

# North West Kent Alternative Provision Service

189 High Road, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7DP

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make rapid progress in their learning because staff are highly effective at re-engaging them with education. Over short periods of time, pupils make excellent progress towards closing the gaps in their learning which had developed due to their absence from school through exclusion. This helps them to regain lost confidence in their own abilities and, for many, reintegrate successfully into mainstream school.
- Pupils respond exceptionally well to the highly structured and nurturing environment that the service provides in each of its centres. The service's highly effective systems for managing and improving pupils' behaviour are used consistently well by all staff.
- Pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning improve significantly during their placement with the service. Their behaviour at the service's centres is often exemplary. Pupils have great respect for those who teach and support them.
- Pupils are able to progress very well because the school ensures that they are placed in the centre which runs the most suitable curriculum for them. This also prevents issues occurring between older and younger pupils and contributes very well to helping pupils feel very safe at school.
- Teachers very quickly gain an accurate understanding of pupils' needs. They routinely set and communicate high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. However, the difficulty of work is occasionally not well matched to the range of different abilities in all lessons and marking does not always help pupils to improve their learning most effectively. Nevertheless, teachers ensure that most pupils still make exceptionally quick progress.
- The executive headteacher's leadership of the service is exemplary. The purpose of the service is communicated with great clarity to the schools that it serves. As a result, the service is able to match the resources it has to the needs of the pupils who are referred very effectively.
- The senior leadership team ensures that there is a very high degree of consistency across all sites. This ensures, for example, that pupils' welfare is safeguarded equally well in all centres.
- The management committee maintains an accurate overview of the service's work. It provides rigorous challenge to ensure that the service is providing the quality of education and behaviour support that is required by the referring schools.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, together with the executive headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons, taught by 12 teachers or appropriately qualified staff. Teaching was observed on four of the school’s sites. It was not possible to directly observe lessons on two sites or at the commissioned service because the inspection was carried out after the end of the examination period for Year 11 pupils and during a period when some of the sites were running their annual activities week.
- Pupils, staff and school leaders, including those responsible for the day-to-day management of each centre and the intervention service, met with the inspectors to discuss the school’s work.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the management committee, who are responsible for the school’s governance, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a range of documents including the school’s tracking of pupils’ progress, the school’s checks on how well it is doing and its development plans, safeguarding arrangements and minutes of meetings held by the management committee.
- The inspectors considered the views of 16 parents, provided through the Parent View website or by email to the inspection service provider, and those of 49 staff.

## Inspection team

Jon Carter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Cox

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- North West Kent Alternative Provision Service opened on 10 February 2012 as a result of an amalgamation of three pupil referral unit (PRU) services. When its predecessor PRU services, The North West Kent Behaviour Service, The Behaviour and Guidance Support Service Centre Class and Dartford and Gravesham Alternative Provision PRU were last inspected by Ofsted, The North West Kent Behaviour Service and The Behaviour Guidance Support Service Youth Wing were judged to be good in July 2010 and the North West Kent Alternative Provision PRU was judged to be inadequate in February 2012. The current executive headteacher was previously the headteacher of The North West Kent Behaviour Service.
- North West Kent Alternative Provision Service operates from six different sites, each offering a different element of education or support:
  - The Rosemary Centre, Dartford, provides education for up to 50 pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4
  - Centre Class, Swanley, provides education for up to 20 pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2
  - The Limes, Dartford, provides education for up to 21 pupils in Year 10. It is also the base of the Intervention Service, which provides behaviour support and therapy for pupils in Years 7 to 10, most often at the pupils' mainstream schools
  - The Hive, Northfleet, provides education for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. It is also the base for behaviour support, reintegration and outreach work in mainstream schools
  - Northcourt, Gravesend, provides education for up to 16 pupils in Year 11
  - Miracles, Gravesend, provides education for up to 16 pupils in Year 10.
- The service also commissions the YMCA in Dartford to provide education for up to 21 pupils in Year 11.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 to 3 receive short-term education from the service. The average length of referral for these pupils is 14 weeks. The length of stay of pupils in Key Stage 4 varies considerably. Many complete their education with the service, whilst a smaller proportion is successfully reintegrated into mainstream school. Overall, a much larger number of pupils attends the school on short-term placements than stays for long periods.
- Pupils on roll at the school have a history of disrupted education. Many are at risk of being, or have been, excluded from mainstream school because of their attitudes and behaviour.
- All pupils have special educational needs. A very small number of pupils has statements of special educational needs. The main needs of pupils are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- There is more than double the number of boys as girls on roll at the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is above average.
- Pupils mainly come from White British backgrounds.

