

# McKee Centre

College House, 63 Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, FY6 7AQ

## Inspection dates

21–22 January 2014

<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.

- Students' achievements during the time they are at the centre are not consistently good.
- Teachers do not always consider students' starting points when planning activities, so some students find the work easy and others lose interest because they find it too hard.
- Teaching assistants have not been given specific training so that they have the skills and knowledge to help students to learn effectively.
- A minority of students do not attend as regularly as they should because they find some lessons do not interest them nor help them to learn.
- The behaviour of a minority of younger students prevents teachers from teaching effectively and teachers do not use the behaviour policy effectively enough to reduce the number of student interruptions.
- Leaders and managers have not had accurate information available in the past about learning, progress, attendance and behaviour, and have not identified clearly what needs improvement nor planned the specific actions needed.
- There are not enough permanent staff to give students regular and consistently good teaching, particularly in mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, leaders and governors have taken decisive steps in the last six months to improve the collection and analysis of figures and information about the centre's work. They now have a clearer picture of what is working well and what needs to be better.
- Leaders and managers plan good opportunities for students to build their confidence and develop a wider range of personal and subject skills.
- Committed and caring staff support students very well so students, including those with medical needs, can overcome their reluctance to learn and take part more regularly in lessons. The centre's work to make sure all students are safe is effective.
- The staff work closely together and give good support to leaders in the steps they are taking to improve students' progress and confidence. Plans for improvement are acted upon promptly.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons, a form time session and two sessions away from the school site, one of which was taught by centre staff. One observation took place jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed students' general behaviour around the centre, talked to students about their reading and their work in the centre.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, other leaders, teachers, students, the Chair of the Management Committee and the community governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked carefully at records of students' achievement and their progress, records of attendance and behaviour, students' exercise books, policies, the centre's evaluation of what is working well and what needs to be better, the plans for actions to improve and information about steps taken to support students.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to review these.
- Inspectors looked at 15 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Nell Banfield, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The pupil referral unit admits students who have been excluded, or are in danger of being excluded, from school. A small minority of students have medical or mental health issues that prevent them from attending mainstream school regularly. The unit also supports students who become pregnant.
- Almost all students are supported at the school action plus stage of special educational needs. Two students are supported by a statement of special educational needs.
- Currently, a very small number of students are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. A large majority are supported by the pupil premium funding. This is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, for students who are looked after by the local authority and for the children of service families.
- The school works in close partnership with the local authority and has a leading role in the Troubled Families programme. The centre has been re-organised in the last 18 months. The current headteacher was appointed to manage these changes and lead the centre's future role.
- A small proportion of students attend courses away from the school site for part, or all, of the time, at Blackpool and Fylde College, Training 2000 Ltd., and a slightly larger group of younger students attend a course at 4Tech Moto.
- The centre holds a number of awards such as the Basic Skills Award, Healthy School status, the Eco Schools Silver Award, the Artsmark Gold and the Sportsmark Award.
- A student at the centre was recently chosen as the Prince's Trust Education Achiever of the Year.

