

New Summerseat House

Summerseat Lane, Ramsbottom, Bury, BL0 9UD

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Not enough teaching is consistently good and a small amount is still inadequate. Teachers do not plan lessons well enough with individual students in mind. Insufficient attention is given to how the teaching can help students develop important social skills.
- Too many students do not make enough academic progress because teaching is inconsistent and not enough is of good quality.
- Despite improvements to attendance some students are absent too often. Too many do not arrive on time at the start of the day. These factors stop them from learning enough and making sufficient progress. The pupil premium funding is not being used effectively enough to support the eligible students.
- Although behaviour in lessons is generally good some students flout school rules. There are too many occasions when students leave the premises without permission.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of education, but it is more often at the individual student level rather than checking how well groups of students are doing. As a consequence, the management committee does not get enough information about how well groups of students are doing compared to other groups at the school and nationally.
- The school's plans for improvement are not sharply focused on improving the quality of teaching or the achievements of students. There have been improvements but not at a fast enough rate.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff have good positive relationships with the students and they know them well.
- Regular training for staff is helping them to improve their teaching and keep the students safe.
- The unit communicates very well with parents.
- The curriculum is suited to students' needs.
- Staff are invariably positive in what they have to say about the unit and enjoy working there.
- Partnerships with other services are effective and make a positive difference to some students.
- The newly opened separate site for students recently excluded is proving successful, as more are returning to mainstream schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by seven teachers and two higher-level teaching assistant. Three of the observations were joint observations with heads of centre. Inspectors visited all three of the unit's sites.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students, the chair of the management committee, members of staff and two representatives from the local authority.
- Students' work was checked and students were heard reading.
- The inspectors took account of the 23 staff questionnaires as well as looking at the results of surveys of the views parents and students undertaken by the unit. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The work of the unit was observed and a number of documents were looked at including the centre's monitoring records, self-evaluation, data about students' progress, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, the unit's improvement plan and records of management committee meetings.

Inspection team

Eric Craven, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Alexander

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- New Summerseat House is a pupil referral unit for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students based on three sites; New Summerseat House, Park House and Coney Centre. It provides for students who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of exclusion.
- It is a part of the local authority's Pupil Learning Centre (PLC), which is made up of three other pupil referral units and a behaviour support service. There is one management committee for all four of the pupil referral units. There is a headteacher and deputy headteacher for the PLC and the separate pupil referral units have heads of centre who operate in effect as headteachers for the units.
- In the case of New Summerseat House there are two heads of centre, one for the Key Stage 3 site (Park House) and one for the Key Stage 4 site (New Summerseat House). They share responsibility for the third site (Coney Centre). Both have been appointed from within the unit since the last inspection.
- The Key Stage 4 students, almost exclusively Year 10, are based on one site and Key Stage 3 students at another. A third site has recently been opened to provide short stay assessment for students very recently excluded from school.
- The unit provides full time education as well as part-time for about a fifth of the students who are dually registered with the unit and their mainstream school.
- The students come from all parts of Bury and the vast majority make their own way to the unit. There are four times as many boys as girls. Five students are looked-after by the local authority and a small number have a statement of special educational needs. Most are from White British backgrounds.
- The government provides extra funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or are children of families in the services through the pupil premium. The proportion of students eligible to be supported by the pupil premium is larger than average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the amount of teaching that is consistently good and better and hence improve students' progress to be consistently good or better by:
 - being specific in lessons plans about what it is that individual students should achieve and making sure they understand this
 - finding more opportunities in lessons for students to develop the skills of working together and socialising appropriately
 - making better use of questioning to check on students' learning and to get them to think more deeply
 - ensuring adults get students to do as much as they can for themselves.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making more frequent formal checks on the quality of teaching
 - making better use of data about students' progress to assess how well groups of students and the whole unit is doing, and compare this to the progress of other students and over recent years
 - use data being gathered from the recently introduced computerised recording of behaviour to check how well groups of students are doing

