

# Broom Cottages Pupil Referral Unit

Broom Road, Ferryhill, County Durham, DL17 8AN

**Inspection dates** 2–3 October 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.

- Achievement overall requires improvement. This is because there is a lack of consistency in the progress made by pupils across the school, particularly in English.
- Pupils who have additional special educational needs do not always make sufficient progress because their needs are not sufficiently well recognised and met in some classrooms.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not ask questions which challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently well.
- Too few of the staff who work in Key Stages 3 and 4 have qualified teacher status. As a result, the quality of teaching requires improvement.
- Marking is undertaken regularly across all parts of the school, too often, however, staff only give positive feedback to pupils and do not give them sufficient guidance and direction on how to improve their work.
- The quality of teaching is not sufficiently well monitored by leaders and managers. This is because targets set for staff do not link sufficiently with the school's plans for future improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting senior leadership team has developed and implemented a more effective behaviour management system.
- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and as a result, pupils make good progress.
- The vast majority of pupils' behaviour improves when they arrive at the school and settle into the routines and as a result, many make a successful return to mainstream school. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers and trainers. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. The inspection team also examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspector studied health and safety documentation, teachers' planning for lessons and documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff and the quality of teaching as well as the school's system for checking pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff, two members of the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the views of three parents who spoke with inspectors on the telephone. One parent made their views known on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Francis Cain

Additional Inspector

Henry Moreton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Broom Cottages Pupil Referral Unit is a small school which serves the needs of pupils in Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 who have either been permanently excluded from school or are in danger of being so. All pupils who attend live in the city of Durham and surrounding areas.
- The school currently has 80 pupils on roll, all of whom are recognised as disabled or having special educational needs due to their behavioural difficulties. All of them are supported through school action plus. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The vast majority of pupils who attend are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from service families).
- Just under half of Key Stage 4 pupils attend school at a range of alternative provision for all or part of their time at the pupil referral unit (PRU). These institutions currently include Box Clever, Ponyworld and others.
- Inspectors were aware, during this inspection, that a serious incident which had occurred at the setting since the previous inspection had been investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspection judgements.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that learning set in lessons matches the needs of all pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs, in order to maximise the progress made by all pupils
  - ensuring all teachers have high enough expectations of what all pupils can achieve and use questions more effectively to improve pupils' thinking skills and develop their knowledge and understanding
  - improving the quality of marking across the school so that it not only praises pupils' efforts but gives them guidance on how to improve both the content and presentation of their work.
- Improve pupils' levels of achievement in English to that of mathematics by:
  - ensuring that the effective strategies used to improve pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 2 are also used to improve the English skills of pupils, particularly the less able, in Key Stage 3 and 4.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that targets set for individual staff to improve the quality of teaching are more closely linked to targets for improvement identified in the school improvement plan
  - increasing the number of qualified teachers to improve the overall quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The majority of pupils arrive at the school with low levels of attainment because of gaps in their education, often due to their behavioural needs. Once they settle in to the well-established routines of the school, many start to re-engage with learning and make progress socially, emotionally and academically.
- School data show that last year the vast majority of pupils who attended school made progress. Some made good and better progress from their starting points. However, too many, particularly in English, made too little progress.
- Despite a small increase in the number attaining GCSE passes, a small number in Key Stage 4 left with few qualifications or accreditations. As a result of this inconsistency, pupils' progress requires improvement overall.
- The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. This is because of the good quality of teaching and the high expectations of staff. The progress made ensures that the majority make a fast and successful transfer back to their mainstream setting.
- Progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 is less good overall because the quality of teaching is less good and staff often have lower expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, pupils who attend the well-regulated and often innovative off-site provision do better, particularly when the activities offer engagement and interest them. This high level of engagement could clearly be seen on a visit to a provider with a focus on sport, where the attendance and attitudes to learning of pupils have improved dramatically. Here, as a result of an equally good focus on English and mathematics, levels of attainment are beginning to rise.
- Last year, attainment in English was lower overall than in mathematics in Key Stage 3. This is because, although pupils now have more opportunity to read through the introduction of a daily reading session, the impact on pupils' reading skills has yet to be seen. Less-able pupils are also not given sufficient individual, targeted support to improve their reading skills.
- Because of the complicated nature of the school in which pupils stay for different lengths of time, it is difficult to evaluate closely the progress of different groups. However, last year pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals made slightly less progress overall than their peers in both English and mathematics. Analysis of school data suggests that their progress was approximately half a term behind other groups. School leaders are now rigorously tracking and monitoring the progress of all groups and ensure achievement for this group, alongside others, is starting to improve and the gap in achievement is beginning to close.
- Pupils' progress in other subjects, for example, information and communication technology (ICT) and science also requires improvement because the quality of teaching in these areas is not consistently good.
- Last year, the progress of the most-able pupils also required improvement. This was because planned learning and targets set in some lessons were not sufficiently challenging and resulted in pupils making less progress than they should have done.
- All pupils who attend the school have identified behavioural needs. Some have additional learning needs, for example, dyslexia. These pupils do not receive sufficient support through individually planned learning and as a result, progress for this group also requires improvement.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching overall requires improvement. This is because not enough is consistently good. This was clearly evidenced by the range in the quality of teaching observed during the inspection and the progress observed in pupils' books.
- Too frequently, staff do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and questions posed do not challenge pupils' knowledge sufficiently nor develop their thinking skills. As a result, pupils make less progress than they are capable of in the time

allowed.