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

- Ensure the quality of teaching is at least good so more students make faster progress by:
  - students explaining their thinking or describing their ideas in more detail so they develop their understanding and communication skills
  - students working on activities and tasks that are neither too easy nor too hard, that interest them and give them a sense that they can succeed and increase their knowledge
  - reducing the instances of calling out and interrupting so students can concentrate, listen and understand better what is being explained and what they are to do.
- Improve leadership and management so all staff are clearer about what they are working to improve, how this is to happen and how it will speed up the progress students make by:
  - developing a positive, clear and explicit system for teachers to use so students know what is expected of them and are motivated to behave and learn well
  - using the improved assessment and tracking measures to compare current and previous figures about learning, progress, behaviour and attendance, so staff are clear about what is already good and plan exactly what they need to do to increase student progress.
  - appointing permanent staff to ensure consistently good teaching across all subjects
  - clarifying how effectively the pupil premium funding has helped those students it supports to increase their progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The achievement of students requires improvement because not enough students are making consistently good progress both in lessons and over time.
- Some students make good progress in lessons and in their work. However, this is not the case for a minority of students, including the most able students. In some lessons, and particularly in mathematics, students' progress is slow because teaching is not effective enough. Records of lesson observations over time indicate that judgements on progress have in the past not been accurate enough and have been over generous. The headteacher and a governor now lead all lesson observations so teachers are more clear about how to define progress that is good.
- Many students have gaps in their learning when they arrive at the centre. Some are hampered in their attempts to get to grips with learning because their reading skills are poor or they have difficulty concentrating. Teaching assistants provide good support for removing these difficulties and students with the lowest literacy or mathematical skills are well supported in improving.
- Additional support, activities and courses are provided for students eligible for pupil premium funding to increase their progress. However, currently there are no clear indications that tell leaders and managers how much, or whether, the use of this funding has improved the progress of those students. The centre's figures since September 2013 indicate overall that students known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium in Key Stage 3 make the same progress as other students, but in Key Stage 4 they make slower progress.
- Leaders make sure all students are able to follow their interests and talents by finding courses they can follow away from the school site which engage them and help them to attend more regularly. Staff check the progress of these students closely to make sure the time is being well used. Most achieve useful certificates and qualifications as a result.
- This year, more students are following GCSE or similar skills-based courses, in English and mathematics. These are supplemented by a range of practical, technical and vocational courses, which ensure students are well prepared for employment when they leave.
- Students with more complex or individual needs are very well supported by the centre and by other agencies and organisations so they achieve high standards in their personal development and in school subjects.
- All students have targets to reach in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics, and the centre now tracks students' progress towards their targets. However, not all teachers use these checks and measures of progress to plan suitably challenging work in lessons.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although some teaching is good, it is not consistent across all subjects, particularly in mathematics.
- Students' progress in lessons, particularly for younger students, is often interrupted by some calling out. Some students refuse to work, their interest is not engaged and they make little progress.
- There are few opportunities for students to reflect on their answers to questions, to describe why they hold a particular opinion, explain what they know or ask questions about the aspects of the lesson that intrigue them. When students have this opportunity, they show they are able to consider conflicting arguments for and against a situation. In a Key Stage 3 English lesson, once they had settled, students weighed the evidence for and against the existence of the Loch Ness monster and were able to express a well-founded view.
- Although good systems have been introduced to measure students' progress over time, and are being used more effectively, this is not happening regularly enough. The analysis is not being used by all staff to measure the progress students make as a result of their teaching and to plan suitable tasks to make sure students' learning moves on further.

- Students' written work is marked, often with brief comments. There are some examples of more detailed comments, which state clearly which parts of the written work have been done well and what the students need to work on so the standard improves.
- Students are not always given the time or guidance to look at or discuss feedback so they can act on it, although one teacher described how she used time in her lessons to do this. In an art lesson, the teacher marked students' work and discussed and agreed an individual target with each student. This helped students to improve their work. Some teachers are beginning to give students the opportunity to write in their books what they are going to do in their future work to improve it. This helps students' progress.
- Teaching assistants help all students to complete tasks and settle in lessons. They also take students out of lessons if they need time to reconsider their behaviour. Training is planned for the assistants so they can develop a range of skills and resources to give more effective support to students' particular needs and stages of learning, rather than simply making sure work is completed. This is designed to support particularly the learning of the most able students.
- In some lessons when learning is good, teachers make sure students can spell and understand the subject words they need to know. In a science GCSE lesson, the teacher reminded students that some marks were given for spelling and grammar in the examination. She made sure students were spelling the technical terms correctly and using them in their answers. Students made good progress as a result. The centre is introducing activities for all staff to use in lessons, which will make sure literacy and mathematical skills are practised regularly in all subjects.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Behaviour requires improvement because calling out and interruptions in some lessons by a minority of students, particularly younger students, limits the time the teacher spends on teaching and prevents other students from concentrating on their own learning. Teachers and teaching assistants do not always use the centre's behaviour systems quickly or consistently enough to prevent behaviour of others from distracting those who wish to work.
- The centre's arrangements to keep students safe and secure are good. This includes arrangements to make sure students attending courses both on the centre site, and at other sites away from the school, are safe.
- Students say they feel safe in the centre as they are well supervised. Although there are instances of bullying, particularly for younger students when they first arrive at the centre, staff are vigilant and students say incidents are dealt with promptly.
- Students, because of their difficulties, sometimes find it hard to show respect for others. However, inspectors found students helpful to them as visitors and willing to talk to them sensibly and thoughtfully. They generally took care of their surroundings, although needed gentle reminders from staff at times.
- They know the risks of using social networks and the centre helps them to minimise any use of derogatory language. Students talk with confidence about how additional courses help them to improve their behaviour. One student said that working with the animals in Blackpool Zoo 'makes everyone calmer and they don't argue as much'.
- Attendance of students is well below national levels but has improved since September 2013. The headteacher and senior leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that attendance figures are accurate. Because this has not always been the case, there are no comparable figures from 2012 to provide a comparison of attendance in 2013. The centre is now beginning to use the more accurate attendance figures to find out how best to improve attendance more rapidly. Although there are support systems and incentives to help parents to improve their child's attendance, this is less often the case for students.
- Students are excluded for serious incidents and usually for no more than a few days. This has been the case for the most recent 12 months. There are some more serious incidents when individual students are excluded for longer periods. Leaders and managers now study the frequency and type of incidents more closely and have identified break times as key times when incidents take place. The centre is developing activities for students to minimise this trend.

