

# Ethos College

Kess Centre, Off Rawthorpe Terrace, Huddersfield, HD5 9NY

## Inspection dates

13-14 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Almost all students arrive with standards well below those expected because of previous educational upheavals. However, they are integrating quickly and successfully so that they become able to take part in learning.
- Students begin to attend regularly and start to feel safe and secure in class. They maintain good behaviour as they increase their involvement in lesson activities.
- Students develop self-confidence through becoming successful. For almost all, their academic progress is good.
- They start to catch up in reading and writing and by the time they leave almost all gain useful qualifications that help them move on successfully.
- With the guidance of the staff the great majority transform their lives and make great personal gains. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are outstanding.
- Teaching is generally good. Sometimes lessons are outstanding and students learn very quickly and efficiently.
- The adults care very well for the students and provide effective support for them in their learning and behaviour.
- The new leadership and management team is good because of the many improvements to achievement and teaching that have occurred since the last inspection.
- Some aspects of management are outstanding, for example those that have influenced students' great gains in attendance and behaviour. The acting headteacher has raised staff morale in a short period of time.
- Managers receive helpful support from the local authority through, for example, the educational psychology service.
- The Management Committee is effective and ensures that it has a thorough understanding of the work of the unit.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' learning is not yet as rapid as it could be because teachers do not explain to students the small steps of progress expected in each lesson.
- In most lessons teachers use only a narrow range of methods to check that students have learned successfully.
- One of the off-site premises used regularly for lessons is not fit for the purpose of educating students in a pupil referral unit. The facility is a potentially demotivating environment for students and staff.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent almost four hours in classrooms and observed seven lessons given by teachers and tutors; some of these lessons were away from the main site. Students undertaking work experience were visited to check the arrangements for safeguarding. Inspectors observed break times, movements into school in the morning and after-school clubs. An inspector joined a group of students for lunch.
- Students' work and their records were examined. Inspectors listened to students reading during lessons.
- The inspectors spoke with students informally and during lessons to gain their views and opinions.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, members of the unit management team, an educational psychologist, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Management Committee.
- The views of staff were taken into account through reading their questionnaires and undertaking meetings with them as groups and individually.
- The inspection took account of the views of parents through scrutinising the unit's own surveys and by viewing the three responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The work of the unit was observed and documents concerning planning, self-evaluation, safeguarding, attendance and students' progress were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Terry Mckenzie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tony Price	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ethos College admits some students who have been excluded from mainstream schools and others at risk of being permanently excluded. Most are educated at the unit, with a very small number supported in mainstream schools by Ethos staff. Additionally, a few students who experience severe social, emotional and medical needs that prevent them from attending school have lessons at home.
- Students are admitted at any age between 14 and 16 but two thirds are in Year 11. Almost half is known to be eligible for the pupil premium payment and this is very high compared to all schools nationally. However, the local authority does not delegate the pupil premium to the unit because all students who attend are funded at a much higher level, regardless of their entitlement.
- Most students are of White British heritage; just under half of all are girls. All students are considered to have special educational needs (School Action Plus). Currently, one in seven has a statement of special educational needs in respect of social, emotional and behavioural or communication difficulties.
- Some lessons take place off site through outdoor education and enrichment activities and a room in a nearby church is used for lessons because of a shortage of space at the unit. Currently, no alternative provision is offered and there are no formal partnerships with other educational establishments. When appropriate, students undertake work experience.
- Upon arrival most students are placed into classes where they stay mainly with the same adults for all lessons. The unit describes these classes as 'nurture' groups.
- The unit offers after-school clubs on some days of the week.
- Since the last inspection a new senior team has been appointed. The acting headteacher occupies an executive role and manages another unit for the local authority.
- Since the last inspection the unit has gained the NAACE ICT Mark (July 2011).

