

Voyage Learning Campus

Unit 1, Crown Works, Ashcroft House, Weston-Super-Mare, BS24 9AX

Inspection dates 14-15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because they are taught well. Year 11 pupils gain good qualifications in these subjects.
- Pupils' artwork is stunning, reflecting the creativity in the teaching of this subject.
- Innovative vocational subjects equip pupils with excellent skills that prepare them exceptionally well for the work place.
- All Year 11 pupils start suitable work-related college courses upon leaving school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Most pupils overcome their emotional difficulties and become confident learners.
- In a short space of time the management committee and principal have taken decisive action to improve the consistency and quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Their actions have been successful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers take too long explaining to pupils what they need to do. This slows their learning.
- In a few lessons, teachers make insufficient use of their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do to plan new work to challenge them to progress more quickly.
- Primary aged and Key Stage 3 pupils are not moved back into mainstream schools speedily enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all five sites (including the provision for eight Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties) and the two key site provisions where the Home Tuition Service is based.
- Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 17 different teachers and a higher learning teaching assistant across all of the sites. Seven of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also heard pupils read (on the Worle site: where most of the primary aged pupils are located) and conducted a work scrutiny while observing lessons on all sites.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the school improvement learning partner, a representative from the local authority and representatives from the management committee.
- Inspectors examined pupils' behaviour plans, individual educational plans, pupil progress data, attendance data, re-integration figures (the number returning to mainstream schools), college destinations, teachers' planning, the school's improvement plan, monitoring of teaching information, a wide range of policies including the appraisal policy and all safeguarding policies and minutes of the management committee meetings.
- Inspectors examined 59 Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff.
- Because less than 10 parents and/or carers responded to the online questionnaire Parent View inspectors could not view what they had to say (there have to be at least 10 responses before the system shows any data). However, inspectors examined the school's recent parental survey data and individual messages sent by parents and grandparents marked for the attention of the inspection team.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
Rowena Green	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This new school was officially launched as such on 1st April 2013 (at the start of the financial year) and the principal took up post on that date. There was a lead in time from 1st September 2012, following a strategic decision to amalgamate three separate pupil referral units and merge the local authority provision for education other than at school across North Somerset into one integral school.
- Based on five different sites (and the Key Stage 4 provision is split into two on one of those sites) the school provides education for Key Stage 1 – Key Stage 4 pupils at risk from exclusion and those who are permanently excluded from school. It also provides the tuition service on two of its sites for pupils with medical conditions ranging from a broken leg to complex mental health conditions. Provision is made on the Weston-Super-Mare site for hard to place Key Stage 4 pupils who often enter the county during Key Stage 4. The school has absorbed provision for eight Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, based at Acorns on the Worle site. Before the formation of the school this was managed by the local authority Education Other Than At School Service. In addition the school monitors the provision for pupils whose parents and/or carers elect to educate them at home.
- Staffing structures and systems are new and there has been considerable change as a result of this recent re-organisation.
- The local authority has just allocated funding to appoint a re-integration officer to work with the school.
- Pupils are a mix of dual registered (meaning they remain on the roll of the school from where they came as well as being placed on the roll of this school) and solely on the roll of this school.
- Pupil premium funding (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is held back in part or full by the home schools of dual registered pupils to support their re-integration. For the other eligible pupils, it is allocated based on their specific needs. The numbers vary from week-to-week as pupils join the school or re-integrate back into a mainstream school. In September 2013, the number of eligible pupils was about 7%.
- All pupils are identified as having special educational needs at school action plus. The proportion with statements of special educational needs varies from week to week, but at the time of the inspection there were 16 such pupils. Their range of needs is wide and complex. It includes attachment disorder, anxiety and depression, autistic spectrum disorders, physical disabilities and many learning difficulties.
- Most pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language.
- The school makes use of alternative provision. There are a number of Level 1 Link Courses provided at Weston College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make effective use of what pupils already know and can do to plan work at the correct level of challenge to move them on more rapidly with new learning
 - teachers do not take too long to explain to pupils what they are expected to do in lessons and so sustain a good pace of learning at all times.
- Increase the speed at which primary aged and Key Stage 3 pupils are returned to mainstream schools by working in partnership with the newly appointed local authority re-integration officer and mainstream headteachers across North Somerset.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment on entry is different for each pupil. Typically, it is below average because pupils have gaps in their learning. As pupils settle they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is good in English and mathematics.
- In 2013 the most-able Year 11 pupils gained good GCSE passes in English and mathematics (including at grades A-C). Lower achieving students who gained Entry Level qualifications in these subjects achieved as well as their peers measured against their lower starting points. Pupils achieve good GCSE success in a wide range of subjects.
- Achievement in art and design and photography is outstanding, with GCSE passes typically at A*-B.
- Pupils develop outstanding employability skills and gain valuable vocational qualifications that enable them to progress to high quality work-related courses at college. The work-related subjects such as construction and motor vehicle maintenance along with the Link 1 courses taken at Weston College contribute significantly to pupils' development of good literacy and numeracy skills in a relevant context.
- Pupil premium funding is targeted individually on a pupil-by-pupil basis, for example, diet and nutrition support or funding to take alternative subject qualifications outside school. Funding is also used to support literacy. Eligible pupils' make good progress in reading, writing and solving mathematical problems. Children looked after by the local authority are often among the highest achieving pupils in the school.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make rapid gains in swimming because specialist funding is used to purchase a swimming coach for them.
- The few minority ethnic pupils receive the same level of support and access to good quality learning programmes as their peers and so make the same good progress as they do.
- There are fewer girls than boys. On occasions pupils are placed in single sex groups so as to accelerate their learning. There is an excellent mix of boy and girl friendly activities and courses. These engage and motivate both boys and girls well. Both genders, consequently, achieve well.
- Hard to place pupils make rapid progress. So much so that very few of the 10 placed in the school in September 2013 are currently in the school: almost all have been placed on suitable courses in mainstream schools.
- Overall, pupils with the most complex medical, including mental health, needs make good progress. A few slip backwards because of deterioration in their health. They are well-supported through periods when their health is not good, but these periods slow their academic progress.
- Similarly, the few pupils who lapse into trouble are well-supported by the Youth Offending Team. They access an off-site classroom run by this team (funded by the school) and so sustain an education aimed at getting them back on track.
- Key Stage 2 pupils educated on the two Key Stage 3 sites (one serves as a Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 site) are mostly re-integrated back into mainstream schools. However, this is not the

