

McKee Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134367
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	360617
Inspection dates	4–5 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Terence McKenzie

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Condon
Headteacher	Lynn Culbert
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight part lessons were observed that involved six teachers. An off-site educational activity was also attended and observed. A range of key documents was scrutinised and meetings held with members of the senior leadership team, members of the management committee and a local authority representative. Other informal discussions were held with staff and students during lessons and in the unit. The inspectors observed the unit's work and looked at nine inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers. Additionally, they considered the views of students and staff who completed separate questionnaires.

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

- The attainment of students on entry to the unit and when leaving.
- The progress that students make in lessons and throughout their time at the unit.
- The impact of the curriculum in encouraging students to attend regularly and behave well.
- The effectiveness of the care, guidance and support of all students and particularly those who are vulnerable.
- The quality of the unit's self-evaluation procedures and plans for improvement.

Information about the school

The McKee Centre is a pupil referral unit located on one site in a busy part of Fleetwood, Lancashire. It serves an extensive area of the Wyre and Fylde district and provides support for students who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. Almost all experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently, all students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities; four have a statement of special educational needs and the remainder are recorded as school action plus under the special educational needs Code of Practice. A much higher proportion than the national average is known to be eligible for free school meals. The mobility of students is very high as most return to mainstream education within six months. Currently, around 30% of students are dual registered with their home schools. Most attend the unit for part of each week whilst engaging in other aspects of education, such as college and work-related learning.

Since the last inspection the senior team has remained stable and the unit is due to relocate to larger premises in May 2011. McKee gained a basic Skills Award, Healthy School status, Investors in People status the Eco Schools Silver Award, the Artsmark Gold and the Sportsmark Award.

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 McKee Centre is a good pupil referral unit. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support to students. It is highly valued by the local authority and by parents and carers, and its reputation within the local community has greatly increased since the last inspection. Almost all students have experienced severe disruptions to their education relating to unacceptable behaviour and failure to attend school. Attainment on entry is low for almost all. However, all groups make rapid progress in their learning and, by the time they leave or return to mainstream education, they have begun to close the gap with their peers nationally. Some of those returning to mainstream education make very rapid progress. All make good improvements in literacy and numeracy. For those who stay to end of their statutory schooling almost all gain academic and vocational qualifications that prepare them well to move on to the next stages of their lives.

The outstanding curriculum provides exciting activities and experiences that students will remember. For example, a writing course encourages students to provide scripts for videos that they produce and perform in a recording studio. This innovative curriculum is instrumental in encouraging students to attend school much more regularly and to re-engage with education. Consequently, from a previously very low level their attendance rises rapidly and improves to broadly average. Extremely interesting activities enable students to greatly enjoy their learning and to achieve well. Consequently, their behaviour improves to outstanding and, as a result, they are able to take part in a wide range of activities off-site, such as through the Prince's Trust. For example, recently a McKee student became the national winner of the Prince's Trust Educational Achiever prize. Students engage willingly in work experience and college courses and their contributions and efforts in these places are outstanding. Some gain employment as a result. Many undertake residential visits and have opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds and join in with local events.

The care, guidance and support for students are great strengths. Excellent relationships exist between staff and students. This ensures that all are very well supported during lessons. The unit makes every effort by way of excellent partnership arrangements with agencies and others to help students to deal with problems whilst remaining fully engaged in education. Similarly, the highly effective arrangements for communicating with parents and carers help to maintain students' well-being and regular attendance. One parent or carer commented, 'They care about the concerns of my child.'

Teaching is good and assessments are mainly used well to demonstrate students' progress. However, in some lessons the learning targets set for individuals are too broad and lack focus. The unit's records for assessment and attainment are thorough but are not always fully effective in demonstrating the progress of individuals and groups. However, managers are constantly improving systems and have implemented good changes since

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the last inspection, for example, in developing the curriculum. Through effective regular review and good-quality self-appraisal, managers know the centre's strengths and weaknesses. Well-focussed improvement planning is based on careful analysis. Consequently, the centre has good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By January 2012 implement improved systems for assessment that:
 - encourage teachers to focus further on the individual learning outcomes for students
 - enable managers to have an even clearer understanding of students' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Despite the low starting points of almost all students, they make good and rapid progress in the very short periods of time for which most are placed. Excellent staff support in the small class groups helps them to settle quickly to learning and remain engaged in tasks until completion. Their contributions to lessons are often excellent. For example, in an art lesson students were able to engage in detailed discussion about light and shade with the teacher. The boys and girls enjoy lessons equally, some for the first time in their education. Consequently, in both key stages, students achieve well and although overall attainment remains low, they begin to catch up well with their peers in mainstream schools. Consequently, most are quickly and successfully reintegrated.

Students gain literacy and numeracy skills through all areas of the curriculum and begin to apply them successfully. As a result they are well prepared for the future. In Key Stage 4, all students who are permanently placed in the centre successfully undertake courses that lead to qualifications, such as through the Prince's Trust, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), Entry Level Certificates and GCSEs. Through workplace and college placements students gain valuable vocational and educational qualifications. Overall, students' development of workplace and other skills is good.

