

Children's Support Service - South Quadrant, Basildon

High Road, Langdon Hills, Basildon, SS16 6HG

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school is strongly focused on helping each pupil to fill in gaps in their learning, improve their behaviour and personal development, and move forward quickly.
- Pupils of all abilities make academic progress at about twice the rate expected, and often faster than this. Their literacy and numeracy skills improve rapidly.
- Art is a strength. Pupils often gain good GCSE passes in art.
- A steady stream of pupils return to mainstream well within a year of joining the school.
- Teaching is very effective. It is characterised by excellent relationships with pupils and a strong focus on improving their personal development, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils' fast progress boosts their confidence and self-esteem so that they become willing to try and work hard.
- Expert behaviour management helps pupils' behaviour to improve considerably.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in almost all lessons are excellent. They enjoy their work and are keen to improve.
- Pupils' personal development improves at a fast rate.
- The staff have faith and confidence in the leadership of the headteacher. They present as a committed, unified, happy team.
- Parents, carers and pupils are happy with the school's work.
- The school provides a rich, memorable range of subjects and activities that form a very good basis for teaching and learning.
- The school analyses pupils' achievement and provision carefully and frequently. It works swiftly to improve any identified areas for development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, taught by 14 different teachers. Four of these observations were conducted jointly with a senior leader. Lessons were observed in all centres and a local library.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers (heads of centres), the assistant headteacher in charge of the Opal service, subject leaders, the chair and another member of the management committee, and two representatives of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with pupils throughout the two days.
- There were too few responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers) to be shown, but the school's recent surveys of their views were taken into account. Eighty-two responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also taken into consideration.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of documentation including: pupils' work and records of their progress; the school's records of the quality of teaching and how it works to improve it; records of pupils' attendance, behaviour, conduct and the school's strategies to improve them; the school's self-evaluation and development plans, and documents relating to safeguarding and the work of the management committee.

Inspection team

Judith Charlesworth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Godfrey Bancroft	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Children's Support Service - South Quadrant pupil referral unit and off-site service ('the school') has expanded since the previous inspection. It now comprises three centres and a service for individuals unable to attend school for various reasons. The Saturn Centre is in Langdon Hills on the outskirts of Basildon, the Galaxy Centre is in Basildon, and the Jupiter Centre is situated in Hadleigh, between Basildon and Leigh-on-Sea. The Opal service (Off-site Provision and Access to Learning) runs from the Saturn Centre and operates in a variety of settings including the local hospital, pupils' homes and public locations such as libraries.
- The school caters for a wide range of pupils, most of whom have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some have additional difficulties such as moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions. Pupils currently include those who have been permanently excluded, those in danger of exclusion ('positive referrals'), those with medical or mental health needs and anxious school refuses.
- The local authority also commissions the school to provide education for pupils in Years 9 to 11 who have statements of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties for whom they have no alternative placement. These students generally remain at the school until the end of Year 11.
- The Jupiter Centre caters for Key Stage 4 students only and the Galaxy Centre for Key Stages 3 and 4. The Saturn Centre and Opal provision cater for all key stages.
- Just over one quarter of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Some of these are awaiting placement at special schools, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The pupil roll fluctuates on a weekly basis. During the inspection there were 171 pupils on roll. Typically, a slightly smaller proportion of pupils than usually found are known to be eligible for free school meals, and a larger proportion than usual are looked after by the local authority. Together, these proportions mean that a broadly average proportion is eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra government funding to support the achievement of these particular groups.
- The school uses a wide range of alternative provision to supplement the education that it provides at its centres. These are: Circles Farm, Crown College, Eden Training, Gateway FM, ITEC, Motorvations, Prospects Canvey Skills Campus, Rallysport Engineering Academy, and SEC.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work with the local authority to resolve issues that have an impact on pupils' attendance, safety and turnover relating to:
 - transport to and from school
 - lack of sufficient space at some centres
 - delays in moving pupils to special schools when this is specified on their statements.
- Reduce incidents of unsociable and challenging behaviour and fixed term exclusions at the Galaxy and Saturn Centres to the very low level found at the Jupiter Centre.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. The school's records show that, on average, most pupils in the centres and the Opal service make at least double the expected rate of progress.
- Rigorous assessments identify pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding when they first join the school and show that attainment on entry is generally below average for their age. This is due to the impact their previously poor attendance, disrupted education and personal difficulties have had on their ability to learn. The curriculum is tailored for each individual to fill in gaps and move them forward. Outstanding teaching quickly closes the gap between pupils' attainment on entry and the expectations for their age.
- Pupils' personal and social development is also accurately measured and recorded, and shows rapidly improving behaviour, self-esteem and attitudes to school. This puts them in a much better frame of mind for learning, which they come to enjoy again. Together, pupils' improved personal development and academic skills allow many to return quickly to mainstream education.
- There are numerous groups of pupils at the school, including those taught by the Opal service. Information on each pupil's achievement is rigorously analysed, and shows that all groups make excellent progress from their starting points. The progress made by these groups often betters national trends. For example, last year pupils entitled to the pupil premium made better progress than others in both mathematics and English, and boys outperformed girls. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in all groups make similar progress to their peers.
- Each term the school investigates differences in the rate of progress of particular groups, for example, that of excluded pupils in comparison to positive referrals, and those with and without statements of special educational needs. Where necessary, school development and staff training are focused on improving the achievement of any group which does relatively less well. The progress of boys and pupils with low reading ages have both benefited from this approach within the past year.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are often at a low level when they first join the school. Throughout the school, expert teaching helps pupils to make excellent progress in these subjects. Gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are quickly identified and closed. Staff emphasise the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in all subjects, and work is set at the right level to match each pupil's literacy abilities. The quality of art work is exceptional and pupils often gain good GCSE grades in this subject.
- Last year, pupils throughout the school performed particularly well in science and mathematics. Overall, pupils in each key stage and each centre achieve similarly, with termly variations. Most pupils achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Almost all pupils in Key Stage 4 leave school with useful, nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSEs, and go on to further education, employment or training. Pupils with anxieties respond very well to the school's supportive approach. Their attainment and progress are often high. This was seen in an art lesson where three Year 10 pupils created high quality, completely individual pieces of creative work on the theme of bullying in the space of one lesson.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding achievement is underpinned by excellent teaching. It is characterised by strong relationships with staff and highly effective support for behaviour and personal development which help pupils engage in learning. Learning aims are made completely clear so that pupils know exactly what they are aiming for. Displays, marking and discussion with staff tell pupils what they need to do to achieve the next level up in their work. Each pupil's learning in lessons is carefully noted and contributes to plans for the next lesson's work.
- Classrooms are welcoming and interesting. Pupils' work, support for literacy and numeracy, and displays relating to current topics, such as ancient Egypt and work-related learning, reflect the high quality of teaching and learning. Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is widely evident. Displays of excellent art work, including many three-dimensional structures, contribute to the overall atmosphere of respect and value. Photos of achievements, certificates, rewards and attendance figures are displayed to reinforce their positive value.
- In almost all lessons, pupils' behaviour and willingness to cooperate is exemplary. Most pupils listen well to each other's contributions. The school has many strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy, particularly in ensuring that they have opportunities to use and develop their skills in all subjects, a need identified by the previous inspection. Staff support improvement in speaking and listening skills carefully; on occasion, for example, staff say, 'What I think you meant to say is... .' Pupils are pleased and proud of how well they are doing and happy to discuss their work with adults. Some commented that they enjoy reading and feel that their reading skills are improving.
- Teaching in the primary department is very effective. When taught as a group, pupils are closely supported and encouraged to work by excellent relationships with staff. Praise and reward are used very well, as is humour and a good level of challenge. Staff understand the need for very short breaks to help pupils remain interested and concentrating. Any distracted behaviour is quickly and firmly re-focused, with additional support provided until the pupil is working independently again. Staff constantly check pupils' work and understanding, offering encouragement such as, 'I'm loving the sound of that, now write it down.'
- Secondary pupils across the school are taught in very small groups, and often individually because each has a personalised curriculum. This means that teaching is completely focused on each individual's needs and results in very fast progress. Pupils are 'coached' and the atmosphere in classes is of collaborative working between staff and pupils. This was very well demonstrated in a science lesson on refraction of light where pupil and teacher worked together to determine the point of focus and explain 'odd' results. Throughout lessons, staff consistently check on pupils' work and use questioning very effectively to assess pupils' understanding, reinforce it and correct misunderstandings if necessary. Teaching assistants are very well briefed and work very effectively with pupils, clearly improving their learning and understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school recognises that pupils' emotional and social well-being and their academic achievement are inseparable. As a result, it places as much importance on improvement in personal development as on academic achievement. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are carefully assessed on entry and thereafter. Analysis of results shows that pupils usually make rapid progress in their personal development alongside their academic progress.

