

Amber Valley & Erewash Support Centre

County Behaviour Support Service, Brookside Road, Breadsall, DE21 5LF

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Almost all pupils return successfully to mainstream or a school more suited to their needs, or move on to college, training or employment.
- Pupils make good progress in personal development. They gain in self-confidence and enjoy learning again.
- Many pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology increases rapidly.
- Teaching is good. Staff have good relationships with pupils which encourages them to behave well and learn.
- Pupils learn to manage their own behaviour more effectively. This helps them to concentrate, learn and make good progress.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the Centre.
- Partnership with parents, carers and a wide range of professionals, schools and colleges contributes very well to pupils' personal development and achievement.
- The Centre's use of alternative provision effectively extends the range of subjects provided.
- The senior leaders are good at improving the quality of teaching and learning and at directing the work of the Centre.
- The management committee makes a good contribution to leadership. Members check carefully on pupils' achievement and the Centre's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement is sometimes limited by the lack of clear, challenging targets to work towards.
- Marking does not give pupils clear information about how to improve their work.
- Working practices and provision are not yet consistent across the three sites.
- The range of subjects provided is limited at Key Stages 2 and 4.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons including one taking place at an alternative provider. Four lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. The inspectors examined pupils' work in files and books.
- The inspectors held discussions with staff, a member of the management committee and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to parents on the telephone and examined responses to a recent survey of the views of parents and carers sent out by the Centre. There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors looked at minutes of the management committee, the school development plan, records of lesson observations and the targets set for teachers. The inspectors also looked at documents that track pupils' progress and documentation on how the Centre gains a view of their performance. The inspectors examined the Centre's procedures for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Amber Valley and Erewash Pupil Support Centre (the Centre) was formed in January 2012 from three separate centres. The previous inspection report related only to the Breadsall Centre.
- The head of the previous Breadsall Centre (now the Breadsall site), which caters for permanently excluded Key Stage 3 pupils, was appointed senior head of centre.
- The Sawley site, which caters for permanently excluded Key Stage 4 pupils, entered into a pilot partnership with a neighbouring secondary school in June 2013. Two acting heads of centre, who job share the position, were appointed from the secondary school at the same time.
- In September 2013, a new head was appointed for the Kirk Hallam site, which caters for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The majority are boys.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is well above average.
- Almost all pupils on the Breadsall and Sawley sites have been permanently excluded from mainstream school and are on the roll of the Centre. All pupils on the Kirk Hallam site attend for five half-days and are on the roll of both their mainstream school and the Centre.
- The Centre caters for around 100 pupils each year, and their average length of stay is two terms. There are no pupils in Key Stage 1.
- The Centre uses the following alternative providers: REAL Education (Rethinking, Engagement and Approaches to Learning), DLDC (Derbyshire Learning Development Consortium), Nottingham Active Learning, Groundworks, and Derby College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding in order to further improve pupils' achievement by:
 - giving each pupil clear targets, matched closely to their ability, so that their work and expectations of learning are always sufficiently demanding, and they know when they have achieved what was intended
 - making sure that marking always specifies what each pupil needs to do to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by developing:
 - the consistency of processes and procedures across the sites
 - the leadership skills of the new heads of site so that they can contribute more to improving the quality of teaching
 - the role of subject leaders so that they can contribute more to checking and assessing pupils' progress
 - the use of data collected about behaviour to better inform actions taken to improve behaviour
 - the breadth of subjects being taught in Key Stages 2 and 4.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- As a result of previous disruption to learning, pupils join the Centre with attainment below that typical for their age. Almost all make good progress in personal development, which enables them to gain confidence and self-esteem and realise the benefits of school and learning. As a result, most pupils throughout the Centre go on to make good progress in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 on the Kirk Hallam site make good progress and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave. Almost all successfully maintain their place in mainstream school.
- A few pupils on the Breadsall site make some remarkable gains in English, mathematics and personal development by the time they leave the Centre. For example, pupils often progress at twice the rate of their mainstream peers and a few make even more progress than this. Similarly, by the time they leave the Centre, some pupils on the Sawley site have made exceptional gains in their personal development and work-related subjects, which are often provided by the off-site alternative providers. A few pupils achieve well at GCSE.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because it is given high priority. Support is well organised and planned to help each individual develop their skills and make up for lost time. Pupils say they like the range of reading books available for them to choose from.
- Progress in mathematics, though slightly slower than in English overall in 2012, is good throughout the Centre.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are carefully assessed. The pupils are well supported and progress towards their individual targets is checked regularly.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make at least the same progress as their peers and sometimes do better. This is because the small amount of funding received by the Centre is used to provide extra staff for the benefit of these pupils.
- Overall, the achievement of boys was stronger than the girls in 2012, except in spelling. However, the progress of boys and girls overall is not significantly different, and, over time, girls do equally as well as boys.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The school indicates that good teaching is increasing, particularly on the Sawley site. Subject-specialist teachers from the mainstream school have raised the staff's aspirations, especially for more-able pupils. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved recently because an excellent teacher has been identified and released from her school to teach for part of the week on the Sawley site. The subject leader on the Breadsall site has recently changed and plans he has put in place are having a good impact on progress in mathematics because what pupils can do is carefully recorded and used as a basis for planning what should be learned next.

