

Eston Centre (EOTAS)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111520
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	356933
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Clinton
Headteacher	Julia Scott
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, the local authority Principal Education Manager for Inclusion, teaching staff, and the school's leadership team. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning for lessons, school leaders' development plans and samples of students' work. They also took into account the views of the five parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by all groups of students
- the attendance of different groups of students
- the quality and effectiveness of health, safety and welfare documents produced by the centre
- the implementation of the centre's behaviour policy.

Information about the school

The EOTAS service is a pupil referral unit making provision for students requiring 'education other than at school'. Key Stage 4 students attend provision at the Greystone centre, while Key Stage 3 students attend the Eston centre. Almost all students are of White British heritage; none speaks English as an additional language. All students have special educational needs and/or disabilities and six have a statement of special educational needs. A small number of students are looked after by the local authority. The home tuition service forms part of the centre's provision. The centre has Healthy School status.

The centre has, in the last year, undergone a period of radical and significant reorganisation against a backdrop of turbulence within the structure of the management team. At the time of the inspection, the centre was led and managed by two assistant heads of service with an executive head of service due to take up post in November 2010. The local authority has put in place an interim management committee. The reconstituted and permanent management committee plans to resume its leadership role on 18 October 2010.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this centre requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The centre is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required to the quality of leadership, management and governance to secure and sustain improvement.

The centre currently provides an acceptable standard of education for students. However, its overall effectiveness is inadequate because leaders and managers have yet to ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are consistently applied. Leaders have not ensured sufficient progress towards targets set in the previous inspection report to improve marking and make better use of assessment data. Students are not always clear about what is expected of them and some do not always acquire the skills needed to return to mainstream schools. Too many students enter the centre in Key Stage 3 as urgent referrals from mainstream schools with little or no liaison taking place. This coupled with previously weak implementation of the behaviour policy in Key Stage 3 has resulted in an increase in exclusions from the centre and a marked effect on students' overall attendance. Leaders have an understanding of the centre's needs and have carried out an evaluation of the effectiveness of its provision. However, some evaluation lacks rigour and as a result, leaders have too positive a view of the impact of some aspects of the centre's work. The current lack of a stable management structure is a contributing barrier to ensuring the necessary capacity to improve further.

Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Those students who attend regularly make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. More students are leaving the centre with external qualifications and accreditations, and teachers' expectations of what students might achieve are improving. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory, but teachers do not consistently take enough account of information from day-to-day or longer-term assessments when planning work for students. They do not always track and assess students' progress sufficiently rigorously. Many students behave well for much of the time, but a few students in Key Stage 3 sometimes demonstrate weaker behaviour and do not always make a sufficiently positive contribution to lessons. The centre has introduced a reward system in Key Stage 3 but as yet it is not consistently applied to reward students' positive attitudes and behaviour. Despite low attendance the quality of care, guidance and support provided for students including the most vulnerable, is satisfactory overall.

A new approach to the curriculum is beginning to have an impact on attitudes and students' progress and there are increasing opportunities for students to apply knowledge in practical and investigative tasks. Students say that they feel safe. . Students make a

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positive contribution to the centre and the local community through the activities of the student council.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for students by:
 - - implementing a behaviour management strategy which reduces exclusions
 - - rewarding positive behaviour more effectively
 - - ensuring that learning opportunities consistently engage and motivate students
 - - ensuring that students develop sufficient skills and attitudes which will enable their successful reintegration into mainstream schools.
- Improve the centre's effectiveness, by:
 - - ensuring that key management positions are in place and senior leaders establish a system which links more effectively with referring schools to identify individual students' needs and their current levels of attainment
 - - developing stronger links with outside agencies and parents and carers to improve students' attendance
 - - providing teachers and other staff with guidance to help them to improve their assessment of students' progress and make full use of the information gathered
 - - implementing policies which reflect the centre's ambitions for its students and ensuring that all staff, students and parents and carers are clear about what is expected of them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When students join the centre, their attainment is very varied, but overall, is broadly average. Their attainment is assessed by staff on entry to the centre. However, follow up information from referring schools on students' progress is often missing. This delays staff in setting academic targets for students. Students, including those with the most significant special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall. When activities are matched closely to their learning needs, many make good progress. However, where work is not sufficiently well matched to their needs, students become uninterested. Some students do not attain as well as they could because they do not attend lessons regularly.

The recent reorganisation of Key Stage 4 provision onto one site and the introduction of foundation learning are having a positive effect on students' behaviour and attitudes to work. One student said: 'It's much better like this. It feels more like college and less like school'. Students are making better progress in a range of subjects particularly hair, beauty and photography. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy has also improved.

A number of students with a variety of medical needs receive teaching from the home tuition service. An increasing number are now taught in groups in the centre as part of a new reintegration programme. Progress for these students is often slower than other centre users, in part because of their medical needs, but also because teachers'

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expectations are not high enough and work is sometimes too easy for higher-attaining pupils.

