

Admaston Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123349
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	368247
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Aldridge

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	6–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Patricia Orton
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom was in the centre for half a day. Altogether, inspectors observed seven lessons and saw all teachers teach at least once. Six observations were jointly carried out with senior leaders. A further three lessons were visited for short periods as part of an observation of pupils' learning. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, representatives of the local authority and the management committee. A telephone conversation was held with a headteacher of a local secondary school. Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents linked to the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, the centre's improvement plan, teachers' planning and analysis of data collected by staff showing the gains made by pupils in their time at the centre. Completed questionnaires from four parents and four pupils were scrutinised.

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

- How effectively does the curriculum foster awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom, meet the needs of girls, encourage boys' writing skills and prepare pupils in Key Stage 3 for the demands of Key Stage 4 studies?
- What is the impact of the new leadership team on the quality of teaching and learning and the centre's capacity to improve?
- Does the local authority set challenging targets for the centre and hold it to account for its performance, including the impact of its partnerships with schools on re-integration rates and exclusions?

Information about the school

Since the last inspection, pupils in Key Stage 3 have been admitted to the centre as part of a re-organisation within the local authority. Most of the 36 pupils are dual registered, and attend the centre for a half-day each weekday as well as their own schools. There are 13 pupils registered solely at the centre: most of these have been permanently excluded from mainstream or special schools in the local authority. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There is a very small number in public care. There are far more boys than girls. Nine pupils have statements of special educational needs which describe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. An above average proportion, almost two third of pupils, are known to be eligible for free school meals. Since the merger, the centre has recruited two assistant headteachers, one of whom has been at the centre for a year.

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

2

Main findings

The centre's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the merger of two settings has been well managed. It is a credit to the headteacher and senior leaders that the centre has retained its strengths and responded well to the demands created by the admission of Key Stage 3 pupils. There is a calm, nurturing and purposeful atmosphere which creates a good climate for learning. Pastoral care is a particularly strong feature. Pupils feel safe and say that there is little bullying. There have been no exclusions in the last two years. Pupils' behaviour is good. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour and pupils generally get on well together outside lessons. Attendance is average with several pupils improving on previously poor attendance in other settings. The centre successfully returns dual-registered pupils to full time education in mainstream, but is less successful with those who have been permanently excluded in Key Stage 3. This is because partnerships within the local authority are not consistently effective in supporting this process.

Most pupils enter with low attainment, especially in literacy. The teaching is good and so pupils make good progress. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. The features that prevent learning and progress from being better than satisfactory in some lessons are linked to challenge, pace and the quality of feedback given to pupils. In the time that they are at the centre, pupils make impressive gains in their reading, spelling and mathematics skills. Despite this, their attainment remains low by Years 6 and 9, and so their achievement is satisfactory.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets the needs of boys and girls equally well and prepares secondary-aged pupils satisfactorily for their studies at Key Stage 4. Staff have worked effectively with local authority advisory staff to develop topics that are common across the centre. A strong feature of these is that, when each topic is introduced, pupils have opportunities to influence what they learn about and how they go about this. Topics successfully combine basic skills and link subjects together to make learning meaningful and relevant to pupils' ages and interests. This development is recent and is soon to be evaluated to check that topics cover all that they should, so that no student is disadvantaged in preparing for later studies. At Key Stage 3, the accommodation limits what can be done, and restricts opportunities to encourage pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles; there is no planned programme of careers education and guidance, and little work-related learning.

The leadership team has been strengthened through the recruitment of two assistant headteachers. The local authority has provided valuable training for staff, as well as support for developing the curriculum and assessment procedures. The local authority provides strategic direction. However, although it checks on re-integration rates and exclusions, it does not set targets to improve re-integration rates or provide consistently

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good support for reintegration of all pupils. Although the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are broadly met, a few have more complex needs that are not easily met with current resources.

Self-evaluation is good. The analysis of data enables leaders to identify areas in need of improvement. Staff know where the strengths and weaknesses lie and have clear plans for further development. The centre's capacity for further improvement is good.

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?