case for the Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils provided for at the Acorns or for a significant proportion of the Key Stage 3 pupils. All Key Stage 4 pupils go on to college and this is significant re-integration success.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is at least good. There are pockets of outstanding teaching, particularly in art and the work-related subjects.
- The most-able pupils are 'pushed' in lessons to notch their work up a gear so as to achieve the highest possible GCSE grades in English and mathematics.
- In the best lessons teachers use their knowledge of what pupils need to learn to plan work at the correct level of challenge to move them on quickly with new learning. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson for lower achieving pupils the task set of writing a letter for a part-time job was relevant and enabled the pupils to gain formal letter writing skills in a context that motivated them to learn.
- Teaching of vocational subjects equips pupils with outstanding work-related skills. For example, in a bricklaying lesson the teacher demonstrated how to cut and lay a half-corner brick with precision explaining the technique carefully. Pupils watched attentively and asked questions of the teacher confidently. They then practised the technique and achieved success.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught across all subjects. Pupils enjoy learning these skills through hands-on practical activities in the motor vehicle workshop and catering lessons.
- Small class sizes and effective use of teaching assistants ensure that in almost all lessons the most-able pupils are challenged to reach their full potential and pupils with additional special educational needs receive the support they require to improve their spelling, reading and hone their mathematical problem solving skills.
- Typically, lessons are taught at a brisk pace, pupils know what they are expected to learn and are given good feedback on how to improve their work. Teachers plan well and provide interesting activities as seen in a Key Stage 2 religious education lesson. Expectations are high and when pupils ask questions teachers use their expert subject knowledge to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding through the answers they give.
- In a few lessons the pace of learning is slowed because teachers take too long explaining to pupils what it is they are meant to learn. Occasionally, teachers do not make sufficient use of pupils' prior attainment to set them activities to challenge them at the right level to progress quickly enough in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils arrive at school having experienced difficulties in managing their behaviour in their previous schools. Often they have not engaged with learning for a long time.
- Staff skilfully support pupils in working through their negative feelings about school. Consequently, most pupils re-engage with learning. They see a purpose in education and want to succeed.