- Pupils are mostly friendly and sociable with one another. They listen to one another in class, and share space during lessons and at lunch times with few problems. Some pupils have difficulties in being with others. If this happens, it is usually when they first join the school and staff support them or teach them separately until this aspect of their development improves. A number of staff questionnaires commented that pupils' behaviour was often challenging until they built up a rapport with staff.
- Pupils are pleased that their skills improve rapidly, which raises their self-esteem and quickly improves their attitudes to school and learning. They appreciate the reward system and look forward to the vouchers they receive to spend in local shops. Keeping safe from internet and substance abuse, being kind, and anti-bullying are frequent topics in the strong provision for their personal development.
- Pupils' attendance is below average. Individuals' attendance very often shows great improvement from that at their previous school, for example, often doubling. Most pupils show great commitment to attending, despite having to travel for up to two hours on public transport to get to school. However, not enough individuals' attendance is in line with national averages. Attendance, overall, is also affected by the fact that a few students are not expected to attend school full-time, for instance, when they are first phasing in from their mainstream school.
- Deliberately anti-social incidents and fixed-term exclusions are infrequent but they do occur. Some differences are evident across the centres. For example, no bullying, racist or violent incidents were reported for last year in the Jupiter Centre, while a few were reported in the other two centres. The school's own surveys of the views of parents, carers, staff and pupils show that all groups are happy with pupils' behaviour and its management.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The success of leadership and management is underpinned by the staff's faith and confidence in the school's outstanding headteacher and their common commitment to providing the best for pupils. Several staff questionnaires made comments such as, 'Working here is a complete pleasure, pupils' needs are always put first.' Another wrote, 'I am valued and it is an exciting, vibrant atmosphere to work in.' The leadership team has recently been restructured to provide better subject leadership and more opportunity for staff to prepare for senior leadership roles, a need indicated by the previous inspection.
- Parents, carers, staff and pupils are regularly consulted and are very happy with the school's work. Comments from Year 11 school leavers include: 'I don't swear or run out or hit people (now),' and 'I've calmed down and become more positive about myself and others'. Partnership with parents and carers is very strong. The school works very closely with them to offer support, for example, in relation to attendance or extra professional intervention for their child.
- The school knows itself well. Self-evaluation is accurate and reflected directly in improvement plans. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are rigorous and shared with the management committee and staff. The targets set for teachers link closely with pupils' achievement and their own professional development.
- The school provides a wide range of interesting and relevant subjects and activities that meet pupils' varying needs very well. Literacy, numeracy and activities to improve pupils' independence and personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are of prime importance. Primary-aged pupils are taught most subjects of the National Curriculum in readiness for them to move back to mainstream or on to special school. At Key Stage 4, subjects and activities are relevant to individuals' interests and capabilities and

lead to useful accreditation which prepares them well for further education, training or employment. Older pupils receive good advice and support about future options from independent advisers.

- Alternative provision is used extensively, particularly at Key Stage 4, to provide vocational opportunities for pupils. Pupils' attendance, safety and behaviour, and the impact of the provision on achievement are rigorously checked and are unquestionably beneficial. However, pupils' attendance at these is not always a choice as the school centres themselves are short of space and cannot have all those on roll attending at the same time.
- Money received from the pupil premium is used well to provide additional support for eligible pupils, for example, to boost their literacy, provide transport between centres, and provide extra support to sustain work-related placements. The school has plans to use its additional primary sports funding from next term as the funding has only just been received.
- The support given by the local authority for the quality of education is well received and effective. However, the school's ability to improve certain aspects of its work is limited by some factors that are out of its control. These include the blockage of places by pupils awaiting placement in special schools, particularly at Key Stage 2; transport arrangements, whereby most pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are expected to travel to school by bus which has an impact on attendance; the lack of escorts for primary-aged pupils who travel in taxis, which could be dangerous; and the lack of space in the centres resulting in a small amount of part-time attendance and the non-optional use of alternative provision. The senior leaders and management committee are in constant communication with the local authority about these matters.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee is experienced and knowledgeable and includes several people with backgrounds in educational leadership and management.
 - Members are kept very well informed about the school's work, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes by professional, informative reports and first-hand information. Members challenge senior leaders robustly on the basis of this information. They understand the link between teachers' performance, as measured by staff reviews and pupils' achievement, with any requests for increases in pay or responsibility, and the need to support any under-performing teachers.
 - All statutory duties are met, including those to safeguard pupils. Finances are well controlled and administered, both at school and management committee levels.

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	136035
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425341

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Diane Shepherd
Headteacher	Sharon Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2011
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