

# Cheshire East Pupil Referral Unit

The Oakley Centre, West Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2PZ

**Inspection dates** 28–29 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Too many students underachieve, especially in English. Attainment overall is too low.
- Some students are ill-prepared to reintegrate into mainstream schools and as a result, too many do not succeed and return to the unit.
- Teaching is inadequate. High levels of staff absence have significantly disrupted students' continuity of learning. Too little teaching is good enough to quickly improve students' attainment.
- Teaching fails to motivate students to want to learn. This means that students do not always have good attitudes to learning and so their behaviour requires improvement.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Staff absence has significantly hampered efforts to bring about essential improvements to teaching and students' achievement.
- Arrangements to manage the performance of staff are not securely in place.
- Senior staff fail to check carefully enough the data showing students' attainment and progress. Consequently they do not have an accurate view of the unit's performance which has declined since the last inspection.
- Leaders fail to ensure that all students receive their entitlement to a full-time education. As a result, the unit's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- The temporary premises and facilities are not suitable to meet the needs of students or staff.
- The management committee does not have a good enough view of students' achievements or the quality of teaching. It has been ineffective in establishing a permanent leadership team and ensuring that all students have full-time education.

### The school has the following strengths

- Systems to bring about improvement have been strengthened since the arrival of the interim headteacher.
- Students get on well together and with staff. They say they like the unit because of the small numbers of students in lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of six lessons taught by the unit’s staff. They observed three others taught by tutors at alternative education providers and a specialist music service commissioned by the unit. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with senior staff who were also observed giving feedback to teachers.
- Meetings were held with leaders, members of staff, students, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Management Committee. An inspector held a brief discussion with a parent visiting the unit. Informal discussions were held with students attending alternative provision.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to be shown. However, account was taken of the unit’s own survey of parents’ views in December 2013 and students’ views from an earlier survey. Thirteen completed staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- The work of the unit was observed and a number of documents were looked at, including: minutes of management committee meetings; reports from external consultants; records of the monitoring of teaching; the unit’s own assessment of how well it is doing; the development plan; school data showing students’ progress; and information relating to students’ behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Eric Craven, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nell Banfield

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- The Cheshire East Pupil Referral Unit caters for boys and girls who have been permanently excluded from school or who are on the verge of permanent exclusion because of their behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The majority of students arrive during Key Stage 4.
- A very small number of students have a statement of special educational needs and six are in the process of formal statutory assessments.
- An above average proportion of students are known to be entitled to support through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after. A very small number are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage.
- The unit is located with a community centre and has been in this temporary accommodation since 2010.
- An interim headteacher took up post in November 2013 and an acting deputy headteacher took up a permanent post as assistant headteacher in January 2013. There have been three temporary headteachers, including the current headteacher and acting deputy headteacher in the last 15 months.
- Excluding the headteacher and deputy headteacher, there are seven teachers. At the time of the inspection, five teachers were absent.
- A number of alternative providers are used to supplement the education it provides. These are the Macclesfield Youth Achievement Foundation, Trade Skills, Skill Force Outdoor Education, Behind the Chair (hairdressing) and Reaseheath and Stockport colleges.

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

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - eradicating all inadequate teaching
  - making sure teachers plan lessons that motivate students because the content is inherently interesting and they see a relevance in what they are learning and so their attitudes to learning are consistently good
  - teachers setting work that is at the right level for students of different abilities so that it is neither too easy nor too difficult
  - ensuring that teaching assistants are always deployed where they can make the most difference to students' learning.
- Improve students' rates of progress, especially in English and consequently their attainment by:
  - improving the teaching of basic reading, writing and mathematical skills and ensuring that work in other subjects gives students plenty of opportunities to use and apply these skills
  - getting students to work hard and think things out for themselves

