

Tameside Pupil Referral Service

c/o White Bridge College, Globe Lane, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 4UJ

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Following placement here the great majority of students make good academic progress and achieve well. They quickly make up lost ground in reading and writing. Older students gain valuable qualifications and most move on successfully.
- Many younger students return to mainstream schools because the adults help them overcome their difficulties. They successfully settle back into learning.
- Students demonstrate good behaviour. They value the strong relationships with staff. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Students feel safe when working at or away from any of the three sites because they are so well cared-for by the staff.
- Teaching is good and students benefit from some lessons that are outstanding.
- Leaders and managers at all levels have successfully established this new provision despite the upheavals of reorganisation.
- The good leadership and management have already ensured that standards in teaching and learning are good and improving. Rates of attendance are rising because appropriate new courses have been introduced for older students.
- The local authority and management committee are enthusiastic about the new facility and have supported it well through its early stages of development

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons teachers do not use information gained from previous learning when planning new tasks. Consequently, activities are sometimes provided that do not take account of the individual and complex needs of the students.
- Students' progress is sometimes limited by the lack of consistency at each site in the way that literacy is taught and reading is supported.
- The attendance rates of a small minority of students are too low.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent almost five hours in classrooms and observed 13 lessons given by teachers throughout the three sites. Students were visited at an alternative education provider to check the arrangements for safeguarding. Inspectors observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Students' work and their records were examined. Inspectors heard students reading during lessons and talked with them informally to gain their views and opinions.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the three heads of centre at the different centres, teachers and those with management responsibilities, the Chair of the Management Committee and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of staff were taken into account through talking with them during lessons and in other places.
- No views were recorded by parents at the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors studied the unit's own questionnaires that some parents had completed.
- 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

Keith Massett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tameside Pupil Referral service was established in September 2011 as an integrated new provision to replace the previous three separate pupil referral units owned by the local authority. It admits students who have been excluded from mainstream schools and also provides education for 22 students in Key Stage 4 who have a statement of special educational needs in respect of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. These students are wholly integrated with all others in Key Stage 4.
- There are three sites, one for each of the key stages, Key Stage 2 (The Bridge, Ashton-under-Lyne), Key Stage 3 (Elmbridge School, Denton) and Key Stage 4 (White Bridge College, Dukinfield). Each site is managed by a head of centre and the principal oversees the entire work of the service on behalf of the management committee.
- The sites for Key Stages 3 and 4 were purpose built and are brand new. Key Stage 3 moved to their new buildings 12 months ago.
- The great majority of students are educated on site but a few who experience extreme social, emotional and medical needs that prevent them from attending school have lessons at home. A very few have dual registration with a mainstream school.
- Other than the students who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties it is rare that students have a statement of special educational needs. However, all are considered to be at the school action plus stage of special educational needs. The service contributes to the assessment process that can result in a student gaining a statement of special educational needs and the subsequent placement in a special school.
- More than half of the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding and this is very high compared to all schools nationally. However, the local authority provides funds for all students at a much higher level regardless of their entitlement.
- Students are admitted at any age from seven to 16. Most of the students are in Key Stage 4 with only nine in Key Stage 2. There are many more boys than girls and most students are of White British heritage.
- The alternative educational providers used by the service are: Tameside College, Stockport College, Power of 1 (Ashton-under-Lyne), Works 4 U (Stalybridge), Rathbones (Ashton-under-Lyne), Education & Youth Service Restart (Manchester), E 2 E (Ashton-under-Lyne), City in the community (Manchester) and Summit Outdoor Motivation (Ashton-under-Lyne).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of attendance for the small number of persistent absentees by working closely with the local authority to devise effective strategies designed to reduce unauthorised absences.
- Leaders and managers must provide students with every opportunity to make the maximum possible progress through improvement in the quality of teaching by:
 - using performance management effectively to ensure that all teachers use the information from students' assessments to address the individual needs of students in their planning
 - providing training for staff that will ensure consistency in the teaching of literacy skills and the support for students' reading developments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all students arrive with educational standards well below those expected for their age. Nevertheless, throughout all areas they achieve well if they attend regularly. They begin to close the gap with those in mainstream.
- For some, particularly in primary, progress is very rapid, particularly in English and mathematics. An example of this was seen when a pupil who was learning about letter patterns excitedly noticed the interesting combination of letters in the word '*bringing*' on a classroom notice.
- Many from Key Stages 2 and 3 return to mainstream schools as a result of the gains that they make in basic skills. They are better equipped to take part in all classroom activities without being left behind.
- For Years 10 and 11 students, the wide range of choices provides an individual programme of study. For most, this is very motivating. They want to take part in learning. The success of this was seen when two older students who had gained an award in cycling acted as instructors in an outdoor education session.
- Students appreciate the opportunities to gain useful qualifications and accreditations including through the alternative education providers. Last year most of the students who left at age 16 went on to further education, training or employment. This year it is predicted that the number and range of qualifications will be even greater and even more students will take up college placements upon leaving. This is directly related to the good support and guidance of staff.
- All groups of students from every key stage make good progress including girls, those registered at a mainstream school as well as at the unit, those educated at home, and those with a statement of special educational needs. Managers have already designed and introduced systems to track the progress of students. This ensures all have equal chances to succeed in learning and none are discriminated against. It also shows that those known to be eligible for the pupil-premium funding are making similar gains in their literacy and numeracy development as the other groups in the service. However, in every key stage, progress could be even greater if teachers planned activities in lessons more closely matched to students' individual levels of ability.

