

The Surrey Teaching Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134108
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	381609
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Martyn Rhowbotham HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils	2-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Ms Karen Peers
Headteacher	Mrs Pamela Walden
Date of previous school inspection	March 2009
School address	The Children's Trust Tadworth Court Tadworth KT20 5RU
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Age group	2–19
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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

Introduction

Inspection team

Martyn Rhowbotham

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Dannheisser

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Teaching and learning were observed across the pupil referral unit, including a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors met with pupils, members of staff, representatives from the local authority and parents and carers. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with the headteacher of a local special school who serves on the pupil referral unit's management committee. Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including that related to pupils' achievement, and samples of pupils' work. Questionnaire responses were received from five parents and carers and 10 staff.

Information about the school

The Surrey Teaching Centre is a medium-sized pupil referral unit. It is situated in Tadworth in specialist accommodation in the grounds of The Children's Trust, an independent charitable trust specialising in the care of profoundly disabled children and in rehabilitation programmes for children with a recently acquired brain injury. It is a registered children's home and admissions are all through the Children's Trust's admissions panel. All pupils have complex medical needs and/or the need for intensive therapies and all have special educational needs. The pupil referral unit has a small number of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many pupils are following a rehabilitation programme within The Children's Trust as they have recently sustained an acquired brain injury as a result of an accident or illness and they generally have been admitted from an acute hospital setting. Other pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex medical needs and are resident for palliative care. All pupils and some parents and carers are resident on site. The pupil referral unit has a strong focus on the development of communication skills for all pupils and on implementing specialist strategies within a multidisciplinary team for pupils with acquired brain injury. There are a very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

This is the only pupil referral unit of its kind in the United Kingdom and it deals with many pupils who have fluctuating consciousness levels as well as a small number of pupils following the National Curriculum and pre-National Curriculum.

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Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding pupil referral unit. The staff go the extra mile to ensure that pupils are taught and supported extremely well. As a result, they make outstanding progress, especially in their communication skills, and they gain a very positive experience of education.
- Pupils engage exceptionally well in education due to lessons being planned meticulously with the individual needs of each pupil in mind. This ensures that they greatly enjoy their learning and behave exceptionally well. They feel safe and well cared for. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and understand fully their disabilities and the very significant barriers these create. Staff are extremely skilled in helping all pupils to overcome barriers and to make outstanding progress in their learning and development.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils outstandingly well because it is planned very effectively to meet the extremely complex needs of all pupils. The curriculum is delivered in an exciting and innovative way, often involving the use of themes and projects adapted to the needs of the different groups within the centre.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and prepares children superbly well for the next stage in their education in a calm, encouraging and caring atmosphere. Pupils achieve as well as, and better than, expected despite the unpredictable path to progress that some brain injured pupils may take. Progress is continually being tracked and there are marked gains in communication and language.
- The pupil referral unit is led and managed extremely well, with a relentless focus on providing the best education possible for the pupils. The management of teaching and learning is exceptionally strong, as is both strategic and operational management.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend and develop the transition service to support pupils in the longer term when they move to their next educational placement and monitor the effectiveness of the service.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most pupils make outstanding progress whilst in the pupil referral unit. Progress is outstanding for pupils who stay for both long and short periods of time. Virtually all pupils who are working on National Curriculum levels and those working at pre-National Curriculum levels make progress that is significantly above that expected. Where a very small number of pupils do not make rapid progress, it is solely due to their severe medical conditions. The small number of post-16 students also make outstanding progress. Pupils moving on to special schools (and the smaller number who go on to mainstream schools) are prepared well by ensuring they have a clear picture of their attainment.

Pupils in the National Curriculum and pre-National Curriculum classes make outstanding progress in lessons. By the end of one extremely successful lesson, one pupil, who spoke English as an additional language, was able to translate the days of the week into English and then put them in the correct order. At the start of the lesson she was not able to even recognise the days of the week in English. In addition, she was able to pronounce days accurately. This learning was then reinforced very well through the excellent use of assistive technology, which enabled her progress to be even more rapid.

Pupils engage in tasks and activities extremely well. This is because activities are designed to take account of the enormous range of abilities and the wide range of barriers caused by acquired brain injury. The multidisciplinary approach to lessons is exceptionally successful and care staff and teaching assistants make significant contributions to the progress made by pupils. There is an appropriate and very successful emphasis on enabling pupils to develop and improve their communication skills and, where appropriate, to develop their skills in reading, number and writing. Assistive technology is used to excellent effect. Pupils' progress is tracked and recorded rigorously.

Realistic targets, customised to individual pupils, underpin their outstanding progress. In one lesson, a pupil concentrated fully throughout and, through blinking his eyes a different number of times, was able to access his choice of pictures and music for the task in hand. In terms of his starting point, this represented outstanding progress in his communication skills.

Parents and carers are delighted with the progress their children make during their

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time in the pupil referral unit. One parent of a child with acquired brain injury stated, 'They are outstanding here; it's great that she is still learning.' Another said he was astounded by the progress his son was making.

Pupils use information and communication technology with confidence and skill. One pupil was able to recognise that his initial search had not given him the answer he desired so he conducted a further search successfully.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils achieve outstandingly well despite the unpredictable path to progress that brain-injured pupils may take. Progress is continually tracked and there are significant improvements in communications and language. Standards achieved by pupils following aspects of the National Curriculum and pre-National Curriculum are, in context, good.