- ensuring that the results of these checks and assessments are shared with the management committee
 - forming more detailed school improvement plans that spell out what difference they will make to the quality of teaching and the achievements of the students.
- The local authority and management committee should make sure that the pupil premium is used specifically for those students who are eligible and should receive reports on its impact on their achievement.
- Improve students' behaviour by consistently and rigorously applying the rules to show them what is acceptable and what is not.
- Increase attendance and punctuality by:
- focusing on those few students with the worst rates of attendance and more specifically on the larger group of students whose attendance lies between 50% and 80%
 - review the unit's methods, including rewards and sanctions, to ensure students are punctual and as a result set whole-unit targets for improving the level of punctuality.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The great majority of the students referred to the unit arrive with attainment that is below that typically expected for their age. For most this is because their behaviour at mainstream schools has held back their learning. A few students who come to the centre have learning difficulties.
- The centre's records are not in a format that enables senior staff to gauge the progress being made by groups of students. Rather their judgments are based on their knowledge of individuals. This leads them to gauge that students' achievement overall requires improvement and inspectors agree.
- The progress students make is generally not enough for them to catch up with their learning and many leave the centre still below the level of attainment typical for their age. The data shows that students often make uneven progress, sometimes not moving forward and even falling back. This is true also for those students with statements of special educational need. The reasons for this are to do with erratic attendance and teaching sometimes not being good enough.
- Nevertheless, most students including those with different needs do gain qualifications before they move back to school or to another pupil referral unit. For example, last year students gained GCSEs but almost all of these were below level C. Too many students do not turn up for the examinations. The unit has sensibly introduced other non-GCSE courses that lead to qualifications that are more appealing to some students.
- The progress in reading made by students who attend regularly, including those with special educational needs, is smoother and more rapid because of the daily reading sessions they have. Some students do not produce enough extended written work and therefore have too little practice in putting their thoughts on paper.
- A number of students make good strides forward in their personal and social development. In part this is because of the good relationships they have with staff. The centre's monitoring records of teaching show that over time students' engagement in lessons improves and that the severity of incidents of poor behaviour reduces. As they learn to get on with one another they put themselves in a better position to return to mainstream school or move to an appropriate special school. A little over half of the students last year moved to mainstream or special schools.
- There are still some students who don't develop the ability to cooperate well with others. They have plenty of opportunities to practise speaking and listening skills but they find listening and being positive about other people difficult.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Around half of the teaching observed was good but a small amount was inadequate and more required improvement. None was outstanding. This is broadly the same picture from the senior staff's observations of lessons last year. Not enough of the teaching is of the good or outstanding quality necessary to help students progress more rapidly.
- Some aspects of teaching have improved because senior staff make some checks on teaching, provide feedback and arrange training. Teachers are using information from their improved assessments of students to plan work for groups of students. However, they are not being specific enough about what they want each student to achieve. This means that students' thinking and skills in some cases are not being stretched enough. Marking of students' work has improved and in many cases helps them understand where they went wrong and how to improve.
- Teachers have begun to introduce more opportunities for activity and less worksheets in their lessons and where this is the case students have responded well. However, this is not seen in all lessons.

