

# Impact Alternative Provision

Daleacre Campus, Daleacre Drive, Bootle, Liverpool, Merseyside, L30 2QQ

**Inspection dates** 6–7 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Not enough teaching is consistently good. Some teachers do not vary work sufficiently to meet individual students' needs. Not enough teaching is vibrant enough to capture students' interests and to get them excited about learning.
- Although many students make the progress expected of them, not many exceed expectations because teaching is not good enough to help them catch up with what they have missed in the past, either through exclusion, bad attendance or poor attitudes to learning.
- Many students behave well in lessons but there has been an increase in misbehaviour this year.
- Attendance remains low even though the majority of students improve their attendance over the course of their stay.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the progress and behaviour of individuals but do not make good enough use of this information to check how well different groups of students are doing.
- Senior leaders, sometimes with support from the local authority, are working to improve the quality of teaching and learning but a few weaknesses remain.
- Members of the management committee have a good understanding about the way Impact works on a day-to-day basis but do not fully understand how well all students achieve.

### The school has the following strengths

- It does as much as it can to keep students safe.
- The headteacher leads the school well. Her view of the school's performance is mainly accurate, helped by improvements in the way that students' progress is monitored and recorded.
- The school works well with parents.
- The school's work with all of its partners in health, education, training and employment is managed very well.

## Information about this inspection

- Large parts of seven lessons were observed; all but one teacher was seen.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, two representatives of the local authority, the Chair of the Management Committee and two parents.
- Many informal discussions took place with staff and students.
- There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors took into account the responses of parents who had completed the school's own questionnaire earlier this year.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and information about their behaviour, attendance and progress.
- Documents relating to school improvement and the safeguarding of students were checked.
- Both sites used by the pupil referral unit (PRU) were visited and so was a sample of alternative providers.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Eric Craven

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Impact makes provision for students who have either been permanently excluded from their mainstream school or are at risk of being so. It also provides for a smaller number of students who are at risk of drifting out of education because of psychological or psychiatric issues. There are a growing number of students from other parts of the country who are looked after in the area for social and legal reasons and cannot attend mainstream or special schools.
- Nearly all students are White British. There are many more boys than girls. About 20 students have a statement of special educational needs on account of their social, emotional and behavioural problems.
- About half of the students remain on the roll of their mainstream schools; these are known as dual-registered students.
- A large majority of students receive other forms of support from agencies concerned with criminal offending, drug misuse, child protection and psychological and psychiatric care.
- Impact operates on two sites, the main one is the Daleacre site and the other, mainly for the more withdrawn students, is known as Alt Centre.
- A high proportion of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra money provided to schools by the government for students being looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- Impact works with many colleges and alternative providers to enable them to meet the needs of their students and provide each with an individualised timetable. These are: Basetech Training, Cornerstone Vocational Training, Beacon Learning, Light for Life, Space, Fairbridge (Prince's Trust), Learnfit Academies (Educ8), Style Training, Litherland Youth Project, Silent Whispers (Shy Lowan), Transition Training, Central Schools, Vision of Beauty, Michael John, Work learn, Corillion, Millingtons, Oakmere College, High Baird College, Southport College, Advanced Skills Academy (Army), Rice Lane Farms, Harmonize, JLP, NWCS, Dolphin, Right Track Training, Alchemy, Barnardo's, Brooke Clinic, P.A.C.E, Parenting 2000.

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

- Increasing the amount of good and better teaching so that students can achieve well by:
  - ensuring that all teachers take more care to match work more carefully to the ability and needs of students
  - making sure that teachers pay more attention to making their lessons and classrooms more interesting, memorable and enjoyable so as to tempt students to become more enthusiastic learners
  - eliminating any teaching that is inadequate.
- Improve attendance by:
  - identifying the most effective rewards and sanctions for different groups of students and targeting those groups more methodically
  - making sure that every student is involved in negotiating a realistic target for their attendance
  - stressing to students how good attendance helps them to get better results.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
  - making better use of information about how students are getting on by analysing it more carefully to show how different groups of students are doing
  - using this analysis to inform leaders and managers, the management committee and the local authority about where extra staff training and resources are most needed

- making sure that teachers manage their classrooms and teaching assistants more effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although most students make progress at about the expected rate, too few make the better than expected progress that they need to do to catch up.
- Examination results are improving. Increasing numbers of students are gaining a broadening range of qualifications and awards because leaders and managers are insisting that all courses in the PRU or with alternative providers are accredited. More and more students are gaining passes in GCSE examinations, which usually include English and mathematics. Students are also helped to fulfil their potential in other subjects that they are interested in, such as science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art. Three years ago, only 14% of students gained five GCSE passes, this year about 35% are on track to do so. The main reason why GCSE results are not better is because many students joining the PRU in Year 11 have already fallen well behind with their coursework before being admitted. This means that attainment on entry is often well below average.
- Nearly all of the students likely to gain good GCSE passes this year have attendance well in excess of the average for the PRU. Not enough is made of this simple fact to encourage other students to attend more often.
- Impact insists that every course offered by alternative providers leads to the possibility of students gaining an award or a qualification. Even so, a few students leave with no qualifications because they do not complete courses.
- Few students read for pleasure and several are hesitant readers but teachers are good at encouraging them to read in class and this helps to increase their confidence and make progress.
- Not enough has been done by the PRU to analyse the progress of different groups of students. However, other than the group of students whose attendance is too low, there is little evidence to suggest that any group consistently fails to make the progress expected of them. Nevertheless, a check of the information available showed that although most students attracting the pupil premium make the progress expected of them, a smaller proportion of them exceed expectations than in the PRU as a whole.
- Students attending the Alt Centre site make good progress because they attend well, behave well and enjoy the relative sanctuary that it offers them.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough to help students to catch up with expectations that were set when they left primary school. Although some of the teaching in the PRU is good, none is outstanding and a very small amount is inadequate. This means that the quality of teaching is too variable to ensure that, when students do attend, they make consistently good progress. There are some common strengths, for instance in the way teachers listen carefully to students and ask them teasing questions to check what they are learning and what they already know. Teachers also take care to let students know how well they have done in lessons. The marking of students' work is usually good and is often accompanied by helpful comments about what needs to be done to make it better. Occasionally, the good is undone by over generous use of the reward system, with students being given unmerited praise.
- Teaching is not always vibrant enough to interest students who often have a very low threshold of boredom and questionable attitudes to learning. Weaker teaching is characterised by dry and colourless lessons based on worksheets and teachers talking to students rather than with them. Stronger teaching makes the effort to inject purpose and pace into learning, such as when students in a mathematics lesson were encouraged to re-word survey questions to make them more specific or when a teacher used her good subject knowledge to bring alive the issues raised in the novel 'Of Mice and Men'.

