

# Silverbank Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132034
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	360354
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Heather Yaxley HMI

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Councillor David Royle (Chair of the management committee)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Neil McAree (interim headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Silverbank Churchill Avenue Kent ME5 0LM
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The team observed 12 lessons, involving 12 different teachers. Four meetings were held with students. Inspectors met with the senior leadership team, subject leaders, staff responsible for overseeing how pupils are protected and kept safe, two representatives from the local authority and two members of the management committee. Documentation relating to the management committee, action plans, the curriculum, students' progress and safeguarding were scrutinised. Inspectors also considered the responses to questionnaires from 14 parents and carers, 27 students and 34 staff.

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

- The proportions of students who make good progress from their starting points for academic achievement and personal development.
- The use of performance data by leaders and managers, including the management committee.
- Progress since the last inspection, particularly in relation to attendance.
- The suitability of the curriculum, particularly in relation to vocational and alternative options, and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- Criteria for admissions to Silverbank.

## Information about the school

Silverbank Centre is a pupil referral unit (PRU) that provides education for students who are currently not attending either mainstream or special schools. Most students are placed at Silverbank because they have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. All students are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and over half have statements of special educational needs, most relating to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are five different aspects of the provision across two sites. Students on long-term placements, short-term placements with plans to reintegrate to mainstream schools, those receiving one-to-one tuition with a view to extending their time at the unit and those on dual roll attending for blocks of four weeks, are based at the Silverbank site. A group of students likely to become the direct responsibility of the local authority as looked after children, and who are not attending school, are based at a social care day facility approximately 20 minutes from the Silverbank site. This is a new venture in collaboration with the social care agencies. Silverbank has 14 students who are looked after by the local authority. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The PRU also employs the staff for the outreach service to mainstream schools, which operates from the Silverbank site. The Silverbank site is also the venue for a range of therapy services available for all secondary-age students in the local authority.

The PRU has been led by an interim headteacher over the past year and a new, permanent headteacher will take up the post in June 2011. All Year 11 students were on work experience at the time of this inspection.

Although registered as Silverbank Centre, the PRU is known as Silverbank Park and this is how the PRU is referenced in this report.

**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****3**

## Main findings

Silverbank Park provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. These are changing times for the PRU. Over the past few years it has developed its provision to meet the needs of an extremely diverse population, most recently with the addition of a second site for those out of school and whose well-being is at risk. The PRU effectively meets the behavioural, social and academic needs of students across the provision, particularly as a result of good care, guidance and support. Although attainment is low, students make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points. However, approximately one third of the students are admitted to Silverbank Park with no intended reintegration to mainstream or special schools and therefore do not meet the criteria for attending a PRU. The local authority is mindful of this and plans are already underway to ensure that only students that meet the criteria for attending a PRU are admitted to Silverbank Park.

The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the effectiveness of the PRU, and of the relative strengths and weaknesses of its work. Senior staff have ample information to use for self-evaluation, but this is not always brought together clearly or succinctly. Nevertheless, the PRU has satisfactory capacity to improve its provision further, as demonstrated by improvements since the last inspection and more recently under the leadership of the interim headteacher. For example, Key Stage 4 curricular options have been introduced over the past year for some students and personal plans for those on short-term placement have been improved. Although still low, attendance rates have also improved. Some absence is accounted for by appointments that have to take place in lesson time, but the persistent absence of some students means that they cannot do as well as they should. For some, attendance improves dramatically when they start at Silverbank Park, but some still struggle even with the good arrangements and efforts made by staff to get them to come in every day. Attendance is above average for those on four-week placements.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory across the provision, with examples of good practice. Good learning occurs when students are given opportunities to learn independently and to rise to high expectations for their behaviour. Opportunities for students to explore concepts at their own ability level without the close support of, and supervision of, adults are not always well planned and sometimes the pace of lessons is too slow. As a result, students are sometimes too dependent on adult support for learning and behaviour management and become restless.

