

The Forest Education Centre

Cabot Drive, Dibden Purlieu, Hampshire, SO45 5UG

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. From low starting points, often due to interruptions to their education, almost all students progress to further education, training or employment when they leave.
- Students make good progress in the centre. All achieve qualifications in GCSE examinations, in vocational courses or in courses that prepare them well for when they leave the centre.
- Teaching is good and so students learn well because the planned activities interest them and they work hard.
- Students feel safe at the centre or when working off-site because they are very well supported and they know that the staff care.
- Behaviour is outstanding because the students cooperate with the high expectations that the school expects of them. This has resulted in a very substantial decrease in unacceptable behaviour and increased engagement in learning by students.
- Leaders and managers have created a very positive learning environment where expectations of students succeeding with their work are at the heart of what they believe.
- Leaders, managers and members of the management committee have brought about good improvements in students' achievement and in teaching since the last inspection.
- Parents value the work of the centre, believe the children are safe and comment on the improvements they see.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is insufficient outstanding teaching, where students are expected to think more deeply and work independently.
- Attendance of a very small number of students is still well below that expected of them.
- There is inconsistent marking in some subjects and pupils are not given sufficient guidance in their books on how to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, nine of which were jointly with senior leaders. In addition the inspector listened to students reading in lessons, met with groups of students and made other visits to classes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, middle managers, learning support and administrative assistants and chair of the management committee. A telephone conversation also took place with the vice chair of the management committee, who is the head of a local secondary school.
- The inspector examined documentation relating to school development and vision for the future as well as information relating to performance management.
- Records relating to students' progress, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and enhanced learning opportunities were scrutinised as well as students' work in books and in displays.
- There were no responses to Parent View but the inspector took account of the school's parental surveys over the last three years and a questionnaire completed by staff.

Inspection team

Graham Pirt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provides support for Key Stages 3 and 4 students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and/or medical needs from schools in the New Forest area of Hampshire.
- The majority of students are transported to the centre but a small number make their own way.
- Almost all students are White British and no students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is above average.
- A few students have additional special educational needs such as autism spectrum disorders or learning difficulties. A small number of students have a statement of special educational needs.
- A number of students attend local colleges for a range of accredited courses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - developing teachers' skills in questioning students in order to increase their knowledge and understanding
 - creating more opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills
 - improving the strategy for the marking of work so that students know what they have to do to improve and be given the opportunity to respond.
- Improve the attendance of some students, particularly persistent absentees, by:
 - working closely with parents and students as well as the local authority's support services
 - making sure that those students' individual learning plans fully meet their needs so that they all want to come to school every day.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The vast majority of students, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, achieve well. As a result, they make at least good progress in English and mathematics, and in their personal development.
- Progress in literacy is good. Staff place a high focus on improving and developing reading and communication skills, making sure that students read regularly and develop confidence in speaking publicly. Students also make good progress in developing their writing skills, as shown by the well-presented work in their books.
- Progress in mathematics is also good, with pupils demonstrating their numeracy skills in other subjects.
- By the time students leave, they have acquired appropriate qualifications, including GCSEs and other forms of accreditation that prepare them well for their futures.
- Although the attendance of a large majority of pupils improves after starting at the centre, a small number of students do not achieve as well as they could because of their continuing poor attendance.
- Outstanding levels of achievement were evident in a Year 11 English class, where students were totally absorbed in a discussion of *Romeo and Juliet* because inspirational teaching motivated them to deliberate about the reasons behind the actions of characters in the play.
- The emphasis on learning plays a valuable role in promoting self-esteem and confidence and giving students the skills they need when they leave school.
- Just occasionally, a few students do not achieve as well as they could because there are not sufficient opportunities to develop their thinking or they are not clear about what they have to do to improve their work.
- The limited specialist facilities for science and technology are used well so students can achieve well in those areas.
- Students' personal development is supported very well by all staff. Students now have many opportunities to have their say and take part actively in discussions, and this helps motivate them in their learning. Students told the inspector that their learning has improved since coming to the centre.
- Those known to be eligible for the pupil premium attain as well as other students in English and mathematics because the extra funding is used well to provide extra tuition in small groups for these students.