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

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, so that a greater proportion is outstanding, by ensuring that:
  - work in lessons is always closely matched to the different abilities of individual pupils
  - marking of pupils' work always shows pupils how it can be improved, gives them opportunities and time to respond, and is followed up to check the impact on their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment when pupils begin their placements with the service is almost always below average. This is because they have often missed a significant amount of education through exclusion, disengagement or absence.
- Pupils' learning is often outstanding as a result of the exceptionally effective ways in which staff help them re-engage with education. Pupils make especially rapid progress during short, fixed-length placements which lead quickly to their successful reintegration to mainstream school. This ensures that pupils are being well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils in all key stages make excellent progress in reading. For example, the youngest pupils catch up well with learning the sequence of the alphabet and the sounds that letters make. Pupils' rapidly improving reading skills help pupils to have a better understanding of the resources used in other lessons so that they make better progress overall. Their development is supported well in a range of different subjects because they read regularly, not just in English lessons.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in English, particularly in Key Stage 3. Key Stage 4 pupils on short-term placements make more rapid progress than pupils of similar age on long-term placements. In lessons, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed that they knew how to use a dictionary and could use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to spell and write unfamiliar words.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium in Key Stages 1 and 2 have maintained the same rate of progress as their peers, while pupils on short-term placements in Key Stage 4 have made better progress than their peers in English. This is because part of the funding has been used to provide staff training and resources for teaching literacy skills. This is one of the ways that the school very effectively ensures there is equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Pupils' learning in numeracy and mathematics is also outstanding. In lessons, pupils usually progress well from their starting points. However, pupils in Key Stage 3 classes did not all demonstrate the same level of confidence when converting between using fractions, decimals and percentages because work was not consistently well matched to their different abilities. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make better progress in mathematics than they do in English.
- Pupils' progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and science in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not as rapid as in other subjects. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, however, make excellent progress in these subjects.
- The attainment of most pupils improves by the time they finish their placement with the service, although it remains low due to the short duration of the placement. Those who complete their education with the service, or at the commissioned provision, successfully gain a range of accredited qualifications including GCSEs. The school does not enter pupils early for GCSE examinations.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers and other adults in all centres consistently support pupils to improve their attitudes and behaviour extremely well. The empathy they show to pupils throughout the school day, together with the personalised approaches they take to managing the difficulties that pupils experience, builds mutual respect very quickly. In this environment, and as a direct impact of the teaching, pupils rapidly regain their enthusiasm for learning, settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- Staff routinely have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. This demonstrates clearly to pupils that the service has every confidence in their ability to be successful. It is highly effective in motivating pupils and improving their self-esteem. In summarising many older pupils'

views of the most important characteristics of the service's staff, one simply said, 'They believe in you.'

- Where needed, staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. This ensures that on the occasions where pupils find it difficult to cope they are given appropriate alternatives that allow learning to continue for all the other pupils. Pupils value the professional way in which staff help them. The way in which staff model appropriate responses supports pupils' social and moral development very well.
- Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' learning and progress. They work effectively with colleagues from within the service and from mainstream schools to check the accuracy of these assessments. They use information from each pupil's individual behaviour programme and their targets for improvement to plan and teach lessons which are strongly linked to the individual behavioural needs of the pupils in each class. However, the difficulty of work is not always consistently well matched to the range of different abilities in all lessons. Lessons regularly include appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers and other adults frequently check pupils' learning and understanding during lessons. They provide pupils with clear verbal feedback which helps pupils to improve their skills and understanding. However, while the marking of pupils' work is regular and provides comments which identify areas for improvement, it does not consistently show them how the work can be improved. Teachers do not routinely give pupils opportunities and time to respond to their comments.