The quality of teaching is good

- Throughout the inspection teaching was seen to be always at least good and some was outstanding.
- When most effective, teachers establish very small-step targets for learning and just the right amount of challenge is given to students. Here also, teachers provide very effective support and feedback by marking work quickly and efficiently so students know straight away how to improve things. In one lesson, a teacher finished marking a piece of writing and said, 'There's not much wrong here – you can mend that quickly!' The student willingly went about improving his work.
- In almost all lessons teachers provide interesting and engaging things for students to do. Consequently, those who attend are captivated and want to learn. Their behaviour changes and they complete tasks when previously they might have shown reluctance. This effective teaching encourages the majority of students to make good progress.
- Teachers pay attention to the development of communication skills in every lesson. They make good use of practical work. Students enjoy this and respond appropriately. For example, in a Key Stage 3 science lesson students safely engaged in chemistry investigations, writing up their findings. In a food technology lesson students were required to read their recipes aloud. They added weights of ingredients. The good support of the adults ensured that all were successful.
- That reading and writing are an important element of every lesson was confirmed by inspectors' observations. However, teachers do not use the same methods at each site to help students

improve their writing or to support reading.

- In some lessons the degree of progress could be even greater if teachers took more account of the individual needs of students and their different levels of ability. More also must be done to set out for individuals exactly what is expected of them in the time available and how to succeed.
- Staff, including those who work at the alternative education centres, provide high quality care to students throughout the day, such as in giving breakfast and free lunches to all regardless of entitlement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- All groups of students demonstrate mainly good behaviour in lessons and around the buildings, during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Good behaviour was also witnessed during a visit to alternative provision for education.
- Where behaviour slips in lessons it is generally because the content has drifted and has become repetitive or uninteresting. Sometimes it is because tasks are not as well matched to students' levels of ability as they should be.
- Very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour were witnessed during the inspection and when they occurred staff responded quickly and effectively so that little time was wasted and the students concerned soon returned to the classroom. It is rare that poor behaviour or low-level disruption interrupts the education of others.
- The use of restraint is rare and diminishing, particularly with older students. The service is aiming to eliminate exclusions and they have been used recently only for the most extreme behaviour. A system to track improvements in behaviour has been developed. The early indications are that this will be of great benefit to all.
- The rewards and sanctions system is fully understood by the students who enjoy earning points to gain the rewards offered.
- Many students have previously demonstrated low levels of attendance at school. Following their enrolment here the great majority rapidly improve by attending regularly and consistently. For most their attendance becomes in line with the national averages for all secondary schools. A small minority, however, fail to attend regularly and therefore cannot take advantage of the chances the service provides to catch up in their learning and gain useful qualifications.
- Throughout the inspection students were polite and welcoming. With the help of the adults, they learn how to get on with others. They gain a better understanding about right and wrong, learn about different people in the community and how to respect them.
- Students establish strong and trusting relationships with the staff. Throughout their time with the service students make great personal gains. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and at every site, including at alternative provision, they report they feel safe. Bullying and harassment are rare with any incidents being quickly dealt with by the adults. Staff use the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and personal, social and health education to help students understand about different types of bullying, how to treat others and what expectations they themselves should have in the way they are treated.

The leadership and management are good

- The good cooperation between the local authority, management committee and managers has got the new service off to a good start. They are justly proud of their achievements in providing new buildings and new resources.
- The principal has quickly established systems so that a good and improving quality of education is provided. Potentially difficult behaviour is well managed so all can work and learn in a safe and productive environment. None are discriminated against. Managers have already improved

the rates of attendance by appointing a family liaison officer and making changes to the curriculum. Nevertheless, for a very few students, rates of unauthorised absence are too high and more must be done in cooperation with the local authority to address this.

- The implementation of performance management has resulted in clear and efficient lines of leadership. The morale of the staff is good with a common sense of purpose evident.
- Managers are beginning to understand better how effectively teachers are working and how well students are learning. Targets have been set for staff to work towards to further improve the quality of teaching and care. Managers are largely accurate in their evaluations and the inspection confirmed that judgements made by managers about the quality of teaching, from lesson observations, are broadly correct. However, not enough use has yet been made by managers of performance management to ensure that all teachers use the information from students' assessments to address the individual needs of students when planning new learning.
- Strategic plans show that managers are capable of improving the service quickly. For example, through the production and implementation of systems to record students' academic and behavioural progress. Managers are beginning to use this information to ensure that students make appropriate progress and that they can quickly identify any that are not doing as well as expected. In this, the service is well supported by the work of local authority advisors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee has successfully overseen the reorganisation of the service including the acquisition of new buildings and resources. Members have shown great determination and tenacity in gaining these important assets for the service. They ensure that all requirements for safeguarding are met and funding is allocated sensibly. Members oversee the arrangements for staff performance management and are aware that the next round must be concerned with further improving the quality of teaching through tackling any staff underperformance so that students can make even better progress. The Chair of the Management Committee visits regularly and provides support and challenge to the principal. He regularly reviews the records kept to ensure that students, including those entitled to the pupil-premium funding, are making the expected degrees of progress.

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	137322
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	400295

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	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Malcolm Knight
Principal	Andrea Skelly
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 2148484
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	andrea.skelly@tameside.gov.uk

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