- Secure good or better teaching and learning in all lessons by ensuring that:
 - there are clear learning outcomes that are different for pupils of different abilities
 - pupils are engaged in purposeful activities throughout
 - marking of work is carried out consistently well and pupils are involved in evaluating what they have learned.
- Match the curriculum more closely to the needs of pupils in Key Stage 3 by ensuring that:
 - there is a planned programme of careers education and guidance and opportunities to learn about the world of work
 - topic planning is evaluated and modified to ensure that it covers all the content that it should in this key stage.
- The local authority should:
 - ensure that the accommodation is suitable for pupils in Key Stage 3 and does not compromise pupils' well-being or privacy
 - set realistic and challenging targets for the re-integration of permanently excluded pupils and support the centre in achieving these
 - support the centre so that it can meet all the needs described on pupils' statements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

All groups of pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs, make equally good progress, although this is adversely affected for a few individuals by their persistent absence. The centre has effective provision to help pupils with reading and spelling difficulties, and in these areas many make dramatic gains, such as an increase in reading age of five years in less than a year. Gains in mathematics are good too, and exceed those made in English. The centre has identified the need to encourage boy's writing and recent curriculum development has included topics carefully chosen to motivate boys to write, such as reporting on a crime scene. The success of these is already evident in some pupils' work, and a full evaluation is scheduled later this term. Progress in science is less marked than in English and mathematics, and the centre has identified this as a focus for evaluation of topics this July.

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Learning and progress in lessons is most often good, and occasionally outstanding. Pupils know that they are at the centre to learn and usually settle quickly in lessons. They are well motivated and remain purposefully engaged throughout lessons. Refusals to work are rare. When tasks are challenging, pupils rise well to this. They challenge themselves too, such as when they use information and communication technology (ICT) to improve their 'previous best' time taken to recall their multiplication tables. Occasionally pupils find work is too easy, though they still complete this properly. Their work is usually neatly presented. They know what their goals are and track their progress towards these. However, in Key Stage 3 pupils are not always successfully encouraged to evaluate their progress during lessons.

Pupils contribute in the centre by taking on responsibilities. They also distribute harvest goods to local people and raise funds for charities of their choice. Their confidence and self-esteem are well developed through their interactions with staff, such as regular recognition of good behaviour, attendance and achievements. However, secondary pupils do not develop well their awareness of their personal skills and qualities, relevant to future careers, as there is not a programme for this. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom is satisfactorily developed through the subjects of art, humanities and music, and the celebration of a variety of festivals.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Staff form very positive relationships with pupils. They show consideration and respect for them and this is generally returned. When they enter, pupils are assessed using a software package and this information is used to set challenging targets for pupils. These are known to pupils because they are up on classroom walls or inside their exercise books and pupils highlight those that they meet. Teachers often refer to pupils' personal targets during lessons too. Staff are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour and so they are successful in engaging pupils throughout most lessons. Staff vary activities during lessons, so that pupils maintain their motivation, and they take good account of the learning styles of pupils. Good use is made of ICT as a teaching and a learning tool. Occasionally, staff occupy pupils but the activity is not purposeful or challenging enough to ensure that all pupils are learning and progressing. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and in the most effective lessons they provide a challenge for all. However, the practice of setting different objectives to take account of the full ability range is not yet consistent. Similarly, marking varies in its quality and usefulness. It is best in Key Stage 2, where pupils are always involved in evaluating how well they have done in a lesson and a record is shown in their books. In Key Stage 3, although next steps are always identified, pupils do not evaluate their work in every lesson. Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals and groups and they often intervene in a timely way to refocus pupils who are having a difficult day.

A good deal of work has gone into planning topics that motivate pupils, such as 'Crime Scene Investigations'. However, work set in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is occasionally too similar, such as in science. The centre has identified that progress in science is not as good as in other subjects and has made this a focus for development. Without specialist science facilities, practical work is limited to investigations that can safely be carried out in classrooms. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is good, but in Key Stage 3 it lacks a work-related dimension and teaching about careers.