- Some staff plan learning well and take into account data available on pupils' previous learning and abilities. This results in personalised learning which meets the needs of individual pupils well. However, in some lessons, teachers' planning is not sufficiently individualised and tasks are too broad and when this happens, progress slows, particularly for less-able pupils and those with additional needs.
- The vast majority of teachers across the school mark pupils' books regularly. However, teachers' written comments are often inconsistent in quality. Too little marking gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work to the next level or how to improve presentation. As a result, progress slows for some pupils.
- In lessons where teaching is good, learning is made purposeful and engaging. Consequently, pupils become involved and concentrate well and, often for the first time, grow in confidence in their own abilities. This reduces the barriers they face and their behaviour improves.
- An example of this was evident in a Key Stage 4 science lesson in which Year 11 pupils were undertaking a controlled physics investigation. They were interpreting data on the direction of beams of light. While the teacher supported one pupil who was ahead of the rest, the knowledgeable support staff assisted others to complete the investigation. Pupils were clearly absorbed by the task and showed very good attitudes to learning and as a result, made good progress in independently interpreting the results.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection expressed the view that most staff were good at improving the attitudes to learning of their children and as a result they made more progress than in previous settings.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils' standards of behaviour require improvement overall. This is because where teaching is less effective, pupils' behaviour is also less good as pupils become bored and 'switch off' from learning. However, the majority of pupils' behaviour shows improvement from that at their mainstream schools.
- Since the last inspection, many changes have taken place in the way in which school staff manage the behaviour of pupils. As a result of a stronger focus on discussion and a restorative behaviour approach in which pupils learn to recognise the impact of their actions, recorded serious incidents across the school have reduced significantly since last year.
- This, combined with careful supervision at break and dinner times, has increased harmony and calm behaviour outside lessons.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection say they feel safe and enjoy coming to school for the majority of the time and feel their views are respected by most staff.
- Pupils spoken to were well informed about the different forms bullying can take. They were also clear that bullying is not tolerated at the school and as a result happens more rarely than has been their experience in other schools. They felt the information given to them through the school's 'e-safety' policy had increased their understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Levels of attendance are increasing and are closely monitored by staff. Links with other agencies, for example, the Education Welfare Service, have further increased this rate of progress as has the work of the parent support advisor. Data also show that attendance improves for the majority of pupils once they join the centre compared to their time in mainstream schools.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement overall, however, much has been achieved over a short period of time by the acting senior leadership team.

- The acting headteacher and other senior leaders now have a clearer focus on the importance of raising standards and increasing the achievement of pupils across the school. This focus is beginning to impact on pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.
- This improvement, coupled with the impressive way in which school leaders have dealt with the difficulties they have faced over the last year, shows the determination of senior leadership and the governing body to continue to bring about change. This demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve further.
- However, before the school's overall effectiveness is able to move to good, leaders recognise much needs to be accomplished. For example, the quality of teaching needs to be more consistently good. Although teachers are observed regularly, the focus for these observations and the targets set for improvement do not consistently link with the school improvement plan. As a result, the quality of teaching is slower to improve, and effective action is not taken through the management of staff's performance to improve areas of weakness.
- Senior leaders are also aware that there is currently a large number of staff who do not have qualified teaching status who lead learning. Plans are in place to support some of these staff to gain qualified teacher status. However, this has not been implemented fully and as a result, improving the quality of teaching is slower than it should be.
- Clear priorities for improvement have been identified in the school development plan, and effective targets have been set for improvement. For example, a much improved system is now in place for the monitoring and recording of serious incidents which occur both inside and outside the classroom and which has improved safeguarding procedures.
- Senior leaders are aware of the lack of progress of pupils with additional special educational needs and a new special educational needs coordinator has been appointed. However, her work has yet to show an effect on improving the achievement of this group.
- Opportunities for pupils to study a wider curriculum are now being reintroduced as staff organise trips to outdoor locations to study the natural world and survival skills. These are popular with pupils, one of whom described a recent expedition as 'brilliant'. These experiences increase pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- While behaviour requires improvement overall, senior leaders are now more effectively addressing current issues and have improved behaviour in lessons. This has been through the continuous application of the newly introduced behaviour management policy and through the strong relationships that staff establish with pupils.
- Safeguarding practices and policies meet current standards. Since the last inspection, school leaders, with the support of the local authority, have improved safeguarding measures significantly. For example, all staff have received extensive safety training around the safe restraint of pupils and record keeping is now to a much higher standard.
- Feedback from parents who spoke to the inspection team was wholly positive with comments such as: 'My child enjoys coming to school now and is really keen to succeed'. This is evidence of the good job the majority of parents feel the school is doing in improving outcomes for their children.
- The school has benefited from a high level of well-targeted and sustained support from the local authority which has guided and supported school leaders through recent difficulties and has helped ensure positive outcomes for pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The management committee has recently been subject to reorganisation. In response to recent guidance, it has widened its membership to include senior staff from local schools and a good level of representation from the community, including a parent. Currently, members offer good support and challenge to school leaders, particularly in relation to staffing, the achievement of pupils and financial issues. They have a good understanding of data relating to pupils' achievement and are in the process of developing a sub-committee which aims to offer further support in improving the quality of teaching. As a result, they are well placed to offer a good level of support and challenge. Working with senior leaders, they are also developing an effective system for checking the performance of staff, which rewards good teaching and will begin to address underperformance of staff. They also monitor the effective spending of pupil

premium funding which this year has been used to develop a 'nurture' unit in Key Stage 1, 2 and 3. The unit is due to open next week and aims to support the social and emotional needs of six pupils who are in danger of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. Governors have overseen the spending of the school's primary sports funding which has been used to pay for sports coaches to improve the quality of physical education teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.

## 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>	113992
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	425708

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>	6–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sam Robbins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Farrer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01740 656040
<b>Fax number</b>	01740 656040
<b>Email address</b>	d.farrer101@durhamlearning.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

