

Kingston Centre (Primary PRU)

Valley Park Campus, Cromer Gardens, Wolverhampton, WV6 0TD

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and managers have failed to sustain the good features seen at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and behaviour are inadequate.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- All groups of pupils underachieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders do not have a clear understanding of how well groups of pupils achieve, especially those who are disadvantaged.
- The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is weak. Some staff lack the knowledge required to assess pupils' progress or to teach these subjects effectively. Reading is not promoted well enough.
- Achievement for children in the early years requires improvement.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are too low. The tasks teachers set for pupils are often too easy, especially for the most able.
- Teachers' marking is not good enough and rarely leads to improvements in pupils' work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is underdeveloped. Too little time is spent on developing their understanding of life in modern British society.
- The school does not have the capacity to improve. The interim headteacher is temporary and there are no leaders of English or mathematics. This lack of leadership means that teaching and achievement are not being improved.
- The new management committee does not have the knowledge to hold leaders to account for the quality of behaviour, safety, teaching and achievement.
- Too much time for learning has been lost in the past as a result of transport arrangements. For some pupils time is lost as a result of high levels of exclusions or absence that is permitted by the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher is developing a clear vision for the centre and is starting to lead improvements.
- A new computer-based system for recording incidents is promoting a more consistent approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The number of incidents has reduced significantly.

Information about this inspection

- All lessons seen by the inspector were observed jointly with the interim headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and at learning and behaviour plans.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff, pupils, two members of the local authority, a member of the management committee and members of the teaching and support staff.
- The inspector took into account 20 questionnaires from staff as well as a recent survey of parental views. There were no responses to the on-line parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the management committee and school policies.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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

- This is pupil referral unit for primary school pupils, aged four to 11 years of age.
- The large majority of pupils are permanently excluded from mainstream school or are at risk of exclusion due to social or emotional difficulties.
- All pupils attend full time at the centre, including those in the early years. The vast majority of pupils are on the roll of their mainstream school, as well as the pupil referral unit (PRU).
- The average length of stay is two terms; however, some pupils stay over three years.
- There are more boys than girls. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage; other pupils come from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- All pupils have special educational needs. A few have a statement of special educational needs or are in the formal process of conversion to or assessment for an education health and care plan.
- The large majority of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after children. This is well above the national average. However, so far this year, the centre has only received this funding for children looked after by the local authority. No funding has been received for most disadvantaged pupils.
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the Management Committee resigned in December 2014. A senior local authority officer acted as Chair until a permanent Chair was appointed on 12 February 2015.
- The deputy headteacher became acting headteacher in April 2014. An interim headteacher was appointed with effect from September 2014 and a different interim headteacher was appointed in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve so pupils are well motivated and challenged
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve
 - training staff so that all have a good understanding of English and mathematics and know how to assess pupils' progress accurately.
- Ensure that pupils are kept safe by:
 - keeping all policies, procedures and staff training up to date
 - requiring them to attend school on a full time basis each day and that no part time or other arrangement is made by the centre where pupils do not have to attend education.
- Improve the progress of all pupils and particularly that of the most able, so that it becomes at least good, especially in mathematics, reading and writing by:
 - ensuring assessments are accurate, especially in writing
 - making sure pupils have opportunities to use and apply their mathematical, writing and reading skills to a good or better standard when they complete work in the various subjects they study
 - training staff in teaching phonics (the sounds made by letters and words) and how to support pupils as their reading develops.
- Swiftly improve the behaviour of pupils who disrupt learning and so reduce the number of exclusions and ensure no learning time is lost by:
 - planning lessons and topics that motivate, interest and engage pupils

- ensuring that teachers implement the school’s behaviour policy consistently
- providing training for staff so that they have the skills needed to manage behaviour effectively
- only authorising absence where it is entirely necessary.

