students at the satellite centre do as well as their peers in the main Centre.

Since the last inspection, the Centre has gone through a period of considerable change. The newly appointed acting headteacher drives improvement through her commitment and determination. She is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and her senior management team. Together they have mapped out a clear path for improvement based on accurate and honest self-evaluation, and have prioritised the professional development of staff so that they work very effectively as a team. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision have improved since the last inspection and now give good quality information. However, the Centre recognises that it does not yet evaluate this data with sufficient rigour to give a clear picture of each individual's performance. The management committee personnel have changed significantly so that the committee now has the necessary skills to hold the Centre fully to account. They have full budgetary responsibility and act effectively as a critical friend. Their audit of the Centre's commitment to community cohesion shows that this is good, but also that the international aspects of its work are a relative weakness. The improvements which the Centre has effected on the attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning of the majority

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of students during a period of significant change, coupled with the effectiveness of its self-evaluation, show that the capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievements by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons teachers' planning clearly identifies how the learning of each student will be developed
 - using data more effectively to give a clear picture of the ongoing performance of each individual.
- Develop the international aspects of community cohesion to give students extended opportunities to learn more about the life of those who live in other countries.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Since the last inspection, the Centre has rapidly increased the proportion of its students whose interest in learning and participation in education has been rekindled. Over the last two years, the number of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grade A* to G has been close to that expected nationally. Given their low starting points on entry, this represents good progress and achievement by the students. The present students, particularly those in Year 11, are on course to attain at a similar level. Most students have gaps in their knowledge resulting from their erratic attendance patterns at their previous schools. In an excellent ICT lesson for Year 10 students, the teacher clearly identified how the learning needs of each individual would be met, enabling them to complete their portfolios and attain the highest grades. Such practice is not consistent in all lessons. There are no differences in the progress made by different gender or ethnic groups.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is based on the high expectations established by all staff and the role models they present to students. Students develop an excellent awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and this is recognised through Healthy Schools status. They very successfully learn to keep fit both through timetabled physical education lessons and by participating in out-of-school activities, which involve a high proportion of students. Students have responded extremely well to the healthy food options available at lunchtime and break. A significant number have taken advantage of information about sexual health, tobacco and drug abuse to change their lifestyle. Students are very supportive of the Centre's reward system for good behaviour, work and attendance.

The Centre has rigorous systems in place, such as its first day absence procedures and its rewards system, which are effective in promoting good attendance and encouraging punctuality. A strong feature of the provision is the way in which students are challenged to manage their own behaviour, and the overwhelming majority have made significant improvement since they first started at the Centre. Most now enjoy coming to school. Students make a positive contribution to their immediate community through the school council and fund-raising activities. The literacy, numeracy and ICT qualifications they gain, together with the gains in their personal skills, ensure a good preparation for their future economic well-being.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The very close relationships between staff and students are strengthened through individual mentoring and tutorial sessions. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they plan lessons conscientiously. However, in a few lessons, planning focuses on delivering the subject content rather than on the needs of each individual student and how these will be met. Generally teachers use resources, particularly ICT equipment such as the interactive whiteboards, very well to interest and engage students. In most lessons, the range of activities is well matched to students' needs. Those in ICT and food technology are highly appreciated by students.

The curriculum includes good links with those in mainstream schools to effectively support students in Years 8 and 9 whose main focus is reintegration. For students in Key Stage 4, the curriculum is excellent. Through the very strong links with local colleges and work-based providers, students in Year 10 are offered a very wide range of options which enable them to transfer to a vocationally focused programme in Year 11 at the Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit or continue with a GCSE-based provision at Coningsby. Through this provision, all gain the qualifications they need for their future lives.

Staff make sure that all students, including those who arrive at different times and the looked-after students in the satellite provision, settle quickly and happily into life at the Centre. Transition arrangements for those moving into the Centre and for those who move to other schools and colleges are excellent and contribute extremely well to reducing

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students' anxieties. The care, guidance and support provided by all staff are second to none. This was very clearly demonstrated in a staff debriefing session at the end of the school day. Staff spend a great deal of time listening to students, giving them advice and promoting their well-being to overcome difficulties in their personal circumstances. Students are given excellent guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the Centre.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example and gives a clear sense of direction to the work of the Centre. Her enthusiasm is infectious and is a crucial factor in the way in which the confidence and self-esteem of staff have been developed. She is very well supported by her senior management team and between them they ensure that everyone is clear about what needs to be done for the provision to improve further. Staff approach key developments enthusiastically, for example the introduction of BTEC programmes this year in Key Stage 4. The management committee now includes a wider range of skills and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. The Centre fully meets its commitments to the promotion of equality of opportunity. It campaigns very effectively to eliminate discrimination, and the differences it makes to pupils' lives are a testament to this.

The Centre makes every effort to establish links with parents and carers through regular review meetings, first day absence calls and regular contact by phone or visit if there are issues on a daily basis. If parents do not respond, the Centre takes more formal action through letters and home visits. There are plans in place to make more use of the Centre's website once confidentiality issues have been addressed. The Centre's partnership with parents and carers is good, with some aspects of exemplary practice.

Safeguarding and child protection are high on everyone's agenda and fully meet national requirements and guidelines. Risk assessments are a particular strength, being thorough and detailed. The Centre uses good links at local and national level to promote community cohesion effectively. However, as yet there are few opportunities for students to learn about life for those who live in other countries.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Only two questionnaires from parents and carers were returned and so the Centre's own data was used to provide a clearer picture of their opinions. An overwhelming majority are very supportive of the Centre and how it supports them and their children. As one said, 'I am so very grateful for all the excellent teaching and kindness and patience that you have shown to my son over the past four years.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Coningsby Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received one completed questionnaire, and one which was only partially completed, by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	1	50	0	0	1	50
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Coningsby Centre, Croydon CR0 1BQ

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I inspected the Centre. I particularly enjoyed being able to talk to a good number of you. You told me very clearly that Coningsby is very effective in helping you to re-engage with education and gain the qualifications you will need to go to college or on to work. All of you emphasised that staff are always ready to help you and that learning is much more fun. Many of you explained what a great difference the Centre makes to your lives. You told me that the small group sizes are a real help and that staff 'make us work hard but are very fair'. You were quick to point out how much the Centre has improved since the appointment of the present headteacher. I agree with these comments and consider that Coningsby provides you with a good standard of education.

To make things even better, I want the Centre to ensure that in all lessons, teachers' planning clearly identifies how the learning of each of you will be developed. I have also asked staff to use information about your progress more effectively to give a clear picture of how well each of you is doing. In addition, I want you to have more opportunities to learn about the life of those who live in other countries.

I know that you will all try your very best at all times to help the staff to make The Coningsby Centre even better.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

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