

The Springfield Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108139
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	377704
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	John Rutherford HMI

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	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Ros Lund
Headteacher	Will Carpenter
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
School address	St George's Road Lupset Wakefield WF2 8BB
Telephone number	01924 303770
Fax number	01924 304040
Email address	wcarpenter@wakefield.gov.uk

Age group	14–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Rutherford
Roberta Mothersdale

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent five hours observing ten lessons taught by ten teachers or teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, staff with responsibilities, students, parents and carers, the Safer Schools police officer, the Chair of the local community association, the Chair of the management committee and two local authority representatives. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. During the inspection they observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including those relating to students' progress, self-evaluation, improvement planning and safeguarding. Inspectors considered questionnaires returned from students, staff and 11 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The Springfield Centre provides education for boys and girls in Key Stage 4 who have been permanently excluded from local secondary schools. All students are identified as having special educational needs, mostly at school action plus level, and none have a statement. The majority are of white British heritage. Around a third are known to be eligible for free school meals. Before joining the centre most students have experienced considerable disruption to their education, usually linked to their poor behaviour and, in some cases, low attendance. A high proportion of students join the centre in the middle of a school year. Many students have a long and complicated journey between their home and the centre.

Since the previous inspection the centre has gone through a period of considerable instability. In 2010 the local authority ended the federation of schools, of which the centre was a member. After a period without a headteacher an executive headteacher was appointed in January 2011 to lead both the Springfield Centre and the linked Key Stage 3 provision in the Priory Centre. The Priory Centre was inspected separately in October 2011. During the reorganisation there was a significant amount of staff change and many staff took on new responsibilities. The number of students referred to the Springfield Centre has recently increased well beyond the 35 places available. In April 2012 the centre responded to this, with the support of the local authority, by opening additional accommodation some distance away in Castleford. This building is much closer than the centre to where a significant number of students live and has reduced their daily journey time.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- The centre provides a good quality of education, having improved rapidly in the short time since it was reorganised. The main reasons for it not being outstanding are the poor attendance of some students and the curriculum not fully meeting the needs and aspirations of the growing number of students. The centre has the full support of almost all the parents and carers who returned an inspection questionnaire or spoke to inspectors. A typical comment is: 'The best thing that ever happened to my son was coming here.'
- Students' achievement is good. They make better than expected progress and achieve important qualifications in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and a range of vocational subjects. As a result, the percentage of students who go into education, employment or training when they leave the centre is similar to most schools nationally.
- The quality of teaching is good because centre leaders, through their systematic performance management processes, ensure that all staff receive training and support closely tailored to their needs. Staff have high expectations for students' achievement and they plan lessons that motivate the students to work hard.
- The behaviour and safety of students is satisfactory. As a result of effective behaviour management approaches, students' behaviour improves considerably while they are in the centre and the time lost for exclusions, although above average, is reducing. Students mostly enjoy coming to the centre and they have good attitudes to work. Consequently, while their attendance is low, it is improving.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. Despite making many staffing changes, the new executive headteacher and senior leaders have the full support of all staff. A key feature of the centre's work is the staff's consistency in promoting good progress in students' learning and in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve achievement from good to outstanding, the centre should:
 - improve the attendance of some students
 - widen the range of enrichment activities and work experience placements to meet, more fully, the needs and aspirations of the increasing number of students.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

When students start at the centre their standards of attainment are well below average. Due to consistently good teaching and support most settle well and work hard, which helps them to make progress at a better than expected rate in English, mathematics and ICT. They make up a lot of lost ground and, although their attainment is still below average at the age of 16, they gain qualifications which stand them in good stead for securing an apprenticeship or a college place when they leave. Their future chances of employment are enhanced by their good achievement in the work-related experiences provided by both the centre and the small number of employers and training providers with whom the centre works in partnership. An important aspect of this is the good progress that most students make in learning about the personal qualities that are looked for by employers.

In lessons many students show that they can independently produce extended pieces of writing that describe an event. They can also write an account of their past experiences in the style required for a curriculum vitae (CV) or an application form. They can read fluently and they have sufficient skills in using letters and sounds, recognising whole words and understanding text to help them obtain information from books. They can competently carry out basic arithmetical calculations in mathematics lessons and in construction activities. Almost all parents and carers who returned an inspection questionnaire feel that their children are making good progress in the centre. One comment that represents their views is: "My daughter has come on well in this school." The majority of students agree that they learn a lot in lessons and they say that this is because they get plenty of individual support.

Quality of teaching

There is consistently good or better teaching across the centre. Central to this are the high expectations that all adults have for students' achievement and work habits. There is, therefore, firm challenge in lessons but this is combined with a pleasant, friendly and encouraging approach which helps the students to enjoy lessons, to volunteer constructive comments and to ask questions. As a result, there is a good climate for learning which makes a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An example of this is seen in personal and social education lessons where students feel comfortable in talking openly about strengths and weaknesses in their behaviour and what improvement goals they need to set. Furthermore, teachers often provide interesting activities that enthuse students to try

their hardest. For example, in art, students produce high-quality work after discussing how the paintings of other students and famous artists are inspired by different cultures, both local and worldwide. Students are also motivated to do their best because they can clearly see how their work in English, mathematics and ICT is relevant to what they will need in the future.