■ Improve leadership and management by:

- taking urgent actions to appoint leaders for key areas of the school’s work and establishing an effective senior leadership team
- developing the system used to track pupils’ progress, so it is clear how well all groups of pupils achieve, especially those pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, and using the results to hold teachers to account for the progress made by pupils in their charge
- ensuring that the management committee is well placed to ask challenging questions of leaders about the quality of provision
- ensuring a better focus on teaching pupils about British values and better preparing them for life in modern Britain
- ensuring all exclusions are formally recorded.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because the capacity to drive improvement is not secure. The temporary nature of key leadership roles severely hampers the pace of change and limits the improvements that can be made.
- In the very short time since her appointment in January 2015, the new interim headteacher has provided stronger leadership and established higher expectations for teaching, behaviour and achievement. The deputy headteacher and staff are supportive of the interim headteacher and of current developments. As a result, a more positive culture of teaching and behaviour, while at an early stage, is beginning to bring improvements.
- The quality of other leadership at other levels is inadequate. There are no staff identified as leaders of English or mathematics. All too often, the efforts of the deputy headteacher have been diverted to reacting to problems and supporting and supervising temporary staff. This has prevented her from focusing on improving teaching, behaviour and achievement.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils lack rigour and are inadequate. Remedial action has been taken and policies and procedures are now up to date. The training of staff has very appropriately been identified as a priority and is underway.
- School leaders are gaining a better understanding of the quality of teaching. Lesson observations now focus on the progress of pupils. This is beginning to inform targets set for improving performance. However, it is too early to identify the impact of these actions.
- Leaders' tracking and assessment of pupils' progress are weak, as is their analysis of achievement data. They do not gain a clear overview of how well groups of pupils are achieving. A new tracking system is in the early stages of development.
- Gaps in the achievement between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and other pupils are not closing in English or mathematics.
- The centre does not receive the primary schools sports funding.
- Leaders are fully aware that more needs to be done to meet the needs and improve the outcomes of those pupils who exhibit the most challenging behaviour. The behaviour policy is not always effective or implemented consistently by staff.
- Clearer and higher expectations of what pupils are to achieve over time are now in place. This is beginning to impact on holding staff to account for their teaching quality and pupils' achievement. Leaders have not focused well enough on holding teachers to account when managing their performance in order to improve the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs and interests of all pupils. It does little to improve pupils' attendance and maintain their interest.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is underdeveloped. Too little time is spent developing pupils' understanding of life in modern British society. As such, the promotion of equality of opportunity and the understanding of discrimination are weak.
- Support from the local authority has not been adequate for the centre's needs. Officers have recognised the urgent need to extend their involvement and plans are in place to provide the centre with additional support.

- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school:

