

The Behaviour Support Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103146
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355327
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Fiona Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 24 lessons, each taught by a different member of staff, and looked at other evidence relating to the quality of learning. Meetings were held with the management committee, staff, students and other stakeholders. The inspectors observed the service's work and looked at its self-evaluation documentation, its policy documents, minutes of meetings held by the management committee, external reports, and service publications. They analysed questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 30 parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the service's work, looking in detail at the following.

- How effectively is the service boosting overall achievement and for different groups of pupils and students?
- How effective is the quality of teaching in fostering academic progress?
- How well is the curriculum tailored to meet individual needs and boosting levels of attainment?
- How well is the service led and managed given the complexity of its organisation?

Information about the school

Birmingham's Behaviour Support Service (BSS) is a complex organisation. It has three functions. First, it is a pupil referral unit (PRU) covering the full statutory 5 to 16 age range, based in nine centres. Three centres cater for primary aged pupils; the others cater for secondary aged students. Second, on behalf of the local authority it provides strategic advice, support and development in the field of behaviour. Third, it offers a service to Birmingham schools and others, providing training, support and guidance for students with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). Only the PRU aspects of the service were inspected.

All students attending the PRU have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many have had disrupted education, having been subject to exclusion or experienced significant difficulties at school. Boys greatly outnumber girls and a high proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few are looked after by the local authority. There is a very high turnover of students in any one academic year with re-integration a priority aim. Although the service caters for pupils as young as five years of age, no separate provision is made for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) education.

The service has received many awards. It has a silver Artsmark and a recently conferred (June 2010) International Curriculum award. This is in addition to a full award for Healthy Schools and national awards in recognition of its work in reintegration and in school support.

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?**1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

Main findings

The Behaviour Support Service ('the service') offers an outstanding level of education and care. Many aspects of its work are outstanding, reflecting the calm and inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the dedication and commitment of the entire staff. Morale is exceptionally high and all staff, together with the members of the excellent management committee, are determined to change and improve the life chances of young people, many of whom have faced severe difficulties and traumas in their lives.

Most students join the service with histories of disturbed education and with below average levels of prior attainment. Allied to this, many face severe barriers to learning, including emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. In these highly exceptional circumstances, the progress students make in their education is at least good, with some, especially of primary age and some Key Stage 4 boys, making excellent gains in their learning and in their social and emotional development. Outcomes are far in excess of what might have been reasonably expected given the students' starting points.

The exceptional quality of the outcomes is enhanced by various aspects of its work, especially its outstanding care, guidance and support. Teaching and learning are of a consistently good quality; in a number of lessons learning is outstanding. Assessment procedures are good and thorough. They have improved well since the previous inspection and staff know their students well. However, scope exists for further refinement in the use of assessment data, especially in terms of ensuring that higher and lower attaining students are set precise and challenging learning targets in lessons. Where learning is good, as opposed to outstanding, it is because some of the target setting, and subsequent evaluation, is not as precise as it is in the very best lessons.

Partnership working is outstanding. Education and care professionals, including many external agencies, work in unison to ensure excellent outcomes. The service ensures high levels of students' safety and considerable emphasis is placed on encouraging healthy lifestyles. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding, including thorough risk assessments for off-site work. Many other outstanding strengths are identifiable. These include the engagement of parents and carers, the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

Since the previous inspection many significant improvements have been made. A common marking framework, covering all nine centres, has been established. This is helping to raise standards. The effectiveness of the management committee has improved considerably and it now plays a full and crucial role in ensuring high quality provision. The curriculum has evolved well. For example, vocational provision in Key Stage 4 has been extended, sporting, social and cultural opportunities have improved and a far better personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is offered across the entire service. The service enjoys considerable success in reintegrating students and has an

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outstanding record of improving the life chances of highly vulnerable pupils and students through the vocational education and other programmes offered. This record of sustained improvement amply illustrates the ambition and drive of the excellent senior management team. Through rigorous self-evaluation, they know its strengths and areas for development and plan carefully to address these issues. This illustrates an outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise levels of attainment by building on established good assessment procedures to ensure that all students, but especially higher and lower attainers, are set challenging and precise targets in all lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Attainment on entry is below-average, as spasmodic school attendance and significant social, emotional, behaviour and learning difficulties have affected performance. In lessons students regularly make good, and sometimes, outstanding progress because of the quality of the challenges set. Classrooms are settled and behaviour is consistently good. It is clearly evident that the students want to learn and the work is enjoyed.

When they join the service many students are predicted to gain few or no qualifications. Data clearly show that those students who are reintegrated into full-time education return with improved records of attainment and are better equipped emotionally and socially to cope with the demands of mainstream school. All students who stay until the end of Year 11 study BTEC qualifications and gain valuable work experience. The service has a proud record of enabling Year 11 students to progress to further education or the world of work.

