

# Children's Support Centre Langdon Hills Basildon

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136035
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	360792
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	High Road Langdon Hills, Basildon SS16 6HG
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<b>Age group</b>	5–16
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They made visits to 18 lessons taught by 16 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, the headteacher of a local secondary school, members of the management committee and staff. Visits were also made to the crèche on-site and off-site provision at a farm. Inspectors observed the unit's work, and looked at documentation such as the school improvement plan, assessment records and safeguarding policies. They analysed completed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 19 from parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which students and pupils are making enough progress in developing their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Whether the unit is doing all it can to raise attendance levels.
- The effectiveness of senior staff in assessing and evaluating the impact of the school's work on the outcomes for pupils and students.

## Information about the school

The Children's Support Service Langdon Hills provides education for up to 100 primary and secondary aged pupils and students who are out of education for a variety of reasons as well as those that are at the risk of being excluded. Pupils of primary age, and some secondary-aged students, are primarily in the unit either because they have been excluded or are at the risk of being excluded. Other secondary aged groups include: pregnant girls, young mothers, anxious school refusers as well as students with medical needs including mental health needs. Most of the students are in Key Stage 4 with only a handful that are primary aged. Numbers fluctuate considerably throughout the year as more pupils and students are referred or placed at Langdon Hills and others are reintegrated into mainstream schools. The great majority of pupils and students are White British and a very small number are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high as is the number with a statement. An above-average proportion of pupils and students are known to be eligible for a free school meal. A small number are looked after. A crèche, catering for up to six babies, is available for girls returning, after giving birth, to complete their education. Because the mothers are always on site when their babies are in the crèche, and its limited operating times, the crèche is not registered.

Langdon Hills was part of a larger service, which included two other units, and which was inspected in November 2009. Following reorganisation about a year ago, the unit has been operating as a stand-alone facility, and this is its first inspection as such. The service is undergoing further re-organisation.

**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 Children's Support Service Langdon Hills provides well for its pupils and students. It meets its aims to return them to mainstream schools where appropriate, support those who are unable to take part in mainstream classes. It prepares students suitably for the future if they complete their compulsory education at Langdon Hills. The care, support and guidance that pupils and students receive are outstanding. This contributes significantly to their good progress and the high success rate of reintegration into mainstream schools. This also enables the great majority who leave at 16 to enter further education, training or employment. Attendance is satisfactory. Before joining, many pupils and students have not attended school for extended periods of time but they make rapid and significant improvement in their attendance once here. This is because of the very effective and comprehensive strategies for monitoring and raising attendance. Outstandingly strong partnerships with parents and carers and the proactive work of key staff, including the home school liaison worker, have also helped to promote regular attendance and good punctuality. There is a strong sense of community within which pupils and students feel, and their parents and carers agree that they are, exceptionally safe and well cared for. The outstanding attention given to safeguarding ensures they are very safe indeed.

Attainment is broadly in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils and students develop good oral skills and targeted action by the unit has considerably improved reading skills where these have been particularly weak. Whilst progress in writing is often good, many pupils and students do not write well and make more limited progress. Primary and Key Stage 3 students find it particularly difficult to complete extended pieces of writing. Pupils and students make good progress in developing their skills in numeracy and ICT. The curriculum offers good opportunities to use computers to support learning but opportunities are often missed to practise and improve writing both in English and other subjects. Practical work in art is of a very high standard.

Teaching and learning are good overall and outstanding in some instances. Diligent planning ensures that good account is taken of the needs of individuals. Staff provide good oral feedback to help identify what has been done well and what needs to be improved. Pupils and students know the levels and grades they are working at but are less sure about how to make their work better. This is because written feedback when work is marked is less consistent in giving clear guidance on how the work can be made better.