Relationships with parents and carers are generally good, as are partnerships with other professionals. This is because staff at Silverbank Park go out of their way to know students as individuals, they know the barriers to their well-being and they know how to select and access support to meet their specific needs. They keep a close check on how actions are being followed through so that things are not missed or left for too long.

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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.

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

- Ensure that the local authority provides clarity about the future direction of the PRU and revises admissions arrangements by the end of this academic year.
- Improve rates of attendance so that all students can take maximum benefit from what the PRU provides.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by:
  - ensuring different activities for different ability groups so that all can achieve the learning objectives at their own level
  - reviewing how staff support students in lessons to ensure that all students are as independent as they can be in their learning and self-management of behaviour.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Discussions with students and their answers in questionnaires provide a mixed picture about how much they enjoy their education at Silverbank Park. Some of this relates to the behaviour of others, some about the rules that they have to abide by and some do not always see the reason for why some things happen or that anything changes as a result of their input. However, they are positive about the support that they get from staff and feel that adults care about them. They take good advantage of the support and this enables them to take more responsibility for their health, safety and well-being. For example, students proactively seek guidance for sexual health and develop strong and lasting relationships with staff, sometimes seeking advice from them long after they have left the PRU.

In most lessons, most students focus well on the business of learning, even when there is disruption from the inappropriate behaviour of others. They pay attention to what is required and are keen to complete tasks. This was evident in a GCSE mathematics lesson and Year 7 history lesson where good relationships and engagement led to a constant exchange of information. As a result their knowledge and understanding increased well. Two students in an individual tutorial session clearly enjoyed the discussion on trench warfare. They responded well to sensitive guidance in order to understand the concepts in a challenging piece of poetry by Wilfred Owen. There are occasions when students attempt to dominate what happens in class by controlling an area of discussion and some seek to disrupt the learning of others. Most respond well when behaviour is managed well by the staff, others sometimes leave the room and do not always return ready to resume work.

Exclusions are high as a result of the interim headteacher formalising the process governing exclusion and implementing a clear policy. Periods of exclusion are always short and the policy is proving effective in reducing the proportion of repeat offenders. Students at risk of exclusion attending for the four-week programmes characteristically return to their secondary schools with renewed motivation and improved attitudes to learning that are sustained in the long term.

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Low attainment is almost always because students are making up for learning that was lost because of prior periods of disaffection. When they come to Silverbank Park they start to catch up and move towards more age-appropriate rates of learning and make the progress that they should each year. Learning accelerates over time for some, particularly when their behaviour settles. For others with poor attendance, progress is limited. Most that are at the PRU during Key Stage 4 go on to college or employment. All leave with accreditations for literacy and numeracy, as well as a range of other achievements up to GCSE level. Overall, students develop some good skills in information and communication technology, but achievement in science is not as good as in other subjects.

*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	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>3</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 quality of teaching and learning varies. A lack of consistency in how activities are planned, how additional adults are used to support learning and behaviour, and a lack of guidance to students about how to present their work mean that some lessons are better than others in moving learning on. When students' thinking is challenged and learning proceeds at a swift pace, students rise to the challenge, achieve well and develop good attitudes to work. Management of behaviour is generally effective in engaging students in learning, although staff do not always make the most of the timely use of rewards, use students' personal targets to reinforce behavioural expectations or to give feedback on how to improve their work.

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Strengths in the curriculum include some opportunities for vocational education, a comprehensive work experience programme and good opportunities for physical development. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), however, is not well planned because it is not comprehensive enough and does not give sufficient support to help teachers plan lessons or to maximise opportunities to develop personal skills in other lessons. Provision in the timetable at the beginning of the week and at the end of each day works well to help students resolve or discuss issues so that they can settle to their learning for the rest of the week. A planned programme of one-to-one tuition as an alternative curriculum for those not managing well in class or those whose attendance is low works well for some to re-engage with learning and to increase their time in regular lessons.