Responsibility and enjoyment are actively encouraged. Through their own council the students have a say in improvements and make a positive contribution to the wider community. For example, they have helped to design an outdoor area at the main centre. The new garden and social area is an excellent example of how the students have made a major contribution to improving even further the success of their school. In addition, these facilities are also used by a Somali residents' association.

Students make good efforts to pursue healthy lifestyles with a high number participating in physical activities, for example. Attendance is improving. Most students now have vastly improved attendance records, with a significant number attending almost all of the time. Strenuous efforts are also made to improve the students' economic well-being by concerted efforts to raise standards in literacy and numeracy in particular. Though attainment in these skills is below average, progress is good. In a Year 10 numeracy lesson, for example, one boy made significant strides in his mental arithmetic skills and could accurately calculate an answer having been given a sequence of numbers and calculations to follow.

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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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	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?

Students learn well because they are well and sensitively taught by knowledgeable staff. The working relationships between staff and students are very good. The work set is mainly challenging and the students are successfully encouraged to work independently. Much of the work is individualised. In an outstanding Year 8 PSHE lesson on learning styles, one boy was challenged through careful and sensitive questioning by his teacher to identify when he most enjoyed learning. The student identified that he was a visual learner and he gave examples of lessons in his 'home' school where he felt he had made rapid progress. He particularly remembered some history lessons and made reference to his understanding of 'alliances' and the importance of 'allies'.

The curriculum is outstanding. It is personalised but also offers considerable scope for extra-curricular activity. Partnership work with many agencies, clubs and work-based learning providers has offered students new and different opportunities and helped to boost confidence and self-esteem. For example, curriculum partnerships enable the service to offer a wide range of vocational options to Key Stage 4 students. Other partnerships have enriched the students' lives through activities such as boxing, scuba diving, pony trekking and outdoor survival. These activities have a significant impact on academic attainment and personal development as well as making a good contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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Outstanding care, guidance and support are provided. The service provides a highly, caring and supportive environment in each centre. The individual needs of all students have high priority. Families and carers, including those from difficult to reach groups, are fully involved in their child's education and care. Effective induction methods and excellent partnerships with many different agencies enable students to settle quickly into the daily routines and to understand the high expectations that the service has of them.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, plus the committed and dedicated support of all staff, results in a clear focus on successfully improving learning and driving improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the excellent management committee, are ambitious for success and fully committed and involved in securing improvements. Beneficial partnerships with many agencies, and with parents and carers, help to secure excellent and individualised programmes for education and social care and successfully promote learning and personal well-being.

Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The detailed risk assessments are thorough and all appropriate policies are in place and monitored. There is a passionate determination to ensure that the students enjoy an appropriate education in a safe setting.

Students make good, and occasionally outstanding, progress because the management of teaching and learning is strongly focused on raising attainment. An emphasis on respect, rights, boosting confidence, self-esteem and encouraging responsibility underpins much of its work. This makes an excellent contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination. Outstanding efforts have been made to promote community cohesion. All nine locations are cohesive and happy centres for learning. Through their many charitable efforts, students contribute to local and national initiatives. The work done with schools around the world has recently been acknowledged through a government award for the service's international curriculum.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Approximately 10% of parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive and confirmed the inspection team's view about the outstanding education and care offered. A small minority of parents expressed some concerns about the amount of progress made. The inspection team looked at this and concluded that students make good or outstanding progress. The service's own surveys also support these views. Few comments were added to the questionnaires, but one respondent said, 'The staff have a caring and kind attitude towards both children and parents. They try their hardest to focus on positive behaviour, which I believe has helped my child's self-esteem and confidence. Overall, they do a challenging job brilliantly.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Behaviour Support Service 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 309 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	40	17	57	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	73	7	23	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	50	11	37	4	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	57	10	27	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	47	15	50	1	3	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)	15	50	13	43	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	53	12	40	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	53	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	60	12	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	60	11	37	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.



6 December 2010

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of The Behaviour Support Service, Birmingham, B10 0QH

My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed our recent visit. I wish to thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed talking to you and learning about your views. You told us about the quality of education you receive and we are pleased to say that our visit confirmed your opinions; you receive an outstanding education. Many of you are making significant strides in your education and personal development. The staff help you to do this but you also help by behaving sensibly in lessons and in the social areas.

Your service has many strengths. You particularly benefit from an outstanding curriculum, from consistently good and sometimes excellent teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support. The excellent work done with your parents and with many education and other partners also makes a key contribution your learning and progress. We also recognise the dedication and commitment of your teachers and all other staff. They all want you to do well.

We particularly liked the presentations of your work that we saw in each centre and we were impressed by the many opportunities you have to try different things, such as theatre visits, pony trekking and boxing. We also enjoyed sampling the biscuits made by students at the Link Centre. Though we have concluded your learning is good and occasionally outstanding, we have asked the staff to ensure that more learning is outstanding. To achieve this, we have asked them to set even more precise targets for each student, especially for those of you that find the work hard or who finish it quickly, so that their progress is further improved. You can all help you teachers do this by keeping up your hard work.

Thank you again for making us so welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector

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