

# ACERS East Lancashire Campus

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	128089
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360116
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alastair Younger

This inspection of the school 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>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	74
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Kelly Dawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Swindon Street Burnley Lancashire BB11 4PF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed and five different teachers seen. Meetings were held with senior staff, a representative of the local authority and with the Chair of the Management Committee. Informal discussions were held with several pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to school improvement and the safeguarding of pupils. No questionnaires were returned from parents and carers during the on-site inspection but those returned by staff and pupils were analysed. Inspectors visited a small sample of alternative settings where pupils are taught by external providers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The significance of differences in the performance of different groups of pupils.
- The impact of low attendance.
- The quality of teaching and the degree to which it is helping pupils to overcome a legacy of previous underachievement.
- The extent to which links with other institutions and providers broaden the curriculum and contribute to outcomes for pupils.

## Information about the school

This short stay school (pupil referral unit) forms a central part of the local authority's provision for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream schools on account of their behaviour. Many have been permanently excluded and others are at risk of exclusion. A significant group of pupils is on roll solely because of non-attendance in their mainstream schools. A very small number are on roll because they are new to the area and have yet to be found suitable mainstream school provision.

Boys outnumber girls by about two to one. A very small minority of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds but are mainly of White British or Pakistani heritage, broadly representative of the population of the area. There is very high mobility of pupils. Nearly all are admitted other than at the usual time and often for short periods. The majority of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

**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?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has many strengths, but overall its effectiveness is limited by the fact that outcomes are satisfactory, mainly as a result of low attainment and low attendance. Nevertheless, good teaching helps pupils who attend regularly to make rapid progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their frequently low starting points. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for, guided and supported. They behave well in lessons and at break times. Most participate enthusiastically in healthy activities but the adoption of healthy lifestyles is limited in part by the lack of suitable provision for midday meals and limited access to trained physical education staff.

Good quality teaching is enhanced by good relationships, good behaviour management and tasks that interest and involve pupils in learning. As a result of good leadership and management of teaching and learning, both have improved since the last inspection. A barrier to further raising attainment is the fact that assessment is not always used to ensure that all pupils are fully challenged to achieve to their potential.

The good curriculum is enhanced and enriched by extensive, carefully monitored work with alternative training providers and colleges of further education. These good partnerships help the school to provide carefully tailored individual programmes for pupils. Pupils who attend regularly develop many skills that will be of use to them in adult life, but the future economic well-being of a minority is compromised by their persistent absence.

The move to a new location has considerably improved the facilities available to teachers and pupils. The school now has good specialist accommodation for cooking, technology, art and physical education and a good indoor recreation area. Classrooms are large, bright and frequently well equipped. Good leadership has set a clear agenda for improvement, with a strong focus on the importance of education. The school has a good and growing reputation within the local authority. Several mainstream schools presented glowing testimonials to the inspection team. Self-evaluation is perceptive and accurate. Many aspects of the school's work have improved since the last inspection and the school is well placed for further improvement.

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

- Improve assessment to raise attainment and improve progress by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment data to set work that fully challenges pupils
  - improving ongoing assessment in lessons by ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is accompanied by advice to pupils as to how they can further improve their work

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- leaving enough time at the end of lessons to check what pupils have learnt.
- Improve pupils' adoption of a healthy lifestyle by:
  - providing suitable midday meals that encourage healthy eating
  - ensuring teaching in physical education has the expertise necessary for pupils to develop a full range of skills
- Improve attendance in order to raise the overall attainment and to increase the progress of those pupils who attend too infrequently by:
  - further emphasising to the parents and carers of persistent absentees the importance of regular attendance
  - involving the Pupil Support Officer more in helping families to ensure that their children attend more frequently
  - working closely with care homes to encourage pupils in these homes to attend school.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Although attainment is low, those pupils who attend regularly make good progress and as a result, overall achievement is satisfactory. In most lessons, pupils work hard, show an interest in what they are being taught and behave well. They relate well to adults in the classroom, are keen to please and show pride in their achievements. Pupils particularly enjoy practical work, such as cooking and craft, but they also often participate enthusiastically in English and mathematics lessons.

Pupils' starting points are frequently low, more often the result of poor attendance and behaviour in previous mainstream schools than any significant degree of learning difficulty. From this position, many pupils go on to achieve success in a wide range of accredited courses in National Curriculum and work-related subjects. Many of last year's leavers gained five or more GCSE passes, mainly at the lower grades. On leaving, nearly all pupils transfer to positive destinations and when a check was made last month, all of these pupils were still participating in education, training or employment. In combination with considerably improved behaviour and advancement of their social skills, these are all pointers to pupils being adequately prepared for their future economic well-being.

The school has identified that there is some variance in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Analysis of data shows that these differences are often the result of changes in small cohorts and are not significant. The exception is the achievement of pupils looked after by the local authority which is adversely affected because by their own choice they very rarely attend. There are currently very few of these pupils but the pattern has been repeated in the past three years, when there have been more. Apart from this group, girls, boys and pupils with special educational needs achieve broadly equally.

Once pupils have experienced what the school has to offer they frequently establish a pattern of good attendance and their attendance levels improve rapidly. The attendance of nearly a half of all pupils has been above average this term, with a significant number of

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these achieving 100% attendance. However, a minority either never establish a regular pattern of attendance or choose not to attend at all. These are mostly pupils who have been registered because of persistent non-attendance in their mainstream schools. Members of the management committee work alongside senior leaders to try to improve the situation.