Quality of teaching

Pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, benefit from outstanding teaching, which enables them to make the excellent progress they do. Lessons are very purposeful and have an extremely productive and positive ethos. Due to the very considerable specialist expertise of staff, a very prominent feature of all lessons is that they are planned in great detail and pupils' individual needs are taken into account extremely well. This enables all pupils to access the curriculum fully, irrespective of their abilities, the extent of their acquired brain injury or emotional difficulties. Other professionals, such as care assistants, teaching assistants, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, all work together very well in lessons to support pupils' progress. Praise and encouragement are used to very good effect and pupils clearly enjoy their learning as articulated by those able to. Due to extremely detailed planning, the sharing of lesson plans and the intended outcomes and excellent communication, lessons are very successful. Many parents and carers attend lessons and this enables them to see at first hand the progress their children are making and enhances the true sense of partnership that is at the core of the pupil referral unit's values and work. Pupils achieve and very often exceed their targets.

Teachers are highly skilled at managing the extremely complex difficulties faced by pupils with acquired brain injury. Teachers are very confident with pupils and, appropriately, are prepared to change their plans should the situation within a lesson call for this action. In one lesson, a post-16 student was very keen to explore aspects of BMX events in the Olympics. He communicated this to the teacher using a variety of methods, including some speech. The teacher amended her plans and teaching very skilfully and, as a result, the pupil achieved his intended outcomes, but through different content and process.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage parents and carers are also involved strongly and many play an important role within the team in the classroom. Lesson planning is exceptionally good. Each child has clear learning objectives and their progress is monitored rigorously. The provision succeeds in preparing children very well for the

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next phase of their specialised education in a calm, encouraging and caring atmosphere.

Teachers are very skilled at checking understanding frequently and intervening where appropriate. When required, they check that the pupil understands where they are and what they will be doing. They enable pupils to use a variety of methods such as blinking or raising a hand slightly to communicate that they do understand before moving on to the next stage of learning.

Much teaching is based on cross-curricular themes and these contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a theme based on Victorian England presented many well-taken opportunities for pupils to develop in context their understanding of values, rights and responsibilities. They also improve their reading, information and communication technology, communication and research skills successfully. Mathematics is taught through a very well-planned series of projects such as fund raising for a water cooler.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The pupil referral unit is very welcoming and harmonious and a purposeful place for learning for all pupils, irrespective of their acquired brain injury or other very significant learning disabilities. Pupils' achievements are celebrated frequently in lessons and through high-quality displays of their work in classrooms. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of staff who make clear to pupils that progress and achievement are possible and that they believe in them.

Pupils feel safe in the centre and know who to go to if they have a difficulty. There are significant numbers of professionals and other adults that pupils have easy access to and the centre adopts a very successful preventative approach to any issues of health and safety or safeguarding by aiming to anticipate any issues before they arise. These are treated as actual rather than potential issues and trigger an appropriate investigation and action.

Bullying is extremely rare and no incidents have occurred over the last few years. The centre is aware that some pupils, especially those with acquired brain injury, require further help in their safety awareness and this is delivered through a suitably adapted personal, social and health education programme. Progress is tracked through the School Function Assessment system which shows pupils make significant progress in this aspect.

The school has a transition programme for schools receiving its pupils. This support for schools takes the form of supporting staff in working with pupils with acquired brain injury. This programme is relatively short term and the long-term effectiveness of it is not monitored.

Parents and carers are secure in the knowledge that their children are safe. They

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speaking very positively about the expertise of staff in understanding behaviours associated with acquired brain injury. They are also very positive indeed about the progress and improvements in communication and confidence their children make while at the centre.

Given the very severe nature of the acquired brain injuries and other disabilities of children at the centre, both punctuality and attendance are good.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. The management of teaching and learning is excellent. There is a relentless focus on providing the best education possible for pupils. The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and is also aware of the considerable strengths and is quickly aware of any areas that need improving. She has adopted a highly appropriate self-critical culture and this is shared by the extremely enthusiastic and supportive staff, who are determined to provide the very best for pupils. Staff are very proud to work in the pupil referral unit. Team working among teaching staff is excellent as is the collaboration between education and other departments. The high standards found at the last inspection have been at least maintained and built upon in some areas. This, together with a highly evaluative and accurate self-evaluation and well-focused plans for improvement, shows that the unit has outstanding capacity to improve even further. The headteacher receives good strategic and operational support from the local authority and The Children's Trust. Partnerships with local special and mainstream schools increase educational opportunities for pupils and the centre is a strategic partner in the local teaching school initiative. Operational management is very effective and the unit runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

The curriculum is outstanding because it is planned for each individual child extremely well. Where appropriate there is a very successful focus on improving literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology through individual lessons based solely on meeting the very complex needs of all pupils. The curriculum, in context, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education extremely well. It does this through, for example, special stories, art projects with the National Gallery, various visits and the importance placed on learning to take turns and to respect adults and peers, which pupils do so well. Equality and diversity are also promoted effectively through the curriculum and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. All statutory requirements regarding safeguarding are securely in place.

The use of all forms of assessment is outstanding and the 'errorless learning' is highly appropriate to meet such complex needs. The tracking of pupils' progress is outstanding, as is target setting, which enables pupils to evaluate their own work and effort.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Surrey Teaching Centre, Tadworth KT20 5RU

As you know, we visited your school recently to see how well you were doing. We were very impressed. We would like to thank you for spending time with us in lessons and showing us your work.

We think you are all doing extremely well in school and learning lots of things. You all try your hardest to do your best and you can be very proud of what you do in school.

You learn extremely well and we think your teachers give you excellent things to do. Your behaviour is excellent and you respect each other by taking turns and being nice to each other.

We think your school is outstanding and all staff do their very best for you.

We have asked staff to work with those of you who will be going to other schools to make sure you settle in quickly.

Thank you again and carry on working hard and doing so well. We enjoyed our time with you and we give you every good wish for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Rhowbotham
Her Majesty's Inspector

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