- insisting that students always present their work to a good standard.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including the management committee, so that improvement is driven forward at a rapid rate by:
  - reducing the level of supply staff as quickly as possible and making swift decisions about the appointment of permanent senior leaders
  - rapidly introducing a rigorous system for managing the performance of teachers
  - ensuring that all students on part-time tuition programmes have a full-time education and so that attendance improves further
  - analysing data on students’ progress and attainment so that leaders know how well different groups of students are doing and making sure improvement plans are based on these findings
  - making sure students are prepared well for reintegration into mainstream schools so that they very rarely have to return to the unit
  - ensuring that the management committee has a full and accurate view of students’ achievements, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding, how teachers’ performance is managed and how this relates to the pay they receive
  - undertaking an external review of the management committee, to include a specific focus on the impact of pupil premium funding, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance can be improved.
- The management committee should:
  - make representation to the local authority in order to secure a suitable and permanent building venue for the unit
  - ensure that the plans to address the budget deficit are realised.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- When students arrive at the unit, their attainment is most often below average for their age. Personal behaviour difficulties and poor attendance in their mainstream school have often substantially hampered their learning.
- From their starting points, students make too little progress so that by the time they leave, students fall even further behind in their learning. Too few students reach the expected levels of attainment. In 2013, few students gained a GCSE in English, with the top grade being E. Only one student gained a GCSE in science, at Grade F. In mathematics students did better, reflecting better mathematics teaching; three students achieved a Grade C at GCSE.
- In the past, the unit's systems to check students' attainment and progress have lacked rigour. The rudimentary data now used show that progress is poor, particularly in English. Almost all students fail to achieve their targets. Although students make better progress in mathematics, too many are still working at levels below their targets.
- Students are not given enough opportunities to use, apply or practise their reading, writing and numeracy skills, especially in other subjects and this holds back their progress. In a food technology lesson, for example, good opportunities were missed to encourage students to think about weights and measures as they prepared a Chinese meal. Similarly, in an art lesson where students were making mosaic patterns with broken tiles, students were not encouraged to discuss shapes, sizes and patterns.
- The interim headteacher has now introduced a clear system to assess students' reading ages. Even so, the development of reading skills is given insufficient priority in all lessons and, as a result, students continue to underachieve.
- Despite recent efforts to collate better information about students' achievement, too little is known about the achievement of different groups of students. Senior staff do not know, for example, how well students, such as those with special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium funding perform compared to other students or how rates of progress are changing over time. This undermines efforts to promote equality of opportunity.
- The most-able students often make better progress than their peers do. Even so, their achievement requires improvement because there is too little challenge in the work given for them to do well.
- Creditably, most students leaving the unit at the end of Year 11 in 2013 went into further education, training or employment, having developed helpful workplace skills. Although students' enjoyment and achievement from off-site vocational placements are variable, these experiences do enable students to make the right choices for their future.
- A small number of students are reintegrated into mainstream schools before the end of Year 11. However, too many fail to sustain their places and return to the unit. This is because they do not develop the necessary skills and attitudes to learning.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is judged inadequate for a number of reasons:
  - at the time of the last inspection students' achievement was judged as requiring improvement; it is now inadequate, which reflects inadequate teaching over time
  - staff absence has meant that students have not had continuity of teaching; there are too many supply staff; the quality of teaching is too variable across their subjects
  - there has been far too little emphasis on improving the quality of teaching; for example, teachers are not provided with targets for improving their teaching or support plans where necessary; only recently have leaders re-established a system for checking the quality of teaching

- the teaching observed during the inspection compared to the unit's earlier records of teaching quality show that it has deteriorated; both sets of records show that not enough teaching is good; too much teaching observed required improvement and a small minority was inadequate.
- Too often, teachers provide work that lacks enough challenge to ensure that students think and work hard, especially the most-able students. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson, a student already reasonably adept at using the computer to surf the Internet, was required to perform Internet searches in order to complete a worksheet to record these skills. The student was verbally guided by the teacher, step by step through each question on the worksheet. This activity failed to challenge the student sufficiently which resulted in too little learning taking place.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low. Students do not do enough for themselves; sometimes staff do more of the work than the students.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed where they can make the most difference. For example, in one lesson, due to the absence of other students, there was both a teacher and assistant working with just one student, who needed no specific learning or behavioural support.
- In order to improve teaching, teachers are now planning lessons using a new agreed format. Even so, planned activities are still not exciting and meaningful enough to ignite students' enthusiasm for learning. Their progress, therefore, remains too slow.
- Teaching in mathematics is better than in English because a permanent teacher is in post and so students experience much less disruption. Achievement is assessed more effectively and so gaps in learning are pinpointed and planned learning meets students' needs. Students' better rates of progress reflect this. Even so, progress in mathematics is still hampered, because students do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their skills in other subjects.
- Too much disruption to teaching in English has contributed to students' underachievement. However, the development of reading and writing skills are not promoted well across all lessons.
- More comprehensive testing of students when they first arrive is helping to ensure that staff are in a better position to provide for their needs more quickly and to accurately track their progress over time. Arrangements to identify special educational needs have also recently been revamped. These new systems are yet to show results in improved teaching and achievement.

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

## **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of the students requires improvement. Some students do not show enough interest or desire to learn. They require a good deal of coaxing to do so. In lessons inspectors observed, some students were yawning, slouching and looking disinterested. Teaching fails to inspire them and activities lack relevance.
- Work in some students' books is well presented and their handwriting is neat. However, too many presentations of work are untidy. Not all students show a pride in their work.
- Students get on well together in lessons, at break and lunchtimes. No derisory or derogatory personal remarks were heard during the inspection. Students say this is typical. A handful of students occasionally use foul language, but this is swiftly challenged by staff.
- Students' relationships with staff are positive. Staff deal with the occasional pocket of disruption calmly and non-confrontationally, diffusing potentially disruptive situations effectively.
- In lessons and around the site, students are compliant. Only a few are occasionally confrontational. Restraint has been used just once since the interim headteacher arrived. The number of days lost to excluding students for a fixed-term is slowly beginning to reduce.
- Students say bullying is rare and if it does occur, it is mainly name-calling. They know about the different forms it can take, such as cyber-bullying. Unanimously, they agree that staff deal with bullying well.
- A new school uniform policy and rules for the use of mobile phones have recently been introduced. Already most students are complying with these. Classrooms and corridors are kept

tidy and students respect displays on the walls.

