

The Key Education Centre

Tukes Avenue, Gosport, Hampshire, PO13 0SG

Inspection dates 10–11 October 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. Many arrive with skill levels that are well below average for their age, reflecting their poor attendance records and negative attitudes towards school.
- The centre and one-to-one tuition service is effective in helping students to take an interest in their education again, so that they make good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All Year 11 pupils in 2013 gained GCSE or vocational qualifications appropriate to their starting points and moved on successfully to further education, training or other specialist provision.
- Teaching in most lessons is good and occasionally excellent. In the best lessons, planning is clear about what students will learn, conducted with a sense of urgency, enjoyable and pitched at the right level.
- Students' behaviour is good both inside and outside the classroom. While the attendance of many students is low when they arrive, at the centre it quickly improves as they begin to re-engage and enjoy learning.
- The determined leadership of the headteacher has ensured the centre's effectiveness has improved since its previous inspection. Her vision for further improvements is fully supported by staff and the management committee.
- The centre is highly respected by other schools and other agencies. It has an excellent reputation in helping pupils to re-engage in their education and overcome the difficulties they face.
- Partnership with parents, carers and a wide range of professionals, schools and colleges contributes very well to students' personal development and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work is not set at the right level of difficulty to ensure all students make outstanding progress.
- Marking and the use of targets do not always show students how to improve their work and reach the higher levels.
- Information on the school's performance is not always summarised well for all leaders.
- The school has not ensured all student funding to which it is entitled, such as the pupil premium, has been received.
- Those leaders responsible for subjects need more frequent opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 14 lessons, including one taking place at an alternative provider. Over two thirds of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Additional information was gathered from observations during informal times of the school day. The inspector examined students' work in files and books.
- Students were heard reading in classes.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, students, parents, the chair of the management committee and another member and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector 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 inspector looked at minutes of the management committee, the school development plan, records of lesson observations and the targets set for teachers.
- The inspector also looked at documents that track pupils' progress and documentation on how the Centre gains a view of their performance. The inspector examined the Centre's procedures for safeguarding.
- A visit was undertaken to Fareham College, which provides alternative courses for older students.

Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Key Education Centre has relocated from two separate sites to a new school building on a single site since the last inspection.
- The centre caters for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. The majority of students are dual registered and remain the responsibility of the mainstream school.
- Students are usually referred either because they are permanently excluded from mainstream school or because they are at risk of this happening. Some have health issues or anxieties resulting in difficulties attending their usual school and may receive education at the centre or at home through the One-to-One Tuition Service. This service caters for both primary- and secondary-aged students.
- Students may be admitted at any time during the course of the school year.
- Most students stay for around two to three terms and then return to mainstream education, but this is variable and dependent on the individual needs of the students. Some go on to be educated in the more specialist provision of a special school. Other students leave to further their education and training
- The majority of students are White British boys.
- Approximately one third of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding but this varies from year to year. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible free school meals, children from service families and children looked after by the local authority. The centre does not currently receive the pupil premium funding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that students' work is always precisely pitched at a level to secure the maximum progress in lessons, particularly for the most able
 - using targets and marking consistently in all lessons so that students understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - improving the quality and use of the information collected on the effectiveness of the school's work by summarising it more sharply and consistently, so that it is easy to identify trends, strengths and where improvements need to be made
 - providing more frequent opportunities for those staff responsible for subjects to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work to ensure all students learn at a rapid rate
 - ensuring that school secures all additional income for students eligible for pupil premium.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many students have had a poor start to their educational experience, considerable periods of absence and are very reluctant to participate in lessons. Consequently, there are many gaps in their learning.
- Nearly all students make at least good progress over time and some make outstanding progress in both English and mathematics. For some individual students the improvement in literacy is as much as the equivalent of one academic year in just over two terms at the centre, and similarly in mathematics. Consequently, students leave with standards that are much closer to the national average than when they started.
- In 2013, almost all students gained a range of national qualifications, including in English and mathematics, at GCSE A–G and at the higher levels A*–C. The increasing proportion of students gaining appropriate qualifications and work-related learning awards confirms the clear trend of improvement. Lesson observations and checks on students' work indicate that this is set to continue.
- All of the students who left the school during the last year are sustaining places in mainstream schools or have moved on to the next stage of their education or specialist provision.
- The centre gives a high priority to developing the students' speaking, listening and reading skills. Staff use a wide range of strategies to engage the more reluctant students, including using specific pieces of writing that challenge their thinking about moral issues. In an effective English lesson, students made rapid progress in developing their understanding of the author's use of language to show the effect of racial prejudice.
- Most students read regularly and many make significant gains in reading and spelling across subjects because teachers regularly check students' understanding and encourage them to use subject-specific vocabulary in all lessons.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium are making the same progress in lessons as other students because additional adults are used effectively to support their learning. Consequently, they achieve GCSE grades in English and mathematics in line with other students.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 spend part of their timetable studying off site. Their progress is good. The arrangements for checking their work, attendance, punctuality and behaviour are effective.
- Those students who receive individual tuition at home also make equally good progress that enables them to re-engage with their learning.
- Centre staff work in partnership well with an array of other professionals, in health and social care for example, to ensure that students are well supported, particularly those with additional emotional or medical needs. Such carefully planned cooperative work helps to secure the good outcomes that are now being recorded.
- On occasion, not all students make the best progress possible because work set by teachers is not always at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most able. Marking and targets do not always clearly show students how to improve their learning and reach the higher levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good use of information from tests taken by students when they start at the unit helps teachers to choose and plan appropriate courses for students to study. This helps to build students' confidence and gives them an incentive to attend school more regularly. Occasionally the information is not used effectively to set work at the right level of difficulty in lessons so that the most able students are challenged to reach the highest levels.
- In the vast majority of lessons, students are engaged and their interest is kept throughout the lesson because materials are carefully chosen and presented with enthusiasm. The teachers' good subject knowledge introduced into the lesson often intrigues students and develops their

interest further. In science, students were enthused by the use of toys to develop their skills in predicting and reasoning about making a fair test of distances travelled.

- In mathematics, students were fully engaged and motivated and made outstanding progress in their understanding and application of probability. The teacher used his extensive knowledge of the subject, and of the individual students, to provide clear guidance, rigorous challenge and just enough support when required, to allow high levels of independent working. Regular checks on students' understanding through probing questions ensured they were moved on quickly in their learning so that all achieved exceptionally well.
- Strong partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants are evident and ensure learners access appropriate support that enables a good pace to learning. They also carefully resolve any misunderstandings by explaining the meaning of technical language and breaking tasks down into smaller steps. There are good relationships between the staff and pupils.
- Teaching delivered through external providers, commissioned by the centre and that provided by the one-to-one tuition service is good. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of these alternative provisions and students' progress is tracked carefully alongside that of others to ensure all achieve well.
- Occasionally, written marking of pupils' work does not indicate what to do to improve or is not used effectively to create individual targets for learning, which limits its impact on students' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of students clearly enjoy coming to the Key Education Centre, so much so that some occasionally show reluctance to leave and return to mainstream schools. This is because they feel safe, secure and happy within the centre and feel their opinions are listened to and acted upon by leaders, particularly in the daily student and staff meetings.
- Consequently, attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Most students make vast improvements in their levels of attendance when compared with those at their previous schools, and attendance is closer to national figures.
- Students value the fact that staff are not aggressive when managing behaviour. There are very clear expectations of both students and staff and the focus is on resolving issues, not punishing or blaming students. Physical restraint is never used and there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years.
- Students spoken to during the inspection were clear that incidents of bullying, including homophobic bullying, are rare. This, they feel, is because of the very positive attitudes of staff and the respect shown by both students and staff to each other. A comment made by one student summed up the feelings of many: 'I feel like staff respect me here.'
- Typically, students behave well in class, around the centre, and in the alternative provision they attend for part of their education. Where behaviour slips in lessons, it is generally because tasks are not well matched to students' levels of ability and are not sufficiently challenging or motivating.
- Parents and students agree how much students' behaviour improves during their time at the unit. Many students arrive with a history of failure in their previous schools, and say that the centre has helped them manage their particular difficulties.
- Multi-agency involvement, individual support programmes through the one-to-one tuition service, and highly effective partnerships with mainstream schools and colleges ensure a coordinated approach with families and a whole-team-around-the-child approach.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has been extremely effective in raising expectations and ambition across the centre and one-to-one tuition service that has moved its overall effectiveness from satisfactory to good. Relocation to a new school building has not hindered the drive for improvement.

- Effective management of staff performance, with frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, has ensured that teaching is now good overall. The outcomes of monitoring have been used to set objectives to improve the quality of teaching and students' progress. The achievement of these is carefully linked to salary progressions. Support and further training have been used well to improve the quality of teaching.
- Self-evaluation is effective and has contributed well to improvements. A good development plan has been established and this too is helping to drive higher standards. Centre leaders, including the management committee, rightly recognise that those leaders responsible for subjects need more frequent opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work to ensure that all students make rapid gains in their learning. Consequently, their planning for improvement is not always clearly focused and, therefore, less effective than it could be
- The centre keeps extensive records of the close checks it makes on students' progress and other aspects of its work. Nevertheless, these are occasionally not well enough summarised to provide a clear, sharp overview of trends and strengths and where improvements need to be made. As a result, teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty and this can slow students' progress.
- The school provides a broad range of learning opportunities that are well suited to students' needs and interests. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education or re-integration to mainstream settings. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted across subjects and during the inspection students reflected on moral questions in English, considering the emotional impact of prejudice in books and how it relates to society today.
- The local authority provides effective and proportionate support. The regular checks of the quality of education and the training on checking the accuracy of students' progress, by the local authority's adviser, have been planned carefully and well received by staff.
- All staff are committed to creating equality of opportunity, tackling any discrimination and improving life chances for their students. Although the centre does not currently receive pupil premium funding, senior leaders have ensured that school funding has been effectively used to ensure students who are eligible for pupil premium achieve at similar levels to their classmates.
- Rigorous safeguarding practices are in place, including for those off site. This provision is continuously monitored and reviewed to ensure safety and good outcomes for individuals.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The relatively new management committee gives good support to the centre, and knowledgeable, effective challenge to the headteacher, who keeps its members well informed about the progress made by students, including those in receipt of free school meals. The experienced chair and committed members have come to grips quickly with the new regulations and responsibilities devolved from local authorities to schools of this type since April 2013. They manage finance efficiently to ensure all students achieve well. They recognise that they need to pursue the funding available for students eligible for pupil premium more vigorously. They have a secure understanding of the performance management of staff, including making a clear link between their classroom performance and pay. Procedures for the headteacher's performance management are well established. The management committee makes sure the school uses safe recruitment practices and gives the safeguarding of students a high priority.

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	133778
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	426406

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	48
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Christine Toner
Headteacher	Linda Alavi
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 January 2012
Telephone number	02392 528653
Fax number	02392 528654
Email address	linda.alavi@hants.gov.uk

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