

# Eston Centre (EOTAS)

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111520
<b>Local authority</b>	Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Inspection number</b>	378314
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil Referral Unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	64
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Clinton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve O'Gara
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2010
<b>School address</b>	Normanby Road Middlesbrough TS6 9AD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 440225
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 463751
<b>Email address</b>	eatos_centre@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, observing 12 staff teach and visited off-site vocational provision. Meetings were held with officers of the local authority, a local authority specialist consultant, the Chair and members of the Management Committee, a secondary school headteacher, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. The inspectors sampled pupils' work and looked at documentation including policies on safeguarding, the centre's development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of past and present pupils' progress. Staff and pupils completed questionnaires and 37 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also read and analysed.

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

- How well students re-engage with their learning, their rate of progress and achievement and how effectively they are reintegrated back into mainstream schools.
- How far the students' behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance improve while at the centre.
- How effectively assessment information is used in helping to shape activities to meet the individual needs of students and provide well-defined guidance for improvement.
- How effective leaders and managers are in ensuring students' progress.
- How effective safeguarding procedures and practice are.

## Information about the school

The EOTAS provision is a pupil referral unit for students requiring 'education other than at school'. An outreach and 'school on wheels' service also form part of the centre's provision. Key Stage 4 students attend the Greystone Centre, students from Key Stage 2 and 3 attend the Eston Centre. Almost all students are of White British heritage, with none speaking English as an additional language. Over three-quarters of the students have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an above-average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. There are twice as many boys as girls. A few students are looked after by the local authority. Since the previous inspection, when the centre was judged to require significant improvement, an executive headteacher has been appointed and the management committee reconstituted, with several new members drawn from senior staff at feeder mainstream schools. The centre is part of the Department for Education Zero Exclusion Pilot programme.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

The Eston Centre has made remarkable progress since the previous inspection. This is because of the headteacher's clear vision, drive and ambition, which are ensuring that the legacy of underperformance and underachievement is being successfully tackled. The rejuvenated management committee provides strong support in helping to galvanise the commitment of staff and is promoting effective partnership working with schools and support agencies. Parents and carers are appreciative of the good and sometimes high-quality care and support their children receive to overcome many of the barriers to their learning.

On arrival in the centre, many students have experienced an unsettled pattern of learning in their schools as a result of their inappropriate attitudes and disrupted pattern of attendance. Students' attainment is below expectations for their age, but it is rising securely and rapidly as students benefit from more settled and happy experiences and improving teaching. Overall, progress is satisfactory, although it is quickening rapidly in Key Stage 4 with a clear trend of rising attainment, because teaching is consistently challenging and thought-provoking. The progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to their peers. When progress is good, expectations of what can be achieved are high and activities are well-matched to age, ability and interests. In the more stimulating lessons, teachers' questioning is challenging, such as when students were assembling balloons to represent the position and size of planets in the solar system. When not enough is demanded of students and progress information is inconsistently used to plan activities and challenge thinking, there is not enough focus on raising achievement. The developing curriculum offers students opportunities to continue the subjects they studied at their earlier schools and choose from a variety of vocational subjects and experiences. This includes a range of off-site options, including 'school on wheels', designed to re-engage students, raise their aspirations and boost their confidence. However, there are times when opportunities to practise basic skills are not exploited enough. Staff provide students with a renewed sense of purpose and direction in their lives. Increasingly, activities to re-engage students are leading to a higher rate of success in reintegrating students back into mainstream school. Students report that they feel safe and that bullying is infrequent. They are encouraged to reflect on

the consequences of their actions and develop self-control. Their often considerate approaches and sensible attitudes to personal safety equip them well for their future. They display a good understanding of the benefits of eating healthily and keeping fit.

The headteacher has been a driving force for improving the quality of learning. He has been effectively supported by the management committee and the local authority. Robust monitoring and self-evaluation accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement. Significant improvements in punctuality, attendance, attitudes to learning, a reduction in exclusions and improving learning and progress demonstrate that the centre's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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?**

- Accelerate the rate of students' progress in order to close achievement gaps and boost attainment by:
  - raising the expectations of what students can achieve, especially in Key Stages 2 and 3
  - making certain that all activities have a relentless focus on raising students' achievement
  - broadening the range of opportunities for students to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Speed up the drive to establish a consistent pattern of at least good teaching by:
  - using and building upon the current thought-provoking practice that is a feature in some lessons to stimulate more interest and promote extra enjoyment
  - making full and consistent use of progress information to shape activities that match more closely the abilities, needs and interests of students of all ages
  - making certain that teachers' feedback to students on how to improve their work is clear and well defined.

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

<b>3</b>
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On entry, attainment is below average, but varies appreciably across cohorts. Nearly all students settle quickly in the happy, friendly atmosphere to progress and achieve satisfactorily. In lessons, students enjoy the interesting and engaging activities. Increasingly, students take pride in their achievements and value the positive encouragement they receive through the centre's reward system. Nearly all students improve their punctuality and attendance significantly and most are able to sustain their improved levels on return to mainstream school. This reflects their better attitudes to learning. The early and accurate identification of students' needs, especially during school-based preventative work with younger students at risk of

exclusion, enables suitable personalised programmes to be planned. However, although much improved, the use of available 'passport information' on students' needs is not consistently applied to set sufficiently challenging individual programmes and targets. The centre's robust progress checking reveals that, as a result of satisfactory and sometimes good progress, attainment by the end of Year 11 is at least in line with students' targets, with many students exceeding them. Achievement and attainment gaps are being narrowed, although the rate of progress in narrowing gaps is slower in Key Stages 2 and 3. Progression of students after leaving the centre is being systematically strengthened, as increasing proportions continue in education, employment and training.