The lack of separate toilets, changing and showering facilities means that pupils cannot change into sports kit for physical education sessions, nor can they shower afterwards. They do not like this, or having to share toilets with younger children. The centre has a good range of strategies for encouraging good behaviour and attendance. It can demonstrate well how it has worked with parents and carers, as well as external agencies, to improve these and other outcomes for pupils. Staff know each student as an individual and pastoral care is particularly strong. They also provide good role models for pupils. Pupils are well supported by staff in making transitions back into mainstream schools, but this is not always matched by support from the local authority, particularly for secondary-aged pupils who have been permanently excluded. There is currently no access to guidance from the Connexions service for pupils in Key Stage 3.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher sets the tone for the centre and leads well by example. The two assistant headteachers have brought additional skills, such as secondary teaching experience and expertise. Staff training and advisory support from the local authority have added considerably, making it possible to retain and build on the centre's existing strengths. All staff have clearly defined responsibilities and they contribute to school evaluation and improvement planning.

Leaders have sensibly concentrated on developing the centre as a unit and recognise that there is more to be done to extend links with the local, national and international communities. The whole-centre approach to curriculum development has helped to bring staff together. They are a mutually supportive team and the centre is a cohesive community.

Monitoring of teaching is well established and the centre's evaluation of this is accurate. Leaders revisit lessons to check that areas for improvement have been addressed. Staff are well supported in developing their skills, including formal training and opportunities to share good practice.

Governance by the local authority is satisfactory. It sets challenging targets for raising attainment and attendance, and holds the centre satisfactorily to account for these through a management committee. Although there are strengths in the way that the local authority supports the centre, there are also weaknesses. For instance, a few pupils with statements of special educational needs have highly specific needs, such as for therapy or multi-sensory approaches, and the centre does not have the resources for this.

Staff at the centre strive to ensure that all pupils are equally well served, for example by carrying out analysis of the performance of different groups, but permanently excluded pupils are occasionally disadvantaged, such as when a pre-arranged 'managed move' does not materialise.

Arrangements to keep pupils safe are satisfactory. All staff are suitably trained in child protection and staff recruitment procedures meet current requirements. Records are correctly kept, risks are assessed and suitable action is taken to reduce these to a minimum.

The centre involves parents and carers effectively from the start, and keeps them well informed through review meetings and newsletters. For those in Key Stages 1 and 2, there is daily information in the form of a home-school book. This celebrates behaviour and achievement and enables parents and carers to communicate well with staff.

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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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires completed by parents and carers was low for a centre of this type. Some who responded felt unable to answer all the questions, in a few cases because pupils had not been at the centre for long. Parents and carers were most positive about children's enjoyment of the centre and the way that the centre keeps them informed about their child's progress. Inspection findings confirm these views. No parents or carers wrote about any concerns on their questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Admaston 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 four completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 36 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	25	1	25	1	25	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)	2	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	50	0	0	1	25	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	50	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Admaston Centre, Telford, TF1 3ET

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited, especially those who spoke to us about their views and work.

We judged that the centre is satisfactory overall. There are some good features too. Your behaviour is good and this means that the centre has a pleasant atmosphere which helps you all to learn. Good teaching means that almost all of you make good progress, especially in reading, spelling and mathematics. Leaders have done a good job of merging the previous Key Stage 3 centre with the one that existed at Admaston before. The staff take good care of all of you; you say that you feel safe and there is little bullying at the centre.

Staff have worked well together to plan topics that interest and motivate you. They involve your parents and carers well in your education. We are confident that the centre will continue to improve at a good rate.

We have asked them to make sure that in every lesson you have work that has a purpose and is not too easy. Staff will mark work thoroughly and make sure you are always involved in checking how well you have progressed in lessons. They will also check how much progress you are making in writing. Staff are going to make sure that in Key Stage 3 you have opportunities that you need, such as careers education. You can help with improvement by attending regularly. Well done to those with over 94% attendance!

Because the local authority is responsible for the centre, we have asked them to support it to improve the accommodation and help more pupils return full-time to mainstream or special schools. We wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Sue Aldridge

Lead inspector

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