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

- At the beginning of their referral to the service, pupils often have entrenched, negative views of their abilities and low self-esteem because of previous failure at school.
- Pupils' attitudes to school improve rapidly and significantly during their referral to the service. This is because each centre provides a calm, nurturing environment where pupils can be successful. Staff expertly rebuild pupils' self-confidence. Pupils say, and show, that they enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' attendance at school also improves significantly. For most pupils, a fresh start together with renewed confidence and better support encourages more regular attendance. This was particularly noted by one pupil who said, 'I now look forward to coming to school.' For others, very effective work by learning mentors provides highly personalised, successful solutions to more severe absence problems including, for example, making alternative transport arrangements for pupils to get to school.
- All staff consistently use the service's behaviour management and modification systems very effectively. Pupils respond very well to the credit points system which is used to set individual targets for behaviour improvement and provides a reminder of the high expectations and rules that pupils are expected to follow.
- Pupils are very clear that staff and leaders at each centre take actions to help them overcome the specific difficulties they experienced in mainstream school, such as anger control, for example. They are very proud, both of their school and of their achievements, and make every effort to keep to the rules. They support each other well. For example, in a science lesson for Years 5 and 6, a pupil successfully encouraged one of his classmates to re-engage with the lesson by offering to work with him.
- In classes and around the centres, pupils' behaviour is often impeccable. This represents a very significant improvement for all pupils and is another important factor in why pupils clearly state that they feel very safe whilst at school.
- Both parents and staff have strongly positive views that pupils behave well and are safe whilst at school.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The executive headteacher, with the support of the senior leadership team and the management committee, leads the service very effectively. As a team, they set high expectations for the quality of teaching and support that is given to pupils to promote rapid improvement in their attitudes, behaviour and attendance.
- School leaders have quickly and very successfully established high levels of consistency across the service's different centres. For example, the school rules, staff's management of behaviour difficulties and the way pupils' behaviour targets are set and monitored are identical on all sites. In securing this consistency and ensuring that pupils' behaviour and learning makes rapid progress during their placements, the school has demonstrated that it has a strong capacity to continue to improve.
- The executive headteacher and her deputies ensure that accurate judgements are made about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning by sharing responsibility for monitoring lessons across the service's different centres. School leaders and the management committee use information from their regular checks on the impact of teaching and support to devise thorough and detailed plans for school improvement.
- There are very strong links between school improvement plans and the management of teachers' performance. All staff are very clear about the contribution they make to school development. Training for staff is highly focused on the most important priorities for improvement. Recent training, for example in teaching reading, has been provided to the whole staff to establish common understanding and approaches in all centres.
- The executive headteacher has a comprehensive appreciation of the link between teachers' pay and their performance. However, the service has not yet fully implemented this aspect of performance management because changes to the staff structure and a new pay policy are due to come into effect in the new school year.
- The curriculum is very well suited to pupils' needs. Placements for younger pupils make sure that they continue to study key subjects so that they can return to mainstream school with improved basic skills, but without having fallen behind in other subjects. Placements for older pupils are more highly personalised and take account of factors which contributed to pupils' referral to the service.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' well-being are secure and meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee, mostly made up of headteachers from local schools, provides the service with expert support from those with up-to-date knowledge and skills. The members routinely and rigorously challenge school leaders about the impact of the service on pupils' behaviour and learning. They recognise that they will need to incorporate more rigorous checks on the links between teachers' pay and their performance as the service becomes more established. They also have appropriate plans to improve their monitoring of pupil premium funding once the method for receiving this from referring schools is improved in the new school year.

## 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>	137955
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	400349

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>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Southby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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