

The Braybrook Centre (Key Stage 3 PRU)

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134257
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	381650
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Price

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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Joanne Wood (Executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
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Age group	11–14
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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Price

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Approximately five hours were spent observing ten lessons taught by eight teachers. Four joint lesson observations were carried out with four different members of the centre's senior management team. Discussions took place with a range of students, members of staff and the chair of the management committee and a representative from the local authority. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, met with two parents, observed the centre's work, and looked at its self-evaluation documentation and improvement plans. The inspector took account of four parental questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by staff and students.

Information about the school

The Braybrook Centre is a smaller than average-sized pupil referral unit for students in Years 7, 8 and 9, with significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Almost all students admitted remain on the roll of their secondary school. Most attend the centre full time. The average length of stay is between one and three terms. Since January 2012, the centre has become part of a larger federation of pupil referral units in the local authority. The majority of students are of White British origin. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. A small number of students are looked after by the local authority. An executive headteacher leads and manages all of the federated provision and has been in post since May 2010.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The Braybrook Centre is a good pupil referral unit. It is good rather than outstanding as currently not enough teaching is outstanding. However, it is very effective in getting students back on track and enabling them to return to mainstream school as quickly as possible.
- Students make accelerated and rapid progress during their time at the centre, often from low starting points, particularly in English and mathematics. They also make good gains in their personal development and establish positive attitudes.
- Teaching is mainly good with many strengths. There has been a concerted effort to improve the teaching of literacy and, as a result, students are making good progress in developing their reading, spelling and writing for a range of different purposes. On occasions, learning objectives lack precision and questioning does not fully extend students' thinking and verbal skills. There are some good examples of marking which gives students a clear idea how to further improve their work, but this is not universal.
- Students' behaviour is good. The centre is a calm and purposeful learning environment. Many make substantial improvements in their attendance, but there are a few students whose attendance is erratic. Students report that they feel safe and enjoy their time at the centre.
- The leadership and management of the centre are good. The substantial recent change of senior leaders has not adversely affected the centre's effectiveness. Systematic partnership working with other pupil referral units in the local authority is relatively new, but has the potential to bring further improvements to the centre through the sharing of subject expertise and spreading best practice, which the executive headteacher is keen to exploit. The leadership of teaching and the management of the performance of teachers are good, with regular monitoring to help teachers improve their practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - developing further opportunities to share best practice through observing outstanding teachers and sharing subject expertise from other establishments
 - ensuring that learning objectives are sharper and made clear to students at the start of all lessons
 - using more incisive questioning to extend students' knowledge and verbal contributions in lessons
 - ensuring that the best practice in marking of students' work is applied consistently across the centre.

- Improve students' attendance by 10% so that it is closer to the national average, by January 2013.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The attainment of most students is low on entry to the centre, due to their previous fragmented educational history. They make good progress while at the centre and, by the time they leave, gaps in performance are narrowing considerably and they are able to return to mainstream schools successfully after a relatively short period of intervention. One of the contributory factors to the good progress they make is the careful assessment of their abilities when they enter the centre. This enables work to be highly personalised and matched closely to their ability. This also allows accurate measurement of their progress. The centre sets challenging targets for students to achieve on a termly basis and many achieve these. The transient nature of students means that there are no discernible trends over time, but the centre is careful to ensure that all students regardless of their background, disability or special educational needs achieve as well as possible. The poor attendance of a few students impacts negatively on their learning and prevents them from making the progress they are capable of.

The sustained focus on improving students' literacy levels has been effective and has resulted in increased confidence in oracy, spelling and reading skills. Students who are identified through initial assessment as struggling in English receive daily literacy sessions and demonstrate improvements in their literacy skills, for example in being able to tackle unfamiliar words more confidently, or the accurate use of apostrophes and writing for a range of different purposes.

Students make good progress in lessons. They are usually attentive and work well. In an English lesson, students were able to write letters as if they had been an evacuee in World War Two, and describe their feelings and emotions. The improvement in both students' academic and personal development are important factors in enabling students to return to mainstream school, or move to other appropriate settings. The centre has a sustained track record of re-engaging and

returning high numbers of students to schools, with the average length of stay at the centre being approximately 20 weeks. Parents and carers are right in thinking that their children are making good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically good, with many strengths. Teachers are good at relating learning to practical situations. They are well practised at using different learning styles and this makes lessons livelier and engages students' attention, for example through the use of artefacts. Positive relationships formed by staff are crucial to encouraging students to engage and persevere in lessons. Classrooms are vibrant learning environments. Teachers set out high expectations of both behaviour and work. This was evident in an outstanding mathematics lesson, where superb planning ensured work was well matched to different ability levels. As a result, students made good progress in understanding how to solve algebraic problems. Students are very positive about the quality of teaching and say that they are given very good individual support. Teachers often give students good feedback in lessons and there are examples of high quality marking, which sets out what students need to do to further improve their work. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects and teachers. Effective use is made of questioning, but the use of higher order questioning to extend students' thinking and verbal contributions is not as well developed. On occasions, learning objectives at the start of lessons describe activity, rather than precisely what students are meant to learn and achieve.