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

- The local authority must, as a matter of urgency, ensure that all facilities provided for teaching and learning are fit for the purposes of a pupil referral unit.
- Teachers must ensure that students have every opportunity to make the maximum possible progress in lessons by:
  - explaining to students their targets for learning in each lesson
  - using a wider range of methods to check students' learning and understanding.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Before arriving at Ethos College almost all students have experienced great disruption to their schooling and many have been persistently absent over a long time. Despite their low starting points all groups, including girls, those known to be entitled to the pupil premium and any with a statement of special educational needs, make good progress.
- Students' good progress was shown by the records that the unit keeps about their previous learning, as well the direct observation of lessons. Furthermore, students' work in their achievement files gives an excellent overview of the day-by-day successes that they make in their learning and personal development.
- Those taught at home are kept in touch with education throughout difficult times in their lives. Others supported in mainstream schools avoid being excluded through the successful support of the Ethos staff.
- Students placed into the 'nurture' system quickly flourish because they are supported so well by the adults. Students begin to take part in lessons and enjoy learning. They gain the confidence to answer questions and join in activities. For some, these are the first successful educational experiences they have had for a long time.
- As their self-esteem grows their progress accelerates. They begin to make up lost ground, particularly in reading and writing. In due course most move from 'nurture' to undertake lessons with specialist subject teachers. Here, they continue to make good progress.
- Last year almost all leavers gained qualifications, some at high levels of GCSE. This year even more are on track to gain qualifications. The courses available provide chances for all to succeed so that none are left out or discriminated against. As a result of their successes most go on to education, training or employment and this is a great improvement since the last inspection.
- Some students attend after-school clubs. They show great motivation. During the inspection two stayed behind to play music and four undertook an extra science lesson in preparation for GCSE. When questioned why she wanted this after a long school day, a student replied 'because I need this qualification'.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- In almost all lessons teachers plan in great detail to provide interesting activities, well-matched to students' levels of ability. This was obvious in a 'nurture' lesson where students were learning about 'describing words'. One student told the inspector 'this is useful to me because now I can choose the correct words to help me explain things better'.
- Teachers provide students with targets to help them improve their learning and behaviour. However, they do not generally explain to students exactly what their individual challenges for learning are for each lesson. Consequently, chances are missed for students to know precisely what is expected of them and how to improve.
- In the best lessons teachers use a great variety of approaches and methods, the pace is usually brisk so that students do not become restless and resources such as interactive whiteboards are used well. In these lessons students make excellent progress and display very positive attitudes.
- Teachers try to move students on in their reading and writing throughout every lesson. They encourage students to use the specialist language of the subject and know how to spell key words and phrases.
- Some oral work in classes is good but teachers sometimes rely too much on questions and answers when checking that students have learnt all there is to know about a subject. Opportunities are missed to use computers or small-group activities to review learning and revise the key points of a lesson.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour is good throughout the unit, in lessons, and off site. In some lessons during the inspection and in the after-school clubs behaviour was outstanding.
- The great majority of students had poor levels of attendance at school before joining the unit. However, almost all greatly improve their attendance and punctuality so that for most it becomes as good as the levels expected nationally for this age group. This improved attendance has been maintained and the average is steadily increasing. This is a huge improvement since the last inspection.
- Students report that they feel safe at Ethos and during off-site activities such as work experience and outdoor education. This view is supported by parents and by staff. Students say that bullying and harassment are almost unknown because of the constant high degree of staff presence, and any issues are resolved quickly. Improvements in behaviour are shown by the reduced numbers of exclusions, serious incidents and restraints.
- Students are generally very polite and welcoming to visitors as was experienced by an inspector who shared lunchtime with one of the 'nurture' groups. Another group was observed by an inspector on a visit to an old people's home. Here the students were greeted with enthusiasm by the residents, showing that good relationships had previously been established.
- Through work experience and outdoor education students come into contact with other people from different communities. They have the chance to appreciate nature. Moments when students were in awe of the wild Yorkshire landscape were witnessed by an inspector during an orienteering lesson.
- Many develop high levels of motivation as was seen at the after-school club. During the inspection very adverse weather conditions resulted in most of the students' transport being cancelled. Despite this, some made their own way to the unit so that they did not miss lessons.
- Throughout their time here students make great gains in their behaviour, attendance, motivation and academic performance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are outstanding.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The unit has improved greatly since the last inspection largely because the acting headteacher has gained the trust and co-operation of the staff and established better relationships with parents.
- Reliable systems to manage students' behaviour have been put in place. Staff report that the unit is now a safer and more productive place to work because there are now better opportunities for the adults to develop positive and meaningful relationships with the students. Therefore, the quality of support that adults provide is greater and students benefit from establishing routines for learning, particularly in 'nurture'.
- The new senior team has changed the entire curriculum making it more meaningful. The focus is firmly on learning. A wider range of academic courses ensures all have the chance to gain useful qualifications that prepare students well for the future. This has resulted in students wanting to attend more regularly and take part in lessons.
- A lesson was observed in a room at a nearby church. It was highly successful because of the skills of the teacher and high motivation of the students. However, in being remote from the school the local authority cannot ensure that additional staff are at hand in the event of an emergency, that teachers can provide high quality lessons without the burden of transporting a great deal of equipment and that students have access to the best possible resources. The use of these facilities is demotivating for staff, wastes their time in travelling, and reduces students' progress.
- Through careful use of the information available managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the unit well. They have identified ways to help students learn more effectively

and provided appropriate training for staff. For example, following training, the way that reading is now taught is co-ordinated and based on the sounds that letters make (phonics). Managers are also able to check if students make the expected amount of progress and ensure that everyone is included in learning.

- Planning shows that managers are capable of continuing the improvements. For example, through the productive use of performance management they intend to help teachers work more closely with each other so that teaching can become even better.
- The local authority values the service of the unit and recognises the recent changes for the better. It has provided the unit with an improvement partner and encouraged the work done by an educational psychologist who helped to establish the 'nurture' system.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the Management Committee accurately interpret the information produced by the unit. They explore students' learning and question managers about it to ensure that none are discriminated against. Members have ensured that the acting headteacher has been set appropriate targets for improvement and that the use of performance management with staff is linked to the way they are paid. They ensure that funding has been allocated sensibly and that all students have the best possible support to developing literacy and numeracy skills. The Committee has ensured that all requirements for safeguarding have been met and reviewed recently.

## 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>	133673
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	406545
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14-16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	49
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Gillian Hughes
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Jayne Foster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	December 2010
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