- Teachers have received training on the good use of questioning but some questioning is not getting students think deeply about and explain what they are doing and what they have learned. There are opportunities missed to put students in positions where they have to do things for themselves. On occasion adults guide and support students too much and don't encourage them to find things out or try things on their own.
- The relationships between students and staff are good in most lessons. Students have a broad awareness of their behaviour targets helped by the regular one-to-one tutorials they have with their class teachers. However, they are much less familiar with their learning targets.
- Many students need to develop their abilities to get on well with other young people. Yet in lessons teachers do not tend to make this a priority. As a result students do not have sufficient opportunities to work closely with their classmates to foster good relationships.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Although students generally behave well in lessons this is not always the case. The behaviour of a small group of boys during the inspection was wholly unacceptable. They were disrespectful and rude. In one lesson their behaviour was poorly managed, failing to get them back on track and so no learning took place.
- The unit's records show few incidents of bullying, which is supported by the views of the students. Where bullying has taken place it has mainly been to do with name-calling. Students use banter a good deal but on occasion this does lead to inappropriate ways of speaking to other people. Most find this acceptable, but it is not equipping them well for the future.
- A new system for recording behaviour has been introduced and early signs are promising that this will provide useful data that the unit can use to measure its success.
- There are occasions when students disregard the rules and leave the premises. The staff respond quickly to ensure that students are safe. However, the majority of those students have done this on more than one occasion despite the sanctions imposed.
- Staff have been successful in getting students not to use their mobile phones at the unit but a few students wear hoodies, coats and caps in lessons which is unacceptable.
- Staff have been suitably trained in how to make sure students are safe; students say they feel safe. Statutory requirements with regard to safe recruitment of staff are met.
- Attendance is low but has risen over the past year. This is partly due to the effective work of the unit with the support of a schools' attendance officer. Around two thirds of the students who joined the unit last year improved their attendance in comparison to their attendance in mainstream school. In fact eight students improved their attendance by more than 20%. Nevertheless there remain a handful of students whose attendance is stubbornly very low. There is also a bigger group of students whose attendance is below 80%. There is a group of students who are too often late for school and who do not respond to the unit's sanctions.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Senior leaders have created a unified staff team who are very committed to the unit. Their questionnaires show how they value the efforts of the recently appointed senior staff. They particularly appreciate the regular training they receive and can give examples of how this has made a difference to the quality of their work. Senior leaders have recently taken effective steps to improve the way they use targets in staff appraisals to make sure they contribute more to improving teaching and the achievements of students.
- Senior leaders use a variety of suitable ways to get to know how well the unit is doing. However some of these need to be better used. Lesson observations have not been frequent enough to give senior leaders and the management committee a view of how teaching is improving in recent years. This has also meant that they have not been able to use this information to set

targets in the unit's improvement plan or to make clear judgments in the unit's summary self-evaluation document. The improvement plan lacks the detail to drive forward improvement in students' achievements and teaching at the pace needed.

- The use of data to assess the unit's work has improved. In checking on attendance the use of data is good. However, other data on the progress students are making is used less well to show how they are doing in comparison to different groups in the unit and elsewhere. On a day-to-day basis staff watch out to ensure students are treated equally and fairly. However, the limited analysis of data means that senior leaders have only a partial view of how some groups of students are doing.
 - The unit has developed a range of helpful partnerships with other agencies including some that have helped make the curriculum more interesting and appropriate for some students. The personal, social and health education programme is designed well to help students learn about keeping safe and how to develop life skills. However, not all students use this knowledge to good effect on a day-to-day basis. Students have not had the opportunity to study English to GCSE level this year because the unit has only recently appointed a teacher with a permanent responsibility for English. Although students take some GCSE examinations in Year 10 the unit is keen for them to re-sit to improve their grades if necessary. However, not all appreciate the value of this opportunity and have not turned up for re-sit examinations.
 - The unit makes it a priority to keep parents well informed. Very frequent phone calls and regular reports keep families up to speed. The unit's last survey of parents' views showed they are pleased with the way their children are welcomed in to the unit and the communication they receive.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Although they receive reports and ask telling questions, the management committee and local authority are at a disadvantage in holding senior staff to account as they do not get sufficiently detailed information about how different groups of students are progressing or how the quality of teaching is improving. As this kind of information is not used to specify targets in the unit's improvement plan they are not able to check thoroughly how the unit is moving forward. The management committee has a suitable range of representation, including senior leaders from mainstream schools, and the chair is an experienced governor. They give due regard to students' safety. The local authority and management committee have not held the unit to account for the use and impact of the pupil premium funding.
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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

Unique reference number	131506
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	406436

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Wilfred Davison
Headteacher	Francine Ledsham-Mills
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2011
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