- Staff have good relationships with pupils and this contributes well to the effective management of behaviour. Teaching assistants are swift to challenge any inappropriate behaviour and, as a result, pupils mostly have good attitudes to learning and make good progress. They say they enjoy their work most of the time.
- Sometimes, pupils are inspired by the teaching. On these occasions, they concentrate very well and are absorbed by what they are doing. As a result, they learn very well. One such example was observed in science, when Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils were fully involved in conducting investigations and observing and explaining their results.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning. They give the right amount of support and encouragement to help pupils achieve success as independently as possible. A very good example of this was observed in the garage at an alternative provider site. Pupils made good progress in car mechanics as a result of the good questioning and support given by knowledgeable assistants.
- Parents and carers agree that pupils are well taught. The Centre works exceptionally well in partnership with parents and carers to give them information about how well their children are doing and what they should do at home to build upon their achievement.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils will achieve in class and most lessons have a brisk pace. However, occasionally, pupils do not make as much progress as they could because learning objectives are not closely matched to the individual ability of every pupil.
- Staff praise achievement, good behaviour and success in lessons so that pupils are aware of when they have done well. However, written marking of pupils' work does not always indicate what to do to improve, which limits the impact marking has on pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Over time, as separate centres, the three sites have developed successful ways of improving pupils' behaviour to enable them to make a successful return to learning or employment. These successful procedures are developing their effectiveness further as a result of the pooling of staff expertise as the centres develop as one organisation.
- The key to the success of the procedures on the Breadsall site is the reward system. Reward points are identified each morning and usually have the effect of setting the day off to a positive start. Targets set for each pupil are carefully individualised and so they have a maximum impact on improvement in the shortest time.
- Target sheets are also the cornerstone of good improvements in behaviour at the Kirk Hallam site. A review of points awarded by the mainstream school staff and by parents are undertaken at the beginning of each half day and pupils think carefully about how well they have done or what they need to do to improve. This usually leads to improvement in behaviour, which means that pupils are not permanently excluded from their mainstream schools.
- Pupils on the Sawley site benefit from a well-planned programme of personal health and social education which enables them to consider topics, such as prejudice, in depth. This has a good impact on the development of an understanding of the different forms of bullying.
- The atmosphere in the centres is supportive and pupils say they feel safe. Toast is available for pupils when they arrive to help them settle. There are always many staff available on each

site and pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if the need arises. Parents and carers receive information almost daily about how well the pupils are doing and agree that their children feel safe and are cared for well.

- Pupils think about the impact of texting and using social network sites on bullying, and reflect on situations which have arisen affecting themselves and others. Any incidents that do occur are recorded in detail and parents and carers are fully involved by the centres when dealing with them.
- Pupils learn how to handle equipment safely, such as sharp knives and potato peelers in food studies and in workshops such as the alternative provider's garage. They understand that personal protective clothing is vital in work situations.
- Individual pupils' attendance usually rises rapidly when they start at the centres and improvement for some pupils is remarkable. The improvement is usually continued when they return to mainstream school or move on, and this plays a significant part in their continued success.
- Actions taken for each pupil following any issues are incorporated into behaviour targets based on each pupil's individual need, and these are carefully checked. However, data is not analysed systematically to identify any more general lessons that might be learnt.

The leadership and management are good

- The respected leadership of the senior head of centre has been highly effective in extending the good practice identified on the Breadsall site to the other two sites. She knows, however, that there is still work to do to achieve greater consistency in practice across the three sites.
- The Centre's partnerships with parents, carers, families, other schools in the local authority and a wide range of professionals and agencies are exceptional. They contribute very significantly to pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- The school works well to improve teaching. Procedures to check on the quality of teaching are well supported by the local authority, which provides good support and guidance for the Centre. Senior leaders provide detailed and helpful information to support teachers in improving their practice. However, the full impact of these procedures on improving the overall quality of teaching is yet to be seen as a full performance management cycle has not yet been completed.
- Leaders make sure that any additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used to good effect by providing extra resources for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, such as additional access to staff. Staff review the progress of eligible pupils and their good progress shows that the way the funding is being used is making a positive difference to these pupils' academic achievement and personal development.
- The school has an accurate view of its own performance. Senior leaders know that data from the three sites needs to be presented in a more consistent form to enable comparison between the sites and with national information, in order to set priorities for improvement. Nevertheless, development plans are effective because they are sharply focused on improvement and state clearly what needs to be done. They reflect the clear vision of excellence for the Centre, identified in partnership with the management committee and the local authority.
- The senior leadership team was newly formed in September 2013. Members are highly

committed to supporting the senior head of centre in developing the Centre's practices. They have a shared vision of supporting pupils to make a successful return to mainstream school in the shortest possible time, or to move on to college, training or employment. However, subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in checking pupils' progress to contribute fully to school improvement.

- The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well. Improving pupils' reading skills is given high priority to enable them to move on successfully from the Centre. Physical well-being is prioritised through outdoor pursuits, especially walking and water sports at Key Stage 3, and in Key Stage 4 by good opportunities to weightlift in the secondary school weights room. Carefully planned arrangements for pupils when they transfer to other establishments give them the best chance of success. However, the curriculum for Key Stage 2 and the range of qualifications offered at Key Stage 4 are too narrow.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The management committee is developing rapidly under expert guidance from the local authority. It makes a strong contribution to leadership because members have a range of expertise which they bring to bear on improvement. Members increasingly challenge and support the Centre and ask searching questions of its leaders about its work. Members have a clear picture of what is happening in the Centre, in terms of the quality of teaching and pupils' performance compared with that of pupils nationally. Members know that senior leadership roles and responsibilities are developed well. The management committee manages the budget effectively and make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Members know how the pupil premium is spent and can identify the positive effect this is having on eligible pupils' achievement. They are involved in managing teachers' performance and have ensured the link between performance and staff pay.

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	131632
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424952

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Pam Reddy
Headteacher	Julie Brandt (Senior Head of Centre)
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
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