The unit is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a very clear sense of direction and has established a strong sense of team amongst the staff. She is well supported by other senior staff and together they have an accurate understanding of how good the provision is and its impact on pupils and students. Performance management and ongoing monitoring are used well to identify and improve issues in teaching and learning. Middle leaders are involved in reviewing and assessing the quality of the school's

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work but are not engaged sufficiently in checking the quality of teaching and learning in the areas they manage. Nonetheless, the good and improving provision and the improving GCSE results are a good indication that the capacity to improve further is good.

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

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils and students to practise and develop their skills of independent writing in English and other subjects to enable them to write at length and achieve better writing standards.
- Develop written feedback to pupils and students so that they have a clearer idea of how to improve their work.
- Involve middle leaders more actively and systematically in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning.

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

**2**

When pupils and students join the unit, their overall attainment is low especially in literacy and numeracy. Social skills are poor for a significant number. They achieve well whilst at the unit and make good progress in improving the standards of their work. Pupils and students make exceptionally good progress in speaking and listening and reading. However, the quality of their written work often does not match their ability to discuss ideas and put forward views orally. Students develop confidence in solving problems in mathematics and in using a range of programs and ICT devices. GCSE results are improving especially the proportions of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C and gaining GCSEs in English and mathematics. Students usually leave with a qualification in literacy and numeracy. Those who are reintegrated into mainstream schools leave with much improved behaviour and social skills and better literacy, numeracy and ICT. Given their satisfactory attendance and largely sound basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, students are satisfactorily prepared for future life.

There are some differences between different groups, but few sustained patterns in performance. Students with medical needs and anxious school refusers performed better at GCSE last year than other groups. Expectant mothers did less well and the unit's tracking from last term identified that they are making slightly slower progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well due to the individual support they receive and because work is tailored well to their needs.

Pupils and students work well in most lessons. They are keen to learn and maintain good concentration. Practical work is often of a good standard. For example, in a science lesson on refraction, students set up the equipment accurately so that they could measure how a ray of light changed direction when it went into a glass block and at which angle it was reflected back. In art, the practical work is vibrant and imaginative, and, as a result, has striking visual impact.

Pupils and students enjoy healthy eating and know the importance of exercise. They behave well in and around the unit which is normally calm and orderly. Behaviour in lessons is usually good. Pupils and students are supportive of one another. Bullying or racism are very rare and pupils and students have every confidence in staff's ability to deal with these should they occur. Those from different backgrounds get on well with one another. Pupils and students readily engage in discussion about moral issues and

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dilemmas. Their self-confidence and self-esteem undergo a remarkable and positive transformation during their time at the unit. For example, often for the first time, they make a positive contribution such as helping in a primary school, performing to elderly local residents or participating in the school council. This is reflected in the following comment from a parent: 'The staff need to know how very special all of their efforts have been and have made my son become the very happy, confident young man he is today.'

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>	3
<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?

Teachers work in partnership with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils and students are well supported in lessons. Occasionally, especially during one-to-one sessions, too much help is provided preventing pupils or students from developing greater independence. Learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils and students so all know what they are learning. In most lessons, activities are well structured to promote good learning. Teachers assess pupils and students effectively through questioning and checking their work both as they work and when they mark their books. Oral feedback is used well to steer pupils' and students learning. Examination-related coursework is well marked with precise pointers for improvement. However, other work is not always as precisely marked leaving pupils and students uncertain at times of their next steps in learning.

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A good range of subjects are supplemented well by off-site provision which is tailored to individual needs. The farm is an excellent placement for students who are interested in a career in farming or with animals. Some older students spend a day or two per week on a work placement. Students in Key Stage 4 choose from a good variety of academic, and an increasing range of vocational, qualifications. Cross curricular projects, and visits and visitors make the curriculum more interesting and widen pupils' and students' horizons, for example raising awareness of global issues. There are good opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum but writing opportunities are less well developed. A well-developed programme for personal, social, citizenship and health education makes a strong contribution to students' personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils and students are exceptionally well supervised. Staff know them and their families very well and provide outstanding support to those who are more vulnerable. Induction and assessment for new arrivals is sensitively managed as so many students are very fragile or troubled when they join. The support for reintegration into mainstream is highly effective and praised by senior staff from local schools. The importance of good attendance is emphasised continuously and there is nothing the unit is not doing to continue to improve it. Not only are social and emotional development carefully nurtured but toast at breakfast and a healthy, home-cooked lunch sustain pupils and students physically.