- The unit's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Staff undertake visits to check on students when they are being tutored at home or in the community and to ensure that they attend off-site provision. Students and their parents know that students should not be in public places at times when they are not being tutored. However, staff cannot guarantee that the few students who are tutored part-time stay at home when not being tutored.
- Arrangements to assess and minimise any potential risks for students when they arrive at the unit are good. Parents who responded to the unit's survey of their view agreed that their children are kept safe. Students also say that this is the case.
- Although attendance is low, in the last year it has significantly improved. Attendance is now checked more rigorously. Staff work well in conjunction with the education welfare service to tackle persistent non-attenders. The low attendance of some students, mainly resulting from part-time tuition arrangements, also adversely affects achievement and continues to undermine efforts to improve attendance to a good level.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Since the last inspection leaders have not improved the unit. Standards are too low and are not rising as quickly as they should. Teaching has deteriorated and is now inadequate, because leaders' actions to improve it have been ineffective. Too many students are underachieving.
- Attempts to improve the unit have been thwarted by turbulence in staffing at all levels and a reliance on temporary staff, including at senior leadership level. The ability of leaders and the management committee to rigorously drive forward improvement remains fragile.
- The leadership of teaching is weak. Teachers have not been guided and challenged well enough to make the necessary improvements to their teaching. Staff are not yet fully held to account for the progress of students.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- Although teachers now assess students' achievement each half term, this is still at a rudimentary level. Leaders are not yet able to check how well different groups of students are performing or find out how standards are changing over time.
- The unit's improvement plan generally identifies the most pressing priorities. Senior leaders are starting to monitor its implementation. However, leaders' view of the unit's effectiveness is too generous. Although the interim headteacher's and acting deputy headteacher's judgements of teaching observed together with inspectors were accurate and well justified, they do not yet formally observe teaching for themselves. An up-to-date rigorous evaluation of teaching is yet to be made.
- The range of subjects taught has been reviewed. More emphasis is now placed on academic learning. However, the curriculum still fails to ensure that students develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills well enough, because opportunities to do so are not well embedded across the range of different subjects. The courses at alternative providers off-site are very valuable for some students, but less motivating for others. Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development requires improvement, because students show too little curiosity and excitement about the world around them. Not all students always apply a good moral code to their behaviour.
- The unsuitability of the building and facilities are a major barrier to improvement. There are no withdrawal rooms where staff can work quietly with students. The staff room doubles as a food technology teaching room. There is no dining room or hall for assemblies. There are few facilities for practical science or design technology. Even though closed, some students are regularly taught in the community centre bar.
- Leaders fail to ensure that all students receive their entitlement to a full-time education. The limited space at the unit prevents in part all pupils attending full-time. Regardless, this is unfair and discriminatory and so the unit's promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate.
- The interim headteacher has the confidence of the Chair of the Management Committee and the

majority of staff. She and the acting deputy headteacher have formed a cohesive partnership and are determined to make the unit much better for students. As a result, a few temporary staff have recently taken on roles as middle leaders to drive improvement forward more quickly. New arrangements to manage the performance of staff have been clearly set out. However, changes are too recent to show any significant difference, such as to teaching or achievement.

- The unit has a deficit budget of £300,000. This was accrued due to previous underfunding. A three-year recovery plan has now been agreed with the local authority. Proposals to increase the unit's funding are well advanced, but are yet to be realised.
- At the request of the chair of the management committee the unit became part of the local authority's improvement programme. In conjunction with the unit's internal training programme a local authority officer has provided support, including appropriate training for staff to improve teaching. He has also regularly raised the issue of the unsuitable premises with the local authority, but decisive action has not been taken to address this which hinders improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee does not have a good enough view of students' achievements or the quality of teaching. Members have been lax in holding senior staff to account for fulsome and detailed evidence of the progress of different groups of students. They are still unclear how the pupil premium has been allocated and what, if any, difference this has made to students' achievement.
  - Although there is evidence that the management committee questions senior staff at their meetings, the impact of this has not been adequate because their knowledge of the unit is weak. For example, they are insufficiently aware of the arrangements to manage the performance of staff. They do not check that teachers' pay awards are linked to the progress students make or to how well students are taught.
  - The Chair of the Management Committee acknowledges that parental and staff representation is too limited. The committee has not shown enough determination to ensure that all students get their full entitlement to education, to establish a permanent senior leadership team or minimise the levels of temporary staffing.



## 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>	136676
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	430953

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>	45
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The management committee
<b>Chair</b>	Fintan Bradley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Francesca Cannarella (Interim Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2012
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