Discussion with students identified their concern that there was little to do during breaks.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management are beginning to secure improvements but overall require improvement because teaching and students' progress have not improved rapidly enough over time.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have set up a comprehensive software system to store more accurate figures and information about teaching and students' progress. As a result, they can see which lessons are not helping students to make good progress and can begin to discuss what needs to change. This is not yet used systematically by middle leaders and teachers, however, to improve the quality of teaching and students' progress consistently across subjects.
- The frequent changes of staff, particularly in mathematics, have meant that some teaching has not improved. Students say some lessons are not interesting and they repeat work they have done before.
- Leaders and governors are clear that teachers who plan lessons so students make good progress have their efforts and skills recognised through promotion or pay awards. This has been built into the arrangements to check how well teachers are performing, by setting targets to improve teaching and to increase students' progress.
- The staff who responded to the questionnaire expressed consistent support for the actions taken by centre leaders and managers to improve teaching and the standards students are able to reach. Several wrote comments that demonstrate their commitment to the students and the pride they feel at being a member of the staff group. However, they too recognise that the centre is not moving rapidly forward because there are insufficient permanent teachers.
- Both the subjects taught and additional activities provided develop students' social and moral understanding well, although students do not always demonstrate this understanding in their relationships with others. More opportunities are planned to continue to widen students' understanding of different cultures. Students are very tolerant of differing sexual orientations and understand, and reflect on, some aspects of different religions and ways of life.
- There are few examples available of parental views on how well the centre supports the learning and progress of their child. Leaders are taking steps to gain these views.
- Overall, the range of subjects and courses available to students ensures that all have an equal chance to achieve a good range of qualifications. The curriculum prepares students very well for the future.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- The centre has a close relationship with the local authority. Governors have been effectively supported in getting the training to build the skills needed for their new role. The local authority adviser knows the centre well, has supported it through the recent changes in its role and provides accurate evaluation of its strengths and where it needs to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have taken their new responsibilities seriously and have been active in seeking ways to develop the necessary knowledge and expertise quickly, so the community governor now supports the headteacher closely in evaluating teaching accurately. Governors make sure the headteacher informs them in his regular reports about whether progress of all students is beginning to improve and question the impact of actions taken to improve. Governors know the number of temporary staff needs to be reduced so teaching can be consistently good. All governors are clear how pupil premium funding has been spent, but as yet are not clear as to how much progress students have made as a result. Governors support centre leaders well in establishing targets for teachers as part of the arrangements to check their performance, and are putting a time line in place to make sure all policies relate to current provision in the centre. They have ensured that 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134367
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	439476

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The management committee
<b>Chair</b>	Kate Condron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Murray
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 April 2011
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