The good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the good relationships students enjoy with each other and with adults. Behaviour is never less than good and almost all become sensible and responsible as a result of the encouragement they receive, following the Centre's code of conduct throughout the day. Consequently, most students are able to cope successfully with the demands of returning to mainstream schools. They are happy to take responsibility and their strong student voice is evident in their contribution to management committee decisions that influence the drive for improvement. This is summed up in the centre maxim, 'You said. We did'. Students make a positive contribution to the wider community, such as fund-raising for a local children's hospice. They have a developing appreciation of the cultural diversity that exists in the world around them. Most students' attendance was weak at their previous schools. Though it remains low for some, attendance is comparable to that in similar provision nationally. Most students have improved their attendance and punctuality greatly. This, together with improvement in their attainment, prepares them appropriately for their future lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

A principal intention of the centre is to make certain students acquire the necessary skills to make a positive contribution to society by raising aspirations and boosting

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

self-esteem. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Increasingly, it is capturing students' interest and engaging them in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. For example, a group of older students were observed absorbed in the dissection of a pig's heart, working out how it functioned and answering the teacher's thought-provoking questions. More effective assessment on entry and monitoring of students' progress are helping staff to match activities more closely to their needs and interests. However, not all teaching is challenging enough, particularly in Key Stages 2 and 3, and for some students there is variation in the amount of time spent practising basic skills and developing independent study skills. Occasionally, questioning is not challenging enough, and although frequent marking is helpful and constructive, clear steps are not consistently provided to help students to improve.

The satisfactory curriculum is being systematically enriched to broaden the range of memorable learning experiences and add to the quality of vocational learning. For example, the theme of the Second World War was used to motivate students to read the novel 'The Blitz' and extend their understanding of the fears and emotions of local residents during a bombing raid. More courses are being accredited, including some of those off-site, to provide clear routes to further learning, training or employment. In the catering course, as part of their normal work, students plan, prepare and cook lunches for students and staff across the centre.

Provision for care, guidance and support is good with some excellent features. Staff provide well targeted support for the development and well-being of students, particularly those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and those who have experienced challenging events. A high priority is given to close collaborative working with parents, carers and specialist support services to ensure students' needs are met. The good relationships the students enjoy with staff enables them to confidently share worries or concerns. As a result, there has been an impressive increase in the number of students successfully reintegrating back into mainstream school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has driven forward improvement quickly to realise his ambitions for the provision. Since his appointment, he has been well supported by an active management committee. Staff share a common purpose, work collaboratively and willingly share good practice. Morale is good and a harmonious ethos permeates the centre. There are clear signs of improvement as teaching and learning are increasingly more effective. This can be seen in the improved planning and use of assessment in lessons, especially where progress is good. Robust checking of students' progress makes certain that staff are clear about what is expected of them. Consequently, there is a sharper focus upon making certain opportunities are

provided for all students to achieve their full potential. The positive engagement of parents and carers contributes well to their children’s development and well-being. There is a good level of confidence and trust in the partnership working with local schools and support agencies and this is central to the continued improvement in the quality of provision and help for students and their families. The centre satisfactorily reduces discrimination and provides equal opportunities for all students to succeed, girls as well as boys. This is evident in the developing quality of individual programmes for students. Nevertheless, the headteacher and the management committee recognise that while the current rate of students’ progress is improving rapidly, more needs to be done in order to close the achievement and attainment gaps faster in Key Stages 2 and 3. All safeguarding regulations and duties are met, with practice that is in line with requirements. A developing strength is the students’ good understanding of how to manage risk in order to keep safe. Community cohesion is satisfactory with a developing awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in the United Kingdom and around the world.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Over half of the parents and carers returned the questionnaire. This is well-above the average level of returns. Their views were extremely positive about the quality of experiences that the centre provides. Almost all parents and carers appreciate that their children are kept safe. The inspectors’ findings support these views. A few parents and carers indicated concerns about the progress that their children were making in lessons. Inspectors found that students’ rates of progress and achievement were being positively addressed and managed by the headteacher and staff and there was a clear trend of rising attainment by the end of Year 11.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eston Centre (EOTAS) 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	27	21	57	3	8	2	5
The school keeps my child safe	20	54	15	41	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	49	18	49	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	49	14	38	3	8	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	54	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	49	18	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	49	13	35	2	5	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)	13	35	20	54	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	54	13	35	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	49	15	41	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	41	19	51	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	18	49	14	38	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	51	15	41	1	3	1	3

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 December 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Eston Centre (EOTAS), Middlesbrough, TS6 9AD**

I want to thank all of you for the friendly welcome that you gave the inspectors when we inspected the centre. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you, including our visits to the Beechwood Centre and R and C Training in nearby Marske.

We were impressed by your friendliness, sensible attitudes and good behaviour in lessons. When working in practical areas, we were struck by how safety conscious you were. The centre provides a satisfactory and steadily improving quality of education, where the staff take good care of you. As a result, you feel relaxed and safe at the centre and when off-site. You are clearly aware of the importance of managing your own behaviour successfully and the benefits that staying healthy can bring. You take pride in your achievements and appreciate the efforts that staff make to ensure learning is interesting. You make satisfactory progress in your work and enjoy lessons that are active and appealing.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and the management committee to look at ways of improving the quality of your learning by making certain that all activities are carefully planned to meet your needs, are always interesting and constantly challenge your thinking. I have also asked that your literacy and numeracy skills are practised frequently to help speed up your progress. This will enable you to achieve more, especially in Key Stages 2 and 3, making a return to your school easier. I have also asked your staff to give you clear direction as to how you can improve the quality of your work.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can and attending regularly. Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope your centre will continue to improve.

I wish you a bright future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts  
Lead inspector

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