

ACERS East Lancashire Campus

Swindon Street, Burnley, Lancashire, BB11 4PF

Inspection dates 14–15 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

- The quality of teaching is too variable. There are too many lessons that require improvement, often because expectations are too low and students are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Most students make the progress expected of them but not enough make good progress from their starting points due to the shortcomings in teaching.
- Despite evidence of students behaving well, overall behaviour requires improvement as does its management across the campus.
- Management roles with responsibilities across the campus are still being developed and so require improvement. Staff are not always working in a concerted way to raise standards. The good practice seen in many areas is not shared and used by all staff.
- The attendance of many students improves significantly after joining the centre. However, attendance is low overall.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and have successfully brought together three distinctly different centres onto a single campus.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of what needs to be done to improve outcomes for students.
- Students are provided with a high level of care so that they feel safe.
- Students are well prepared for leaving school. A large majority move into education, training or employment.
- Most students enjoy the range of vocational activities provided on-site and other recently introduced learning activities that contribute to their personal development and well-being.
- The new management committee is representative of the community partners. It has established an effective structure to challenge leaders and support the further development of the campus.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 14 teachers or higher-level teaching assistants, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to lessons.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff, the chair of the management committee and representatives from the local authority. Discussions took place with individual students in lessons as well as at break and lunchtime. Telephone conversations were held with a local headteacher, an alternative curriculum provider and with a small sample of parents.
- The inspector observed the centre's work, and looked at students' work and information on their progress. Safeguarding policies and other documents were evaluated. The centre's questionnaires completed by parents were scrutinised since there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire for the lead inspector to assess. Responses from the questionnaire for staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Keith Massett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Helm

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- There has been significant re-organisation since the previous inspection with the amalgamation of three different provisions for Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and for students who are unable to attend mainstream school for medical reasons in September 2012.' The new campus is located on the site of the Key Stage 4 provision.
- The new campus headteacher was previously the headteacher of the Key Stage 4 provision. Almost all of the current staff were previously employed at one of the centres. A new management committee has been established.
- Many of the students have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion due to behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. A significant group is on roll because of non-attendance in mainstream school.
- Boys outnumber girls, but there are increasing numbers of girls. A very small minority of students are looked after by the local authority.
- Students who attend the medical provision are unable to attend mainstream school because of medical reasons or if they are in the later stages of pregnancy or are young mothers. These students remain on the roll of their mainstream school. Many have anxieties around attending school and have irregular or very low attendance in mainstream school.
- A high proportion of students have involvement with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- A significant number of students have been missing from education for much of their secondary education prior to attending the campus.
- A small minority of students have a statement of special educational needs and a high proportion is known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- An increasing number of students attend the campus for additional support to help them access mainstream education and to attend more regularly.
- Nearly all students are admitted other than at the usual time.
- A small number of students attend alternative education provided at Accrington and Rossendale College, Burnley College and Alternative Academy.
- Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds although they are mainly of White British or Pakistani heritage, broadly representative of the population of the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the consistency and quality of teaching to improve outcomes for students by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations for all learners and routinely use their knowledge of students' previous attainment to plan learning activities that interest and challenge them
 - planning is clear and explains what groups or individual students will learn and is not just a list of learning activities
 - there are more opportunities for students to show initiative and work independently
 - there is regular marking and written feedback that is routinely followed up
 - staff consistently apply the campus behaviour-management methods when dealing with inappropriate behaviour both in the classroom and around the campus
 - there are more opportunities to share good practice.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management across the campus by:
 - completing the recruitment of leaders and ensuring all leaders and managers have clear

responsibilities across the campus

- holding all staff to account through performance-management systems
- completing the self-evaluation process that has been started
- gathering a greater range of student views to inform how the centre operates
- ensuring that the analysis of student assessments on entry are used consistently to set targets that will lead to more students making good progress from their starting points
- evaluating the quality of the new provisions such as the one-to-one tuition and the nurture group to support students moving into full time education as quickly as possible
- establishing more effective systems to raise the level of students' attendance
- developing and reviewing the effectiveness of the management committee in monitoring all aspects of the work at the campus and holding leaders to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students are generally working at a level that is below the national expectation for their age groups when they arrive at the campus, often as a result of previous disrupted educational experiences.
- Whilst at the campus most students make the progress expected of them. However, although there are many instances of students achieving well, not enough make good progress from their starting points so that attainment remains below the national average for all students.
- Achievements for students who remain at the campus until the end of Key Stage 4 are improving. In 2011/12 there were significant improvements in the percentages of students achieving GCSE A* to G grades while the proportion achieving A* to C grades were similar to the previous year. Students' results in English, mathematics and science were similar to each other with some students gaining higher grades in these subjects. All students gained at least entry level 3 information and communication technology qualifications.
- Students are well prepared for leaving school. A large majority move into education, training or employment and are successful because they have developed the essential skills and attitudes required to maintain places at college or work.
- Key Stage 3 students have only attended the campus since September. There are clearly individual successes but not enough are making the good progress necessary to regain the ground many have previously lost. Most stay for short periods before returning to mainstream school.
- Medical provision students have only attended the centre since September and are already starting to achieve better than previously as they now have access to full-time education and have more learning opportunities such as the vocational subjects.
- The school's examination data and inspection findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of students, including those eligible for the pupil premium, boys and girls or those with a statement of special educational needs. They achieve as well as other students because of the good support they receive in lessons.
- Parents say they are regularly and well informed about the progress their children make while at the campus. The small sample who spoke with inspectors are pleased with the progress their children are making.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. There is evidence of some good teaching in all areas of the campus and in all subjects. However, teaching requires improvement in a significant minority of lessons because expectations are too low and students are not sufficiently challenged.
- In most lessons, teachers and teaching assistants work in close partnership to effectively support learning and manage student behaviour. However, sometimes staff do not deal effectively with students' behaviour and, as a result, learning slows.
- The most effective teaching is well planned and has high expectations of students. It captures and sustains their interest through the use of well chosen tasks and often involves practical learning activities. These are well matched to individual needs and support their social and emotional development. Students can see the purpose of what they are doing. Independent learning is encouraged and the teachers ask questions that help to develop independence. Here, attitudes to learning improve and good progress is often made.
- The teaching of literacy skills, including reading, is a priority. Literacy lessons have recently been introduced and are starting to address the gaps in students' literacy. Vocational lessons also offer effective opportunities for students to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a vocational setting.