It was established by discussions with students and via their questionnaires that students feel safe at the McKee Centre. Furthermore, observations confirmed that through accessing aspects of the off-site curriculum, such as working at a local agricultural college, students have good opportunities to understand about taking risks and keeping themselves safe. This learning is supported through aspects of the curriculum and work with partners off-site, where they learn to consider risks such as drug taking, alcohol abuse and smoking. Most students experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but through becoming so engaged with their learning, students' behaviour improves rapidly and becomes outstanding. Similarly, they develop good social skills and begin to demonstrate respect for others in the unit and in the wider community. Through science and other aspects of the curriculum, students learn about lifestyle choices and thus their acceptance of healthy eating through the meals provided in the unit is good. Many take advantage of the outdoor play area whilst on site during breaktimes. This helps them to reduce stress and maintain good levels of fitness.

The rapid gains in students' confidence and self-esteem enable them to make outstanding contributions through the student council. The recent acquisition of the Eco-School Award evidences their excellent understanding of what can be done to improve the local

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environment. As a result students have taken part in voluntary activities, such as tree planting, felling and walling. Despite most attending temporarily, some undertake trips and residential visits arranged by the unit. These activities help students to see how others work and live and bring them into contact with people from other religions and cultures. For most students attendance improves rapidly to become broadly average.

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	1
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	2
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?

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers monitor students' progress very accurately, using their skills to provide opportunities for them to adjust and improve their work. All teachers work diligently to engage students and maintain their interest. Classroom assistants are well directed to provide targeted help in completing tasks and consolidating learning. The use of assessment to support learning is good overall but teachers do not always make the best use of assessment information to set students individual targets that always fully match their needs.

College and work placements are chosen carefully to ensure that they are extremely well matched to meet the needs and interests of students. Consequently, they attend, engage and behave very well at the centre and when on work placements. Aspects of the curriculum are innovative. For example, partners in the community, such as the Fire Brigade help to deliver ASDAN courses. Staff are encouraged to plan and provide high quality memorable experiences designed to interest the students and spur them on to

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continue to achieve. These include the utilisation of community resources that enable students to perform and record their work. Throughout, the focus is on developing key skills in preparation for returning to mainstream education.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are provided by the dedicated staff and partners, such as the pupil support officer, all of whom know the students and their families very well. Furthermore, they liaise expertly with the mainstream schools from which the students come. Consequently, through their support, staff and partners prevent a great number from becoming permanently excluded. The large majority of students failed to attend regularly at their mainstream schools, but upon entry to the McKee Centre and through the efforts of the staff and partners students' overall attendance improves rapidly.

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 headteacher has successfully embedded a good sense of shared purpose amongst the staff through careful delegation of responsibility. As a result staff are keen to provide the best service possible for students. Since the last inspection, almost all aspects of the service have improved so that outcomes for students are now very much better. For example, initiatives have improved the now outstanding liaison with students' families and this has resulted in much improved attendance. The development of highly effective partnerships with colleges and vocational providers has made a powerful contribution to the outstanding degree of care, guidance and support. The management committee discharges its duties satisfactorily and has plans in place to review strategies to support and challenge the senior team following the impending move to new premises. In the meantime, a senior officer of the local authority, who is not a full member of the management committee, satisfactorily undertakes this aspect of management and reports regularly to the committee.

Safeguarding practices and procedures are good. There is considerable experience of safeguarding amongst the senior staff. Furthermore, students' views and considerations are properly taken into account. Good relationships exist with safeguarding officers of the local authority.

The senior team effectively manage the highly inclusive curriculum so that no student is discriminated against and the range of learning options ensures that all have good opportunities to achieve their potential. Equality is further ensured by managers who scrutinise the work produced by students and through the day-to-day attention to their welfare by all staff. McKee staff promote good community cohesion within the unit and the

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wider community because of the improved relations with the local community. The community cohesion policy and an action plan are supporting further developments well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The nine questionnaires returned from parents and carers were broadly of an expected number for a provision of this nature. Returns were almost all very positive with only a very few negative responses to individual questions. There were no negative comments and the majority indicated that their child is being well-prepared for the future. They confirmed that the unit meets the needs of children and unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. Most felt that the unit is led and managed effectively. These indications are in line with findings of the inspection.

One parent or carer enthusiastically praised the hard work of staff and commented, 'I am completely satisfied with each and every thing that the McKee Centre does for my child.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at McKee Centre 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 9 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	11	6	67	1	11	1	11
The school keeps my child safe	3	33	6	67	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	4	44	5	56	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	22	6	67	1	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	4	44	5	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	33	6	67	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	44	5	56	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)	5	56	4	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	56	4	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	44	5	56	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	44	5	56	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).

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">■ 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 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of McKee Centre, Fleetwood, FY7 7BS

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited the McKee Centre recently. We very much enjoyed meeting you in classes and during breaktimes. We were particularly impressed with your outstanding behaviour and good manners.

McKee is a good unit because you make good progress and achieve well. Most of you appreciate the range of new and exciting opportunities offered by the outstanding curriculum and you make excellent contributions to the community of the school and beyond. You gain skills and confidence so that many of you can return to mainstream schools whilst others continue and attain useful qualifications that help you to move on to the next stages of your lives. The staff work very hard to provide you with good lessons and outstanding care, guidance and support. The leaders and managers are good and are particularly effective in gaining high quality support of partners and agencies in the community to help to keep you feeling safe and engaged in education. Your parents and carers greatly appreciate the excellent communication that takes place between home and the unit.

So that you can make even greater progress during lessons we have asked the headteacher to continue to improve the systems for assessments. This will help teachers to always set individual learning targets for you that exactly match your needs, and enable senior staff to have an even better understanding of how well you are progressing.

Thank you for your interest in the inspection and we wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McKenzie

Lead inspector

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