- When teaching is good students wake up, contribute well and make rapid progress because work is matched well to their interests and ability. In an ICT lesson, for instance, it was made very clear what was expected and students could be seen to be getting increasingly involved as they improved their typing skills. In a duller lesson, the same students were seen being taught about the purpose of advertising. There were no examples of effective or ineffective advertising; the only resource used was a dictionary. Students did little other than answer questions and made little noticeable progress.
- In too many lessons, teaching assistants do very little. Teachers do not tell them clearly enough what is expected of them. In some lessons they are totally superfluous to need. Not enough imagination is being used to establish more productive roles when there are more absent pupils than there are in attendance. A small minority of teachers take little pride in their classrooms and leave them too dull to stimulate student interest. These things point to the need for teachers to manage resources and accommodation more skilfully.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Most students joining the PRU are on the brink of being lost from education or training and facing the likelihood of reaching school leaving age with no qualifications and very few prospects. In nearly every case this is because of their negative attitudes, behaviour and attendance. In the majority of cases students leave with better prospects than when they entered and with an improved awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters.
- There are too many instances of misbehaviour and attendance is too low. Many of the reasons behind this situation are beyond the control of the PRU. Impact frequently has to deal with problems that originate through students' choice of lifestyle. There has been a general trend of slightly improving attendance over the past three years but not enough attention is paid to identifying precisely where even better attendance could be supported through better consideration of rewards and sanctions and the inclusion of a personal attendance target for each student. In the past there have not been many serious incidents or short-term exclusions but a gradual increase is being seen this year.
- Bullying is not a major issue, nor is racism or sexual harassment. A growing problem is some students' attraction to different groups in the community which means they have to be kept apart from those in rival groups in the PRU.
- During the inspection, students' behaviour was very settled. Students were well-behaved and polite. They were happy to talk sensibly to inspectors, although more students' than usual were absent during the inspection. Students attending the Alt Centre site are frequently sensitive individuals who have previously felt intimidated by life in big schools. They appreciate the calm and secure atmosphere provided. As a result, attendance there is good (100% during the inspection) and students frequently make good progress.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The headteacher leads the PRU well. Students' difficulties have become much more extreme and complex in recent years and there has been a big increase in looked-after children, often from other parts of the country, who have even greater difficulties. Despite the additional pressures arising from these changes, the PRU is moving steadily forward, with more and more students gaining qualifications and a curriculum that keeps on developing to provide more alternatives for students who have rejected mainstream education.
- Staff get a clear picture of how each individual is doing but there is not enough analysis of the bigger picture so leaders and managers cannot confidently say whether students achieve equally well, for instance girls achieving as well as boys or whether students attracting the pupil premium do as well as other students. This makes it difficult for the leaders and managers, including the management committee and the local authority to make sure that funding,

resources and training are always used to best effect.

- The leadership and management of the huge array of alternative provision are good. Care is taken to make sure that all safeguarding procedures are in place and that all courses lead up to the possibility of a qualification. If any provider falls below demanding expectations they are told why and not used until the situation improves. Leaders and managers carefully analyse the relative effectiveness of different providers but do not sufficiently compare the overall effectiveness of alternative provision with the rest of the PRU's provision.
- Procedures for checking on the quality of teaching are good but the drive for improvement is too drawn out because teaching less than good tends to be overtolerated. Targets for this year are more demanding than in the past. The best teachers are not necessarily the best paid ones.
- Leaders and managers work exceptionally effectively with parents and the huge range of professionals and agencies that are a major part of nearly every student's life. Parents are particularly grateful for the way staff help their children and themselves.
- The local authority is offering good support to teachers who are teaching subjects they were not trained to specialise in.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Most members of the management committee are employed by the local authority, for instance in the Children's Services department or in attendance and welfare roles. They regularly visit the PRU in the course of their work. As a result, they build up a good picture of how effectively the PRU impacts on the students they are supporting but a lesser understanding of its overall effectiveness. This is compounded by the limited information it receives from leaders and managers about how well different groups of students are getting on. This in turn limits the management committee's ability to question leaders and managers and the local authority about why things are as they are and what can be done to make the PRU good. The management committee knows how money attracted through the pupil premium is spent but has not checked on how effectively this spending is helping to raise standards for those students known to be eligible for it. The management committee plays a full role in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and rigorously followed and that no group of pupils is discriminated against.

## 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>	104849
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	400743

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>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Rogers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Bridson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2010
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