Teaching is effective in delivering a broad curriculum which includes a strong focus on promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, there are plentiful opportunities for students to work co-operatively and creative subjects such as art help to promote students' cultural development. Good attention is given to core subjects so that students are able to keep pace with their peers in mainstream schools. Assessment of students' progress is thorough and this information is used well to inform teaching and set challenging targets. Parents and carers who met with the inspector feel that their children are well taught. One parent commented that since her child had attended the centre he had learned to tell the time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour is good. Staff set high expectations for behaviour and the majority of students respond well to this and develop a clear view of right and wrong. Students' behaviour at lunchtimes, when they eat 'family style' with the staff, is good. In their free time there is fierce competition to be the pool champion and students have developed a code of conduct to ensure this is a positive and sociable activity. The reward system is used consistently and effectively to promote the good behaviour seen in lessons and this motivates students effectively to develop mature behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Staff work well together as a team and are skilled at de-escalating problematic behaviour. The good improvement that students make in their behaviour is an important factor in them being able to return to mainstream schools quickly.

Many students make vast improvements in their attendance; some reach average or

above average levels of attendance, but there remains a minority who do not attend frequently enough. Students respond well to excellent ethos of the centre and respect one another and property. When meeting with the inspector and in their responses to questionnaires parents and carers said they are encouraged by the improvements their children make in their behaviour and increased enjoyment of school.

Students said that there is little bullying and that they feel safe, and most parents and carers who responded agree. None reported any issues with prejudicial or cyber-bullying, and students acknowledged that if bullying did arise, staff were quick to stamp it out. When some students find behaving appropriately more difficult, they are encouraged to reflect on their actions quietly and to apologise to people where appropriate

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher provides excellent leadership of the centre. Together with the local authority and the management committee, she has set out ambitious plans and a clear vision for further improvement. This will see stronger collaboration between the pupil referral units in the authority, so that expertise and best practice can be shared more easily. This is beginning to bring increased subject expertise into the centre, which is starting to benefit students, for example in art. The changes in leadership have been managed well and have not slowed the pace of improvements. Staffing of the senior leadership team is now established and secure. The management committee provides a good level of challenge and support and has been influential in strategic decision making as well as providing effective monitoring of the work of the centre. The centre has a sustained and secure track record of improvement. It is well placed to move forward and has a good capacity to improve further.

Regular monitoring of teaching has ensured that teachers are able to improve their practice, and their professional development is carefully planned to match the needs of the centre. The development of the federation of all the pupil referral units in the authority provides greater scope for the cross-fertilisation of best practice.

The curriculum is mainly a primary based model, whereby class-based teachers deliver most of the subjects. The centre is reviewing this, so that more subjects can be taught by specialists. The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Places of worship are visited in the locality and good use is made of visits to support the curriculum. The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For example, in a personal, social and health education lesson, students were able to reflect perceptively about the issues of dementia faced by grandparents. Outdoor activities and sports are used well to promote students' self-confidence and self-esteem. The centre works effectively with schools to prepare and support students on their return to school, so that the transition is as smooth and successful as possible.

The centre works well in partnership with parents and carers. They commented on the willingness of staff to put themselves out in order to address problems students

were experiencing. Parents and carers often see the centre as a lifeline and one commented, 'They are like an extended family'. The centre is vigilant in ensuring that any forms of inequality or discrimination do not arise and the outcomes for all groups of pupils are carefully analysed. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current government requirements.

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.



23 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of The Braybrook Centre (Key Stage 3 PRU), Wolverhampton, WV11 1NN

I enjoyed my visit to your centre and talking with many of you. Thank you for contributing to the inspection through completing questionnaires and sharing your views with me.

The centre ensures you receive a good education. You make good improvements in your behaviour and for most of you improve your attendance, although a few of you do not attend frequently enough. Your behaviour in lessons and around the centre is good and I was impressed by how hard you try in lessons. The teaching you receive is good and as a result, you make good progress with your work and this helps you to be able to return to school. You told me you feel safe and enjoy the good variety of lessons and other activities which are offered by the centre, particularly the outdoor activities. The headteacher and staff are working hard to improve your centre and there are some exciting plans for the future. I have asked the people leading your centre to do the following things:

- to increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - providing opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers elsewhere
 - making sure learning objectives at the start of lessons are very specific
 - using better questioning methods to make you think and discuss more
 - making sure the best practice in the marking of your work is applied consistently across the centre

- to improve your attendance, particularly for those of you who find attending a struggle.

You can help to improve your centre by always attending regularly and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Frank Price
Lead inspector

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