- When pupils slip into trouble outside of school, the local Youth Offending Team is usually successful in keeping them engaged with learning.
- Behaviour is good. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils respect the sites, keep them tidy and look after the displays of their work in corridors. They welcome visitors and talk enthusiastically about how this school has helped them turn their lives around.
- There are very few instances of bullying and racism. Spontaneous flares of aggression are exceptionally rare. Such instances are tackled swiftly and positive outcomes result. Fixed term exclusions have fallen very considerably since September 2013.
- Pupils feel safe. They all have immediate access to an adult who they trust.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cyber and prejudiced types of bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe when using a computer and in a work-place (such as a construction site or hairdressing salon). Older pupils know that getting caught up in a gang is likely to get them into trouble. Their knowledge of the dangers of getting involved in extremist political groups is good.
- Pupils know the harmful effects associated with smoking, but a few find it hard to 'kick' a long-standing habit. There is a robust plan to support them to quit. Pupils understand the risks associated with unsafe sex.
- Attendance for most pupils has increased significantly since being at this school. For many it is high. The school works ceaselessly to improve the attendance of a few pupils who do not attend as regularly as they ought

The leadership and management are good

- Since taking up post the principal has been effective in his drive to improve teaching. The quality of teaching is better across all five sites compared to what it was in March of this year.
- Upon his arrival the principal, supported by the local authority, carried out learning walks across all sites. Findings showed that not all teachers were consistently setting tasks at the correct level of challenge for pupils. Training and coaching was implemented to bring about change. Most of the time teachers now plan to challenge all of the pupils in their classes.
- The school analyses its work diligently. It has secured in a short space of time an accurate picture of what it does well and what needs further improvement. It uses its analysis to improve. Having discovered that individual learning goals could be sharper it has embarked on refining individual education plans, but it is too early to evaluate impact.
- Senior and middle leadership roles are evolving. There is evidence of good impact. The faculty structure is improving planning for subjects and ensuring consistency across all sites. Leadership of specific therapeutic programmes is effective and benefits students. Joined up working with health and other agencies supports individual pupils and their families well.
- Leaders work hard to provide equal chances for all pupils to succeed. Any form of discrimination is tackled rigorously. But, some pupils, particularly Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils at Acorns, are not moved back into mainstream schools quickly enough.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by work-experience, a wide range of vocational courses, outdoor

education (rock climbing and caving), trips, sports coaching and lunch-time clubs. Advice and guidance is strong both in respect of supporting pupils in overcoming their emotional barriers and about their next learning steps. Careers guidance is good.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Reflection on how to better their behaviour and also on the plight of others less fortunate than themselves is good. Through art projects, religious education and learning to speak Spanish and French their awareness of cultural diversity is raised.
- Work with parents is good. They are well-supported in helping their children come through 'tough and dark times'.
- Support from the local authority is good. The local authority supports the training programme for teachers. Financial support is very good. Funding has been allocated for a specific re-integration officer to work with the school.
- The principal has a clear strategy for developing the skills of all staff so that they are equipped to apply for more senior posts within this school and beyond its walls.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The management committee meets its functions well. It has health, education, Youth Offending Team, and parental representation. Its skills profile enables the management committee to support pupils in vulnerable circumstances effectively. In a very short space of time the management committee has provided the school with a clear sense of direction and strategic steer as the new provision continues to develop. It asks challenging questions about pupils' progress and makes sure that teachers' performance, based on how effectively they promote pupils' learning, is linked to pay. No underperformance is tolerated. Procedures for the performance management of the principal are in place and are compliant with regulations. Directly involved in self-evaluation and strategic planning, members of the committee are on the ball and understand the importance of managing change to ensure this school remains financially sustainable and effective. All safeguarding requirements are met.

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	138455
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	408953

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	6–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Rod Bell
Principal	Nick Donnelly
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01275 884164
Fax number	01275 854635
Email address	Nick.donnelly@n-somerset.gov.uk

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