

College Hall

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131769
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	381400
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Marion Bent
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

James Bowden

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Seven lessons were observed, taught by seven different teachers. Discussions were held with the Chair of the Management Committee, the local authority line manager, the local authority school adviser, the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility and with a small group of students. The inspector took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the unit's work, and looked at students' files, curriculum plans, tracking data showing students' progress, rates of attendance and students' work, including displays in and around the classrooms. Questionnaire responses from one parent and carer, 19 staff and 22 students were analysed.

Information about the school

This average-sized unit provides education for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. It is a short stay provision for students in Years 7 to 9, whereas those in Years 10 and 11 will often complete their compulsory education at the unit. Because of the relatively small numbers in Years 7 to 9, students are taught in a mixed-age class. In addition, there is a mixed-age class of students, some of whom initially attend part-time for medical reasons, in Years 7 to 11 educated in an annex building on the main site. Students can be referred to the unit at different times of the year. During this year almost a third of the students arrived in the final half term of the academic year, the Year 11 cohort having left after their examinations. The unit also has an outreach service to support students with challenging behaviour in mainstream schools.

The great majority of students are boys and almost all students are of White British background. A very few have a statement of special educational needs and all have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school that is effective in meeting its core aim of developing students academically, vocationally, socially and emotionally. It is not yet outstanding because support for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is inconsistent, as are opportunities for independent learning.
- Achievement is good. By the time students leave the unit at the end of Year 11, most have rediscovered their appetite for learning and, having gained a range of accreditations, move on to further education, employment or work-based training. Students in Key Stage 3 also make good progress, which eases their reintegration into mainstream school or other specialist provision.
- Good teaching is characterised by effective behaviour management strategies and work that meets the learning needs of all students. Engaging starter activities and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) by teachers enliven learning. However, there are times when staff do not give students sufficient time to think about the tasks asked of them. In addition, as students become more motivated, opportunities are not taken to extend their learning by providing appropriate tasks to be completed before the next lesson.
- As a result of the unit's added focus on students' personal development, they enjoy learning, their self-esteem improves considerably and their behaviour in lessons and around the unit is good. The unit is a safe place to learn.
- Leadership and management of the unit at all levels are good. An effective programme of monitoring and evaluation has ensured that the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. This in turn has led to improved student performance over time. Effective support from the local authority and the management committee underpins the work of the unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more consistent opportunities for students to use and apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Increase opportunities for independent learning by:
 - allowing students more time to work through problems they may have

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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- with tasks set in a lesson
- providing extra challenges for students to be completed before the next lesson.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When students arrive at the unit, baseline tests and other data show that their attainment is well below that of their peers in mainstream schools. This is as a result of missed schooling due to exclusion, negative experiences of mainstream education and, for the great majority, their behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The results of baseline testing help teachers plan their work to ensure students' learning needs are met and that targets set for improvement are challenging. For most students, attainment remains below that of their peers when they leave at the end of Year 11. Nevertheless, because of the good progress students make, including towards GCSE and equivalent accreditations, gaps are closing between them. Students achieve success in accreditation in functional skills in English and mathematics but progress is less secure in their application of literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects across the curriculum. Older students in particular consolidate and extend further their ICT skills, which supports their presentation of coursework for the various BTEC courses they follow. In addition, some are confident users of the interactive whiteboards provided in each room.

School data show there are no significant differences in progress between boys and girls, for those students known to be entitled to free school meals and for those students in the unit's annex. Most younger students maintain their reintegration into mainstream or other specialist provision after leaving the unit and most older students continue on to education, work or work-related training when they leave at the end of Year 11.

In lessons observed during the inspection, students made good progress and a few made rapid progress. In an English lesson, progress was particularly good in terms of developing students' deeper understanding of written text through attempting to identify the background of the author and the author's rationale for use of language. In art, in preparation for a visit to the Tate Modern Gallery, younger students developed their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the range of work produced by Damien Hirst. Good progress was also made by older students using ICT in completing the various units required for completion of the BTEC business administration course. Of the few parents and carers whose views were made known, all were positive about their children's experiences at the unit, a view endorsed by inspection evidence.

Quality of teaching

Staff know the students well. A strength of teaching is the consistent and sensitive

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way staff manage behaviour, keep students on task and defuse any potential issues that may lead to students being off task. This was particularly effective in a mathematics lesson where students were working out their preferred non-calculator method for long multiplication. By the end of the lesson, each student, despite the odd frustration, had decided which method suited them best. Similarly, in an English lesson, staff ensured the frustrations and difficulties of one student did not disrupt the learning of the other students when identifying behaviour and personality traits of key characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. In the best practice, lively starter activities engage students immediately although, on occasion, the rationale for these is not made explicit. However, learning intentions are made clear at the start, and at the end students have the opportunity to recap and consolidate learning. There are ample opportunities for students to read aloud, most doing so with confidence.