Moral and social development is accorded a high priority and the impact is clear to see in pupils' good behaviour and the harmonious atmosphere within the community of the school. Pupils of different faiths showed a keen sense of spirituality and fulfilment when preparing for a largely non-secular Christmas celebration.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 reason good provision only results in overall satisfactory outcomes is largely owing to pupils' low prior attainment and the low attendance for some, rather than any inherent weakness in provision.

In a large majority of the lessons observed, teaching was good. None was inadequate. In settings where teaching was not judged, because it was conducted by external providers, pupils were seen to be learning well and making good progress.

The success of many lessons is due to careful preparation and planning by teachers and classroom assistants. Relationships between adults and pupils are particularly good and

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contribute to the good management of behaviour. High quality resources are used well, such as in a cookery lesson where pupils were preparing a vegetarian chilli. Teachers are adept at overcoming some pupils' reluctance to engage. In a good English lesson, for instance, individuals were encouraged to become increasingly involved in developing their descriptive writing skills, first, by being presented with an image of a pop star they liked and then by being asked to write about their taste sensations as they ate a marshmallow. Teachers are also good at encouraging pupils to work with as much independence as possible. Teachers have good access to reliable assessment information but do not always use it to provide pupils with work that fully challenges them to move learning on. Occasionally, not enough time is left at the end of lessons to check what pupils have learnt rather than to reiterate what has been taught. Too often, the comments made when pupils' work is marked refer more to the effort that has been made than offering succinct advice about how further improvements could be made.

The curriculum is good and is developing well. Good attention is paid to ensuring that everything it offers is engaging and that most courses lead to accreditation. There is very careful vetting of the benefits external providers bring to pupils' education and personal development. The curriculum has a secure core in the promotion of the basic skills of numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology. All pupils are also taught science. Complementing this core is a good range of options which include much enjoyed aesthetic, practical and physical activities. Great care is taken to coordinate provision for pupils who spend time in different settings, to ensure that they receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Close working with external providers brings particular benefits, particularly for lower attaining pupils and those with a particular interest in work- related activities.

Pupils are looked after well. The school offers a good, nurturing environment within which pupils can thrive. Good care, guidance and support help pupils to make good progress because interventions are well targeted following good initial assessment of pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils have been extensively involved in drawing up a system of rewards and sanctions that contribute well to encouraging improvements in their behaviour and their feeling of well-being. There are many examples of pupils making sufficient progress in improving their behaviour to enable their successful return to mainstream school. Many good initiatives have been introduced and contribute to the rapidly improving attendance of some pupils. However, more can still be done to improve the attendance of a minority. For example, focusing the work of the Pupil Support Officer on those families which are hardest to reach and establishing closer working arrangements with workers in care homes.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and managers have firmly embedded the understanding among staff that this is a school, with a responsibility to educate pupils rather than to contain them. Staff have responded well. After the initial reluctance of some, teachers have wholeheartedly embraced the opportunities given to them to spend time alongside colleagues in mainstream schools. This has given them good insights into subject management, reduced any sense of isolation, generally improved the quality of teaching and enhanced the ambition and morale of those staff by highlighting the importance of the jobs they do.

The management committee contributes well to school improvement. It has played an important role in the securing of new premises and the resolution of personnel issues. As well as being very supportive of the headteacher, the minutes of meetings show that it is equally challenging. Membership of the committee includes a good range of interested parties which ensures that the needs of the community are well represented. Parents and carers are kept well informed about the progress their children are making. They are encouraged to attend reviews and school events. More can still be done to engage with parents and carers to encourage better attendance and to elicit their views on a more regular basis.

Equal opportunities are promoted well. Although equality of opportunity is provided, a minority of pupils choose not to avail themselves of it. There is no discrimination and in the main, pupils of differing ethnicity mix well and achieve on a par with one another. While the timing of the inspection coincided with a Christian festival, festivals of other faiths are equally celebrated. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and effective. They result in pupils feeling safe and being cared for well. Responsibilities are clearly defined and there are prominent displays helping to inform pupils who to turn to if they have any concerns and how to avoid threatening situations. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It works well within the educational community and operates as a harmonious community on a day-to-day basis. It plays a lesser role in the broader community.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

No parents or carers responded to a questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection. This is unusual. In light of this, inspectors looked at responses made by parents and carers to the school's internal surveys. These suggest that most parents and carers are very satisfied with the help the school is giving to their children. Parents and carers also feel that their children are kept safe and are cared for well.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at ACERS East Lancashire Campus 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 0 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 74 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of ACERS East Lancashire Campus, Burnley, BB11 4PF**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school a while ago. It was good to see you in class and at break times and to have the opportunity to talk with some of you. Especial thanks for the peppermint creams you presented us with that you had prepared as a part of your Christmas celebrations.

We visit schools such as yours to see how you are getting on. We judged your school to be satisfactory overall but it is doing some things well. You are well taught, for instance, and as a result, you are making good progress. Your timetables are full of good learning and developmental experiences and you are well cared for, guided and supported. We feel the school is well led and managed and is well positioned to keep improving.

You behave well and make a good contribution to making the school a happy place. You say you feel safe in school and so you should because everything possible is done to make sure that you are.

As a part of our job we make recommendations that we feel will help make schools even better. In this instance we made three.

We want teachers to make sure that they use assessment more carefully to make sure the work they set you is hard enough to challenge you fully and then to check that what they have taught you has been learnt and remembered; we want the school to make sure it gives you more opportunities to adopt healthy lifestyles and finally, we want more of you to attend on a regular basis. Each of you probably knows someone else who should be attending but does not. Have a quiet word; they probably do not know what they are missing.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector

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