Students feel safe because they know staff are supportive and always prepared to help them. Students recognise the importance of eating well and have an understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. However some, by their own admission, make unhealthy choices and continue to smoke despite taking part in a smoking cessation programme. A majority of students make a satisfactory contribution to the community both inside and outside school by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. Fundraising for local and global charities chosen by students takes place regularly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teachers have good relationships with students and understand their needs. In many lessons, teachers plan tasks which are well matched to students' interests and abilities allowing all students to be successful. These teachers have high expectations of all students and establish clear boundaries. Disruption in these lessons is minimal and students make good progress. However, in some lessons teachers do not make sufficient use of information from the various assessments when planning tasks for their students. As a result, students are not always clear how to improve their work or eradicate weaknesses. Some students, particularly those receiving home tuition, only manage to complete tasks because they receive a great deal of support. This does not promote their

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ability to work independently, and reduces the impact of the short time they spend learning in the centre. The disruptive behaviour of a small number of students in some Key Stage 3 classrooms is not always managed as well as it could be and as a result, these students progress less well.

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Initiatives such as linking subjects through the use of themes in Key Stage 3 increasingly ensure learning opportunities are modified to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. This also helps to engage and motivate students. Outdoor education sessions are successfully designed to promote students' interests and physical development. These sessions also provide opportunities for students to engage with the local community and spend time outside the centre.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. However, the centre does not provide students or their parents and carers with sufficiently clear guidance about its expectations. As a result, parents and carers do not always support the centre enough in improving students' attendance. Some aspects, including the support students receive when transferring to the next phase in their education or to the world of work, are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Recent progress has been made towards resolving some key issues facing the centre, including the development of a sustainable staffing structure and the introduction of some good changes to the curriculum. However, there is a lack of rigour in some of the centre's procedures and a lack of consistency in the way in which it deals with students. This lack of direction is evident in aspects of the leadership of the centre, such as in rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and driving improvement. Although some staff work effectively, they are not provided with sufficient guidance to help them improve their practice.

The centre works well with other services, but less well with referring schools. While a student placement panel has been agreed, it has yet to be established. Without it, centre leaders are sometimes unable to take a more proactive approach to supporting students before they reach crisis point and are excluded from school. The centre works well with many parents and carers and their appreciation was reflected in the positive comments made to inspectors during the inspection. However, relationships with harder to reach parents and carers are less good as was demonstrated when staff were unable to contact some parents or carers in a crisis. There are suitable arrangements for promoting community cohesion. Students are satisfactorily prepared for life in a multi-ethnic community through an individually tailored personal social curriculum. The effectiveness

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with which the centre promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is satisfactory.

The management committee is currently suspended and a local authority strategy group is undertaking this role. This group has a secure understanding of the centre and has developed a clear set of priorities for the future. These priorities are to remain when the reconstituted management committee returns in October 2010. The group has also ensured that all government safeguarding requirements are met and that practice is of a satisfactory standard. The centre has been well supported by the local authority during the last year, and its budget is now well controlled. However, it has yet to demonstrate the capacity to improve without external support. As outcomes for pupils are satisfactory the centre provides adequate value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Five responses were received by the inspection team from parents and carers. This represents a low response rate. All are highly supportive of the work done by the centre in supporting and nurturing their children. A parent met with the inspectors and once again expressed a very positive view about the support the centre gave to the whole family, particularly during times of crisis. While the inspection team judges the centre as providing an acceptable standard of education, it found weaknesses in its leadership and management.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eston Centre (EOTAS) 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 inspection team received 5 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	60	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)	3	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	60	1	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	60	1	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	60	2	40	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



7 October 2010

Dear Students,

Inspection of Eston Centre (EOTAS), Middlesbrough, TS6 9AD

Thank you for being so cooperative during our recent visit to your centre. Many thanks particularly to those of you who gave up your lunch time to speak to inspectors. We really enjoyed talking to you and hearing your very honest views.

Although we feel there are some positive things to say about the centre we feel that some parts of it need improvement to prepare you to return to mainstream school or college. We also found that the leaders of the centre need to apply its policies and procedures more consistently. As a result, the centre has been given a notice to improve. This means that inspectors will visit again to make sure that things are improving quickly enough.

Some of you told us that the work is sometimes boring and too easy and we agree with you. We were pleased to see that in some lessons you behave and work well. This helps you to make good progress, but it does not always happen because you are not always given clear guidance about what is expected of you and not all teachers have the same high expectations. This may be confusing for you and it does not help you to develop all the skills you need to return to mainstream schools or have successful future lives. The staff sometimes do too much for you and do not allow you to develop independent skills or take responsibility. We have asked the centre to improve these aspects of its work.

We found the behaviour of a small minority of students was not good enough. We were also concerned about the poor attendance of some students, who when they are not in the centre are not learning. Looking at the work you do it is clear that some of you could pass examinations with good grades, but because some students do not attend regularly they are not as well prepared as they should be. We think it would help if there were more rewards to encourage students to improve their behaviour. However, staff cannot improve things without all students playing their part, by attending regularly and working hard.

Yours sincerely,

Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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