The quality of teaching

is good

- High-quality relationships and effective support across the centre mean that lessons are calm and there is a good work ethos. Routines are clear so that students know what is expected of them.
- In the best lessons, teachers extend students' skills and build on their previous learning by using very good techniques that help students to think more deeply and use knowledge they already possess.
- Good questioning is a key feature of the most successful lessons in helping students to think carefully and search for knowledge. In a science lesson, for instance, a student made excellent progress in understanding how to find the calorific value of food through the very structured questions posed by the teacher. Nevertheless, not all teaching uses questioning well enough to deepen students' understanding.
- Some outstanding teaching was evident where students made excellent progress in their learning and were confident in stating their views as well as listening to those of other students. This was evident in a discussion about the characters in *Of Mice and Men*, where views were

related to the political climate of the times in which it was set.

- Teachers plan a range of activities that interest students and this leads to them being engaged in their work. Students in art participated in the community 'Rhino' project, decorating a fibreglass rhino to join others being displayed around Southampton.
- Assessment of students' progress has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Students' work is often accurately marked with helpful comments. However, this is not consistent across the centre and so at times students are not aware of what they have to do to improve.
- Just occasionally, in a small proportion of lessons, teachers do not persevere in seeking students' responses and this limits the assessment of their knowledge and reduces the independent learning that can take place.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning and are seen as a highly valued part of the team.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is outstanding, including when they are working off-site. Records show that learning is very rarely disrupted by the poor behaviour of students and no examples were seen during the inspection. Case studies show that behaviour improves quickly once students start at the centre.
- Students say that there is not a problem with bullying but that it would be quickly dealt with and they say they feel safe. The centre is effective in fostering good relationships. Records show that there have been no racial incidents. In discussion, students say they enjoy their time at the centre and that they can now work better. One student said, 'Teachers give you time and understand you'. They say they would not change anything.
- Students are admitted to the centre because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or medical needs. On entry, their behaviour is often challenging, affecting their learning. Records show that they quickly settle and begin to achieve well because of good quality support and guidance and the emphasis on the centre being a place in which to learn. As a result, attendance improves for most students. However, a few remain persistently absent and, as a result, overall attendance is still too low.
- Behaviour is very well managed, although this is very subtle and good behaviour is more the result of the interesting work and support that is provided. School and local authority documentation shows that exclusions have fallen rapidly from 86 days two years ago to only 2.5 days in this year. Once students feel confident, they begin to work together and many help others with their learning or sharing activities.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the very well structured 'Thought for the week', as well as in a range of subjects and topics, enabling good levels of responsibility and strong moral awareness. Students have a say in all areas of the centre.
- The work on the school internet radio station is a key feature of helping students to gain confidence, engage with the community and develop their social and cultural awareness.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteachers, effectively supported by staff and the management committee, have successfully improved the quality of teaching, achievement, behaviour, curriculum and attendance in the past two years. Members of staff describe the headteacher as the inspiration behind this improvement. It is clear that he has a very well defined vision for the development of the centre, shared by staff, management committee and the local authority.

- There is a strong commitment to improving teachers' skills so that they can progress and seek promotion. The strong and well-organised management of professional development has helped improve the quality of teaching.
 - The centre is well supported by the local authority, which recognises the improvements made since the previous inspection. The local authority gave a high level of support before and after the previous inspection and now regularly supports leaders in monitoring performance, but with lower intensity.
 - Leadership responsibilities are effectively spread and staff are fully involved in planning and evaluating the performance of their areas.
 - The range of subjects and topics has been reviewed and enriched and now meets students' needs well. Additional experiences, such as the radio station, football and horticulture, engage students well. Leaders are aware that there is more to do to make sure that all students want to come to the centre every day.
 - The school manages and provides effective support for an outreach service to a small number of home-tutored students.
 - Relationships with parents have improved, as shown by the results of the surveys over the past few years. The school promotes very positive relationships with the local schools, support agencies and the colleges with which it works.
 - Leaders make sure that all students have equal opportunities, as demonstrated by those students who benefit from individual support and additional experiences.
 - Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee provides strong and effective direction to the school, helping to create an atmosphere in which students thrive. There is strong evidence in minutes of how they hold the centre to account. Members of the committee are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement through regular updates from leaders and through visits to the school. They know about the quality of teaching and data on the centre's performance, including the achievement of students. They have a clear awareness of their role in managing the performance of staff, how effective performance is rewarded and how underperformance is addressed, for example through the training provided. They oversee the school's finances well and make sure that money allocated to support students eligible for pupil premium funding is used for the benefit of those students. They share in the vision for the planned development of the centre.
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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	115847
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401541

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	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Dash
Headteacher	Dominic Coburn
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
Telephone number	02380 423827
Fax number	02380 879468
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