- In vocational lessons observed during the inspection students were motivated by the activities that were well planned and had a clear purpose. High levels of engagement with the task and cooperation with others enabled students to make good progress. They were developing speaking and listening skills in talking with others to plan their cooking activities and mathematical skills in accurately weighing ingredients. In construction, students used mathematical skills to measure distances and calculate angles to design and construct a photo frame. High levels of independent work were evident with students only asking for support when necessary. In these lessons all students made good progress.
- In less effective lessons, teachers do not use information about what students can already do to plan lessons that interest and challenge each student. Planning is little more than a list of learning activities. As a result students are not always aware of why they are doing a piece of work. In these lessons learning and progress is not as strong.
- There are some good examples where teachers provide written or verbal feedback to enable students to understand how to improve their work or what is required to improve it to the next level. This work is often given a level or grade so that students know how well they are doing towards their targets. This practice is not consistently applied throughout the campus and each student's response to the feedback is often not followed up.
- One to one sessions are well planned and effective in supporting students' social and emotional needs as well as giving support for those with specific learning difficulties.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students and attitudes to learning are variable in lessons in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Behaviour of the medical provision students is much better. These learners behave well. However, the staff are sometimes too content that these students are compliant and not actively engaged in learning and so they do not make as much progress as they might.
- The best behaviour is seen when teaching interests the students, activities are engaging and particularly during more-practical learning activities.
- Students respond well to the use of rewards. Some staff use them very effectively but systems are at an early stage of development and they are not used often enough or consistently across the campus.
- Students' behaviour is usually managed very effectively in lessons and around the campus. There is some variation of practice between the staff that occasionally leads to inconsistencies in response. .
- The attendance of many students improves significantly but overall attendance is too low. Some students find it difficult to adjust to full-time education following significant periods out of school and although their attendance improves rapidly it remains too low and this has an impact on the overall attendance of the campus. Non-attendance also has an adverse impact on the ability of these students to make good progress.
- Students confirm that they feel safe. They understand different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that they do not suffer from harassment or intimidation.
- A few students attend off-site provision at local colleges. The behaviour and safety of these students is a high priority. There is regular communication about attendance and progress and rapid follow up if issues arise during the weekly visits by campus staff.
- Students were very willing to share their views about behaviour and safety and other aspects of the campus. They told inspectors that they would welcome more formal opportunities to share their views with campus leaders through a student council.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and have successfully led the assimilation of three distinctly different centres onto a single campus. Progress has been made in developing common practices but this process is not finished.
- Leaders have quickly established an accurate view of what needs to be done to improve the outcomes for its students. All staff are currently involved in evaluating what they do to ensure the campus strengths and areas for improvement are accurate.
- Local schools are very supportive and complimentary about the positive impact of the changes that have already been made.
- There has been rapid progress since the centres joined together. For example:
 - full-time education for students who attend for medical reasons is now provided and there are fewer students who are now on part-time timetables
 - leaders have increased the range of vocational courses, many of which are delivered on site in areas such as construction, childcare, hair and beauty, and motor vehicle studies.
 - provision for students who require additional nurture sessions or for those who require one-to-one tuition has been increased and literacy has been added to the Key Stage 4 curriculum. The impact of these actions has not been measured.
- Management roles with responsibility across the campus are still being developed and an additional member of the leadership is currently being recruited. Consequently, strategies and staff are not always working as effectively as they might be to raise standards and it is too early to evaluate the impact of the recently established strategies.
- Leaders do not ensure that assessments when students arrive are used consistently to set targets that will lead to students making good progress.
- A consistent approach to improving teaching and to the performance management of staff has been developed but not fully implemented, so holding staff to account is not fully embedded. The good practice seen in many areas is not shared and used by all staff.
- Leaders ensure good links with parents, effective partnerships with a range of other agencies such as the youth offending team and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Strong links with local secondary schools are supporting more collaborative working.
- The school fosters equality and provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, and social development through the curriculum and personal support for individual students. Cultural opportunities are not as well developed.
- During a period of review and planned change leaders have ensured that safeguarding and procedures for child protection have remained high priority at the centre. Students who attend off-site learning at local colleges receive the same high level of care.
- The local authority has supported the re-organisation and provides appropriate support for the centre.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee has set high expectations for the new campus and is aware that improvement is required. It has been re-structured and has established a clear programme of meetings, focus groups and identifying members with lead responsibilities designed to ensure the effective support and challenge of the leaders as the campus develops. Its membership is reflective of the local school community and partner agencies.

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	128089
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	406371

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	132
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Mark Robson
Headteacher	Kelly Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2010
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