Through systematic assessment and recording, teachers have a detailed understanding of the personal and learning needs of each student. Overall, they use this information well to plan activities or additional support that help most students to make good progress. Occasionally, the learning objective for each student in a lesson is not sharp enough to give clear direction to their learning. However, the centre has almost plugged this gap with much clearer guidance about the range of objectives that should be set in each subject. The overwhelming majority of parents, carers and students who returned an inspection questionnaire agree with inspectors' evidence that teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour and safety are satisfactory overall. Their behaviour is improving strongly as a result of the effective methods used by staff to help them overcome their significant previous difficulties. The large majority of parents and carers, students and staff who returned an inspection questionnaire expressed a positive view about behaviour. Most students try hard to gain the centre's rewards for staying on the right side of the clear boundaries set by the staff. When sanctions are applied constructive guidance is immediately provided and then students are given a 'fresh start' to return to uninterrupted learning as quickly as possible. Students respond well to this and the learning time lost due to short-term exclusions has reduced significantly in the last year. The School Safety police officer provides activities and guidance for students which make a significant contribution to their improving behaviour. A notable feature of his recent work is involving students in local community projects to improve the lives of residents, such as replacing fences and providing bird boxes for senior citizens. The students are, rightly, very proud of what they have contributed to the community.

Students say they feel safe in the centre and their parents and carers agree. They do not feel under threat from any form of bullying because adults quickly see when a problem might be arising and they deal with it quickly. There have been no incidents of homophobic or racist bullying since the centre reorganised. Students clearly understand how to avoid the dangers inherent in misuse of the internet or mobile phones.

The centre staff, in partnership with external support services, use an effective range of measures to reduce absence. The development that has made the biggest positive difference is the opening of the new site some distance away in Castleford, which has greatly reduced the journey that many students have to make each day. As a result, while attendance is still low, it is improving strongly.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The executive headteacher and senior leaders communicate a strong passion for helping students to overcome their difficulties so that they can have an equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations. Staff respond positively to this. Robust monitoring and improvement of the staff's performance have brought about consistently good teaching across the centre. At the same time, staff say they feel well supported by senior leaders in managing the very challenging behaviour of some students. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in students' outcomes and effective plans to improve them where most needed. The significant improvements in students' progress and personal development, since the executive headteacher and leadership team started working together, demonstrate the centre's strong capacity to continue raising levels of achievement.

Senior leaders have recently started involving staff at all levels in leading aspects of teaching and learning and these staff are quickly producing very focused plans for future improvement. Under the direction of the executive headteacher and management committee, leaders and staff from the Springfield and Priory centres work closely together to develop more effective approaches to teaching and assessment. This results in better transition for the students who continue from Key Stage 3 into Key Stage 4. The management committee is well informed about Springfield's work and ensures that centre leaders and the local authority are making the best provision possible for the students. Leaders made very effective use of the intensive support provided by the local authority in the early days following re-organisation. This level of support was soon removed because the centre leaders were able to demonstrate that they had the capacity to make the necessary improvements independently. Arrangements for safeguarding students meet requirements.

The curriculum provides an appropriate balance of academic, vocational and extra-curricular enrichment activities. This enables many students to gain qualifications and develop interests that are useful to their future lives. However, as the number on roll increases, a growing proportion are not always motivated by what is on offer, especially in relation to work-experience placements and enrichment activities. The curriculum provides good opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about the traditions and beliefs of a range of cultures, especially in art. In history they are provided with good first-hand experiences of life in the past, for example digging trenches like those used in the First World War to help them feel what war was like for people only slightly older than themselves.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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 [0](#)).

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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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



22 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of The Springfield Centre, Wakefield, WF2 8BB

Thank you very much indeed for your help when I came with my colleague to inspect your centre. We found our discussion with you and your questionnaire responses very useful in helping us to make the judgement that your centre provides you with a good quality of education.

You make good progress in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and a range of vocational subjects. You gain very useful qualifications which help you to get a job or a college place. Your art work is particularly good. While we were in your centre, we saw how hard you work in lessons and how much effort you are putting into improving your behaviour. Well done for this. The staff push you to do your best in your work, but they also provide considerable support and care for you. You respond to this very well and you thoroughly deserve the rewards you receive. You show considerable care for others, and I saw this especially in some of the work you are doing in the local community, like building fences and making bird boxes for senior citizens. Many of you told us that you feel free from any threat of bullying and we could see how well students get on together. This makes your centre a very pleasant place to visit.

The headteacher and staff are very keen to continue improving your education and we have agreed with them that the most important areas to work on are to:

- help some of you to improve your attendance
- provide a wider range of activities and more links with employers so that there is something to suit everybody as the number of students increases.

You have a lot to gain by attending the Springfield Centre so please do not stay away unless it is absolutely necessary. My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector

