

# CSS NE Quadrant Pupil Referral Unit

The Mile End Centre, Turner Road, Colchester, CO4 5LB

**Inspection dates** 10–11 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching varies between the centres. Good teaching occurs in all centres, but expectations are not always high in a significant minority of lessons.
- A small number of students do not make enough progress from their starting points because of shortcomings in teaching.
- Weaknesses in leadership and management have resulted in inconsistent practice across the different centres.
- Self-evaluation procedures, such as leaders' monitoring of teaching and their analysis of assessment data, lack rigour. The off-site one-to-one tuition is not monitored routinely.
- Students' behaviour, and its management by staff, varies between the centres.
- A few students stay in the centres for too long. There is not enough urgency to return them to a mainstream or special school as quickly as possible. This is particularly relevant to students with a statement of special educational needs.
- Not all leaders and managers have a good appreciation of their precise roles and are not, therefore, working in a concerted way to raise standards.
- Although some students' attendance improves significantly, attendance is low overall.

### The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed executive headteacher has very quickly developed great insight into what needs to be done to improve provision.
- The Key Stage 4 and medical needs centres prepare students well for leaving school. A large majority go into education, employment or training.
- The service works very closely with a wide range of other agencies as part of a good support and guidance network.
- Students are provided with a high level of care.
- The service establishes good links with parents and carers.
- The medical needs centre builds up students' resilience and self-worth very effectively.
- Each centre has established a range of learning experiences that are well adapted to match the ages and needs of students.
- Key Stage 4 students and primary-aged pupils make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all four centres and observed lessons at each. They spent in excess of five hours in classes, comprising 12 lesson observations and shorter visits to note students' learning. Sixteen different teachers were observed. No one-to-one teaching sessions conducted away from the centres were observed.
- Meetings were held with a local authority officer, the vice-chair of the management committee, the headteacher of a local secondary school, members of the senior leadership team and other staff, and students.
- A small number of parents' and carers' views were obtained through Parent View, and the questionnaires completed by the majority of staff were analysed. No parents or carers asked to meet with inspectors.
- A wide variety of documentation was examined, such as student assessment information, attendance records, self-evaluation procedures and development planning, and internal records of lesson observations. Students of all ages were seen reading in a range of different subjects.

## Inspection team

Mike Kell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Children's Support Services NE Quadrant Pupil Referral Unit (CSS) is a large and complex pupil referral unit. It comprises four centres, each with a centre manager. Three centres cater for a specific age group: Key Stage 1 and 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4; the fourth centre is for secondary-aged students with medical needs.
- Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils have either been permanently excluded or are at risk of this happening. They spend the majority of their time in the centre, but also receive one-to-one tuition off site.
- Most Key Stage 3 students have been permanently excluded, although some are referred to the centre for short bursts of additional support, such as following a one-off incident, with the aim of returning to mainstream provision quickly. Some of them spend all of the week at the centre, while others attend part-time and also receive one-to-one tuition off site.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 have generally been permanently excluded. They spend their time either in the centre or placed with alternative education providers, such as colleges.
- All of the students in the medical needs centre have physical and mental health needs that prevent their attendance at a mainstream school. Many of them have not attended school for a considerable length of time before joining the centre. Just under half of these students are taught at the centre on a part-time basis, and the remainder receive one-to-one tuition off site.
- The overwhelming majority of students have a White British heritage. Boys account for approximately two thirds of the number on roll. Very few students are looked after by their local authority. Around a quarter are known to be eligible for free school meals. The local authority is still working with schools to determine the impact of pupil premium payments when students move to CSS.
- A small number of students have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these are of primary school age and they have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- The headteacher left the service in the summer of 2012. The executive headteacher who was subsequently appointed runs a comparable service to CSS in another quadrant of the county.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching in those centres where it needs improvement by ensuring that:
  - students are always provided with activities that challenge them and which accelerate their learning
  - teachers routinely use their knowledge of students' attainment and previous achievement when planning activities
  - there is a better balance of teacher-led activities and expectations of independent learning through activities that require students to show initiative and take risks in their learning
  - staff consistently apply the service's behaviour management procedures when dealing with instances of inappropriate behaviour
  - planning focuses on what teachers anticipate students will learn, rather than just listing the activities that the teacher is going to provide.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management across the service by:
  - clarifying all leaders' and managers' responsibilities and then holding them accountable through performance management
  - implementing a systematic self-evaluation process across all centres, including the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching

- improving the processes for analysing students' assessment data in order to better determine each student's progress from their starting points
  - raising the expectation that students will return to more appropriate provision as quickly as possible and working more closely with the local authority and local headteachers to achieve this
  - evaluating routinely the quality of one-to-tuition that takes place away from the centres
  - establishing more effective systems to raise the level of students' attendance
  - increasing the management committee's role in monitoring the work of the service holding leaders to account.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students are generally working at a level that is broadly in line with, or just below, the national expectation for the age group.
- Students overall do not make good progress from their starting points over time because of variations between centres, although there are many instances of students achieving well.
- Key Stage 4 students achieve well. Their good progress in acquiring key academic and vocational skills and qualifications enables them to move into continuing education or employment. In addition, most develop the personal skills and attitudes that they need in order to sustain college or work placements.
- Students in the medical needs centre make extremely good progress in their personal development, which enables them to return to education and remain there. Some of them build on this increased resilience and more positive attitudes and achieve well. The majority acquire a good array of accreditations, including functional skills qualifications that enable them to transfer into work or training successfully when they leave. However, in small number of cases these transformed attitudes are not exploited by staff in ways that encourage students to make even more progress.
- Key Stage 3 students who attend regularly make variable progress in lessons. In some, teachers' expectations of work and behaviour enable them to achieve well. However, this challenge is not evident in other lessons and so students do not make as much progress as they could. Consequently, not all students in this age group acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding quickly enough.
- Staff in the Key Stage 1 and 2 centre maintain a good balance between enhancing pupils' personal development and their ability to control their anger and frustrations, with developing core literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, pupils achieve well in areas such as speaking appropriately and listening to the views of others, reading and writing.
- There are no significant differences in the performance between different groups of pupils, such as those with statements of special educational needs and those who do not have statements.
- The service has variable success in enabling students to return to a mainstream school, or find a placement in a special school. There are instances of students making such good progress that they reintegrate quickly and smoothly into mainstream education, but in most cases this does not happen quickly enough, or at all.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between the centres. Good teaching occurs in all centres, but expectations are not always high in a significant minority of lessons.
- Key Stage 4 students are taught well. Staff have good subject knowledge and teach with confidence. Detailed planning acknowledges students' previous learning and so activities build on this systematically. As work is accurately matched to students' capabilities, teachers can encourage students to work independently, think for themselves and solve problems.

- Staff in the medical needs centre are very sensitive to students' medical conditions and emotional state, and at times this appears to be an over-sensitivity that becomes counter-productive. There is a fear of pushing students too hard and so teaching can become too pedestrian, with not enough challenge. At these times, teachers talk too much rather than laying down explicit expectations of independent work. Despite this, students' positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour ensure that learning takes place, but it is not maximised.
- Inconsistent behaviour management and detailed planning are barriers to routine good teaching and rapid learning in the Key Stage 3 centre. Some staff deal well with low level disruptions, such as reluctance to work or the use of inappropriate language, and so effective learning takes place. In addition, at these times teachers stretch students by stimulating their inquisitiveness. Other staff do not recognise students' previous learning in their planning to the same extent nor do they manage behaviour so efficiently. As a result, teaching is less effective.
- Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils are taught well. Teaching maintains an effective focus on developing pupils' social skills and their ability to work with classmates, as well as promoting their academic learning. Positive relationships between pupils and adults underpin teachers' ability to have high expectations of learning and behaviour.
- Key Stage 1 and 2 staff promote pupils' acquisition of literacy skills well, and staff at other centres provide opportunities for students to practise reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. The extent to which this is successful varies because it hinges on other features of teaching, such as behaviour management, expectations and appropriateness of the task and resource.
- Not all teaching is equally effective in promoting aspects of students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. When teaching is good, students are seen developing independence, listening respectfully and recognising the needs of others.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Students' behaviour and attitudes differ between centres, although the majority of staff believe that behaviour is good, as do all parents and carers.
- Behaviour depends on the extent to which students view the centre as a positive, learning community in which all staff have the same expectation of what constitutes inappropriate behaviour in lessons and around the centre, always respond to it and do so in a consistent way. Behaviour is excellent in the medical needs centre and good on the primary and Key Stage 4 sites. Key Stage 3 students' behaviour and attitudes are more erratic and can deteriorate into low-level disturbance at times.
- Students confirm that they feel safe in the centres. They understand different forms of bullying and say that they do not suffer from harassment or intimidation.
- Staff do not have any concerns about students' safety, and nor do any of the parents and carers who gave their opinion through Parent View.
- Students feel that they receive a high level of staff care, guidance and support, and their families agree with them. Consequently, they learn how to deal with setbacks.

- The centres for Key Stage 4 students and for those with medical needs do a good job in assisting students to develop the attitudes and behaviours that will hold them in good stead when they leave school. Year 11 students in the Key Stage 4 and medical provisions speak maturely and realistically about the positive influence that the centres have had on their personal development. They present as confident and optimistic young people who are looking to the future with hope.
- The low overall attendance rate is caused by a small group of non-attenders, particularly in Key Stage 3, and the service is finding it difficult to improve this situation. Non-attendance has an adverse impact on the ability of these students to make good progress.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The executive headteacher's experience of successfully leading equivalent provision elsewhere has enabled her to develop a very perceptive understanding of CSS very quickly.
- Leadership and management responsibilities are unclear. Not all staff with management responsibilities know exactly what is expected of them. Therefore, line managers have difficulty holding them to account with no criteria against which to judge their performance. For instance, procedures for monitoring the one-to-one teaching that takes place away from centres are unclear.
- The service does not make it explicitly clear to students and their families at the time of admission that anticipated lengths of stay in a centre are short.
- Management policies and procedures are not applied consistently across all centres. Some centre managers have taken responsibility for their centre and have taken the initiative to establish consistency, leading to more positive outcomes for students.
- Centre managers audit the provision for which they are responsible and respond to the findings, but these reviews tend to happen in isolation. There is no coherent procedure for self-evaluating the service as a whole and then using this information as a basis for strategic planning.
- Leaders observe lessons regularly and some of them draw perceptive conclusions that help staff to improve their practice. Others however, do not have the experience that enables them to tease out the stronger and weaker elements of teaching and learning. Consequently, the lesson observation programme does not contribute greatly to teachers' performance management and staff training programme, although leaders are well-advanced in their preparation of a new performance management procedure.
- Leaders have implemented a good, planned curriculum in each centre. Each curriculum is tailored to match the needs of its students. For instance, that in Key Stage 4 has a good vocational dimension supported by off-site provision, while students with medical needs pursue a good range of accredited courses. The Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum is based on a nurturing approach that is rooted in developing pupils' personal development, ability to interact with others and self-control.
- Robust procedures safeguard students well. Rigorous vetting procedures, including the maintenance of a single central record, ensure that all staff are suitable for working with children.

- Students' assessment information is examined and so staff make judgements of students' progress, but the procedure lacks depth. For instance, data are not interrogated in a way that enables leaders to compare students' performance with national expectations.
  - Leaders have good links with students' families and have effective partnerships with a range of other agencies. While there are also some good links with mainstream schools, these are not yet at a level that encourages schools to enrol students from CSS.
  - The executive headteacher's track record of improvement elsewhere, her insight into CSS and the local authority's willingness to support change indicate a strong capacity for further, sustainable development. Staff show strong support for the new management team.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - is aware that improvements are required
    - ensures that safeguarding procedures are effective.
  - The management committee maintains oversight of the service primarily through the reports that it receives. However, it does not question the reports in any depth and it has limited first-hand evidence of every centre's work through formal visits. This reduces its ability to monitor leaders' work and to contribute fully to raising the quality of education.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132850
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	406500

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

<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>	129
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Philomena Cozens
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 December 2010
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