Young mothers and their babies are well supported by qualified staff in the crèche.

Babies are effectively looked after and cared for. A stimulating and interesting environment with colourful toys encourages good development. Students are shown how to care for their babies and prepare healthy meals when they are ready for solids.

Communication between crèche staff and mothers is very good and the latter are well consulted about their baby's needs. Successfully maintained log books and assessment records document key developments for mothers.

*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	2
<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>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The local authority provides a strong strategic steer for the future development of Langdon Hills. It monitors and supports the unit well. The headteacher has created a strong sense of purpose and a unified team who are rightly proud of the unit and what it achieves. Senior staff have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning across the school and for individuals. They are proactively working with other pupil referral units to secure further improvements. The roles of middle leaders are developing

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gradually. However, their roles in monitoring teaching and learning are not systematic or robust enough. The management committee has developed its role well over the last year and maintains a good, and active, oversight of the unit's work. Informative reports provide a useful basis for the committee to question and challenge senior leaders in the unit and the local authority. Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements. Off-site safeguarding arrangements are monitored extremely successfully, for example, to make sure that adults working with students have all undertaken police checks. Risk assessments are exceptionally robust, for example, crèche staff complete a daily risk assessment. Responses to potential child protection issues are rapid and liaison with other relevant professionals, such as social workers, is excellent.

Equality of opportunity is good. The unit monitors well pupils' and students' participation rates and outcomes by different groups. Most students achieve equally well. New data systems have given the unit greater facility to analyse, explore and tackle the small differences between different groups.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted at school and local community level. The global dimension is developing well through links with Bangladesh and Ghana. The curriculum provides a range of opportunities to learn about people from other ethnic and religious backgrounds in Britain. However, not enough first-hand opportunities to meet and work with students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds mean that the impact on pupils' and students' understanding is limited. The unit has a detailed plan which it evaluates and intends to establish links with a school that has a more diverse intake.

The unit works extremely closely with parents and carers, external agencies and other professionals/specialists for the benefit of students. There are good and improving partnerships with other pupil referral units and local schools as well as external providers.

*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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are very positive about what their children receive at Langdon Hills and this is reflected in their written comments. For example, one parent wrote: 'Since my son has been attending the school he has overcome many of his issues and has grown in confidence. The school has given my son the very best start to continue with his future education.' Though a few parents and carers indicate that their children do not like school, discussion with students and the school suggest that most are pleased to be at Langdon Hills. However, for some, their schooling has not been a positive experience.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Children's Support Centre Langdon Hills Basildon 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 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 65 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	42	6	32	4	21	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	42	11	58	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	47	10	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	37	12	63	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)	7	37	11	58	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	74	5	26	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



26 January 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Children's Support Centre Langdon Hills Basildon, Basildon, SS16 6HG**

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to give us your views during the recent inspection. We think that the unit provides you with a good education. Most of you achieve well and grow in confidence as your learning improves.

The calm, warm and friendly atmosphere in the school gives you a strong sense of belonging.

The outstanding care, guidance and support you receive help you to feel exceptionally safe and encourage and support your attendance.

The school has established excellent relationships with your parents and carers and this helps with communication between home and the unit.

The headteacher is working closely with staff to support your needs and to make the provision the best it can be.

You develop exceptionally good art skills during your time at the Langdon Hills and make significant progress in developing your speaking and reading skills.

In order to make provision even better, we have asked the school to help you to develop your writing skills and to provide you with more written guidance on how you can improve your work. We have also asked the headteacher to involve staff with management responsibilities more in checking the quality of teaching and learning.

We think that you can help by continuing to work hard and attending as regularly as you can. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe

Lead inspector

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