Although teaching is good overall, there are a few inconsistencies in supporting students' independent learning. On occasion, rather than allowing students to explain their responses fully, adults intervene too quickly, providing answers or correcting misconceptions immediately. There are also a few missed opportunities to deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the task in hand through appropriate extension work to be completed before the next lesson. Of the few parents and carers whose views were made known, all were happy with the quality of teaching. Most students too are supportive of this view, which was endorsed by inspection evidence.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The reason students attend the unit is because of their disruptive behaviour over time in their mainstream schools, which has resulted in them being permanently excluded. Many have missed schooling and lost interest in education. The unit works hard to counter this by promoting positive behaviour and enabling students to understand 'trigger points' and manage their own behaviour. Students have been involved in setting up the unit's behaviour code, as well as the rewards and incentives for good behaviour as part of the unit's ethos of 'praise over sanctions'. This has contributed well to overall improvements in behaviour and attitudes to learning. Any issues or concerns during the day are discussed at the end-of-day staff debrief meeting and procedures put in place to ensure incidents do not recur. Consequently, typical behaviour improves, as shown by the decline in fixed-term exclusions over time, despite growing numbers and students with more challenging behavioural needs. Improvements in behaviour and attitudes mean that Key Stage 3 students are prepared well for reintegration to mainstream school or other specialist provision and Year 11 students are ready for the next stage of their education.

In discussion with the inspector, a group of students said there was no bullying at the unit, were aware of a range of different types of bullying and were confident it would be dealt with if it did happen. Students in this group were also fully aware of issues surrounding internet safety, explaining that, although they had access to a media site in creative media lessons, this was controlled fully by the teacher. Students were positive in the inspection questionnaire about how well the unit

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managed behaviour, which was confirmed during the inspection. Notwithstanding this, a few students had reservations about standards of behaviour in lessons. This was not borne out during the inspection. The few parents and carers whose views were made known echoed students' views.

Compared to their previous schools, students' attendance is much improved and is moving close to that expected for special schools and pupil referral units. The persistent absence of a very few has impacted on the overall percentage of students who attend regularly.

Leadership and management

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection as a result of effective leadership and management at all levels. The senior leadership team is effective in ensuring all areas of the unit's provision run smoothly. This is underpinned by effective management of performance and appropriate continuing professional development. The unit is now fully staffed and, as a result of delegating responsibilities, including for curriculum areas, more staff are now actively involved in management roles. This supports further improvements, identified in the unit's action plan as a result of purposeful and ongoing self-evaluation. Effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision and outcomes for students have contributed significantly to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The management committee has been restructured and is now sharper in its role as a critical yet supportive friend of the unit. The local authority has been effective in working with and supporting the unit since the last inspection, focusing on ensuring sustained all-round improvement across the provision. Equality of opportunity permeates all aspects of the unit's work. Any discrimination, including that based on race, gender or sexuality, is challenged and tackled swiftly and effectively.

The broad and balanced curriculum, including an increasing number of vocational courses, reflects that found in mainstream schools, thus supporting Key Stage 3 students' reintegration and enabling those in Year 11 to achieve accreditation in a range of subjects. However, the senior leadership team and subject leaders have yet to plan effective support to improve students' application and use of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. Students' self-esteem and confidence, as well as aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, improve as a result of a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. In addition, enrichment activities, both within and beyond the taught curriculum, support well students' all-round academic and personal progress. Many examples of this are seen in displays in and around the unit, for example, artwork from different cultures and photographic displays of outdoor and adventurous activities, as well students' own posters showing their awareness of how to manage their own safety. Procedures and protocols for safeguarding arrangements are highly robust, including for off-site visits and activities. Of the few parents and carers whose views were made known, all were positive about their children's experiences at the unit.

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 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.
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.



16 July 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of College Hall, Wokingham RG40 3BT

Just before you broke up for the summer holiday I visited the unit to see how well you were getting on. I also wanted see whether I could identify anything to make the unit better. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, meeting a small group of you as well as talking with individuals. I was very impressed with the two of you rehearsing songs early in the morning in preparation for your recording session in the afternoon, as well as by the dessert provided for me at lunchtime by one of the hospitality course students; it was presented really well and was also delicious! All of you who responded to the inspection questionnaire thought the unit would deal with any bullying if it was to occur and that you felt safe attending there. I agree with you and found the unit provides you with a good quality education.

Here are some of the other good things I found.

- All staff at the unit have your best interests at heart and look after you well.
- The unit prepares you well for reintegration to mainstream school in Key Stage 3 and for life beyond for those of you who leave in Year 11. This is because it improves your attitudes to learning, as well as your behaviour and confidence.
- The curriculum matches that of your mainstream schools, helps you catch up with what you have missed there and provides you with opportunities to take GCSE and BTEC examinations at the end of Year 11.
- The headteacher and her staff are working hard to improve things further and make things better for you.

I have asked the headteacher of the unit to make the following improvements.

- Help you to use and improve your literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Give you more opportunities to learn independently.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden
Lead inspector

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