The care, guidance and support to students and their families are integral to the work of the PRU. It successfully provides the right support at the right time with key adults or services so that students and their families are confident that issues will be addressed. This includes access to a range of therapies that are available on site. The special educational needs coordinator and pastoral support manager work very effectively as a team to coordinate much of the support. Between them they have a wealth of knowledge of, and access to, a range of relevant support services. Students' behaviour across the provision is managed calmly, quietly and with appropriate respect. Older students are very appreciative that staff take them to appointments and interviews and prepare them well for what to expect. Outreach staff work in tandem with the rest of the staff, particularly in respect of students who may be referred to the PRU in the future.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear drive and ambition by leaders and managers to improve the PRU's provision. Their attention is firmly fixed on improving students' academic achievements as well as their behaviour, although their action plans do not always reflect this. For example, the PRU's action plan and those of subject leaders show what needs to improve and what will be done but not what will be measured in relation to students' achievements.

Similarly, the work of the management committee focuses more on business and less on what it is that is making the difference to students. Nevertheless, the PRU has successfully extended the provision to increase the range of students' needs that it can cater for. This demonstrates its commitment and high priority to remove the barriers that prevent students from accessing education and to ensuring equality of opportunity for all the students in its care. The local authority is giving equally high priority to resolving the

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admissions policy for Silverbank Park, particularly in relation to those students who are unlikely to reintegrate to mainstream or special schools.

Over the past year, the work of the deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher and subject leaders have been redefined so that their delegated roles are appropriately strategic. Their responsibilities for all students, across all parts of the provision at the two sites, are developing, as is their use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of their work. The management committee fulfils its responsibilities appropriately, although members have been slow to review and implement some key policies. Their strategic approach to ensuring community cohesion is at an early stage. All safeguarding requirements are met. Good attention is given to the broader aspects of safeguarding students, including record keeping, child protection procedures, risk assessments and checks on alternative off-site providers.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</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>3</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**

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was below average for a PRU. Of those who responded, the vast majority are positive about the provision.



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

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

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

The inspection team received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 98 pupils registered at the PRU.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	7	11	79	1	7	1	7
The school keeps my child safe	4	29	9	64	1	7	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	6	43	7	50	0	0	1	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	21	8	57	2	14	1	7
The teaching is good at this school	6	43	7	50	1	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	36	8	57	1	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	29	10	71	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	21	9	64	1	7	1	7
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	29	9	64	0	0	1	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	43	7	50	0	0	1	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	26	8	57	0	0	1	7
The school is led and managed effectively	6	43	7	50	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	29	9	64	0	0	1	7

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	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.**



4 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Silverbank Centre, Chatham ME5 0LB**

It was a pleasure to come and inspect Silverbank Park this week. We were sorry to miss those of you in Year 11 and hope that your work-experience programmes go well. We want to say a big thank you to all of you who completed a questionnaire and to those who talked to us in groups or individually. We have taken your views and comments into account and hope you feel that the inspection report reflects your opinions. We found a mixed picture in what you said to us. Some of you are very happy at Silverbank Park but others do not enjoy it so much and feel that your views are not taken into account. You told us that staff support you in staying safe, keeping healthy and preparing you for the next stage in your education, and we judged that you receive good care, guidance and support from staff.

Overall, we judged that Silverbank Park provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. We have identified some things for improvement and you can help with these by discussing them with staff and looking for ways to play your part in Silverbank Park's improvement. The things that we have suggested that Silverbank Park should do are:

- to ask the local authority to clarify how students are admitted to Silverbank Park in the future
- to improve rates of attendance so that all students can take maximum benefit from what Silverbank Park provides
- to raise the quality of teaching by making sure that students have more opportunities to achieve learning objectives at their own level and to work more independently.

You will find more details in the full report and we hope that you will read it with your families. Many thanks again and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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