- Since the previous inspection, the management committee has failed to prevent a decline in the centre's overall effectiveness.
- The committee does not hold leaders to account for making sure that funds and resources, such as the pupil premium funding are secured and used to good effect. It manages the budget effectively.
- The new management committee brings relevant professional expertise and experience. Its members do not ask searching questions of leaders about performance data and hold them to account for the centre's performance. Members understand that the quality of teaching is not yet good enough.
- Members are not fully involved in processes to reward good teaching or tackle underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. This is because the school's behaviour policy was, until very recently, not fit for purpose. The policy did not support staff in dealing with pupils who showed the most challenging behaviour because it did not give clear information about what to do when the most challenging behaviour was exhibited. Arrangements to check that all staff consistently follow the current behaviour policy are not effective so leaders do not know if all staff do so.
- Over time, levels of disruptive behaviour and verbal assaults on staff increased. Although the number of such incidents have very recently decreased and the severity level of assault has fallen, occurrences of disruptive behaviour are still unacceptably high.
- Those pupils who exhibit the most challenging behaviour have had a significantly negative impact on behaviour as a whole. Pupils say they feel safe and there is little bullying. They know that the adults will deal effectively through discussion with any concerns they have. However, they also say that it can be noisy when behaviour is challenging and this is a distraction.
- Some staff do not have the skills needed to manage challenging behaviour effectively.
- A newly introduced system for recording incidents is helping to bring about improvement in pupils' behaviour as leaders start to identify trends.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. This is because until very recently systems lacked rigour and policies were not up to date. Not all staff have completed the required training. All staff are now trained in physical restraint procedures.
- Pupils understand different forms of bullying. They know what they need to do to keep themselves safe. However, they do not always make the safest choices. For example, some pupils attempt to run through the car park instead of getting onto the mini-bus safely. Staff supervision, in this context, is not sufficiently vigilant.
- Attendance, although improving, is below average and unlawful exclusion, which the school identifies as absence with permission for pupils who display the most challenging behaviour means that attendance of some pupils is well below average. This means that time for learning is lost for these pupils and the safety and security of absent pupils cannot be guaranteed.
- The number of lawful exclusions is too high. This has a negative impact on pupils' achievement, because too many lessons are missed.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate. The impact of teaching on pupils' achievement over time is inadequate. While some teaching is good, examples are not shared widely enough among staff to spread the strongest practice.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are too low, particularly for the most able pupils and in writing. Pupils are not always fully motivated and challenged by the work provided because it is dull and too easy.
- Some teachers are making better use of the information, especially in mathematics, from assessing what pupils already know and can do to plan work that meets their varying needs. However, not all teachers use this information well. Much of the work is based on all pupils completing the same task, rather than making sure it matches each one's ability or starting point.
- The teaching of writing is inadequate. Pupils' writing skills are under developed because they rarely use them in longer pieces of writing either in literacy or in other subjects. The assessment of pupils' writing is not accurate.
- The teaching of mathematics is stronger than the teaching of English. This is because the assessment system is effective in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers plan work to fill these gaps effectively.
- The quality of marking is improving but remains varied. Some teachers write positive comments in pupils' books. Sometimes other teachers explain in more detail to pupils how to improve their work. However, teachers' advice rarely lead to improvements in pupils work.
- The impact of the work of the teaching assistants varies. Sometimes, teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning because they take charge of a class or are very clear about what they need to do to enable pupils to achieve their targets. At other times teaching assistants take little part in lessons and instead sit listening to the teacher.
- The teaching of reading is inadequate. Staff are not well trained in the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) or in helping pupils to develop their reading skills. Books are often locked away and are not readily available for pupils to use. This restricts pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- Almost all parents who responded to the school's own recent survey thought that teaching was good. While inspectors judge that teaching is inadequate, they agree with parents that it is starting to improve, as a result of the recent actions taken by leaders.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- As a result of previous disruption to learning due to their social or emotional difficulties, most pupils join the centre with levels of attainment that are below those typical for their age. The large majority make inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics and have fallen even further behind by the time they leave the school. Pupils' progress is particularly weak in writing. Consequently, the attainment of most pupils is below national expectations.
- Achievement in mathematics is stronger than in reading or writing. However, around half of all pupils are not on track in any subject to make the progress expected of them.
- The extremely poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils results in exclusion from school. This leaves too little time for learning and these pupils underachieve.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is inadequate. Pupils do not gain an early grasp of the sounds made by letters. The lack of this foundation restricts the progress they are able to make.

- The most able pupils underachieve because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are too low, especially in writing. Pupils are not well motivated or challenged by the work set for them because it is dull or repetitive.
- Recent improvements to the organisation of classes, such as the splitting up of the pupils with the most challenging behaviour into smaller groups, is starting to improve pupils' achievement. This is partly because expectations of how well pupils will behave are higher.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is much slower than that of their peers. The gap between these pupils and their peers widens as they progress through school. The pupil premium funding, has not been used effectively.
- Most of the parents who responded to the school's recent survey said that they thought that their children made good progress. While the inspector does not agree with this view she agrees with parents that some pupils make good progress in their personal development.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- There are very few children in the early years and they are taught alongside others in the Key Stage 1 class. A considerable level of personal support is allocated to guide children and provide a reasonably appropriate range of early years experiences and activities. Children enjoy their time in the early years. However, there are weaknesses in the development of their communication skills.
- For this reason, achievement in the early years requires improvement. There are too few opportunities to promote communication to aid the development of children who have difficulties with their speech and language skills, although their personal and social development improves well.
- Improvements to children's behaviour and in their ability to relate to others mean that they settle down to learning increasingly well. This means that children are ready to start the next stage of their education.
- Relationships between staff and children are good. Children are well cared for. Routines are well established and some children become increasingly independent. They appreciate that their efforts and improvements in their behaviour are recognised by adults. Children are proud to add stamps to their reward cards, which recognise their achievements in all areas of their learning.
- The amount of time children spend learning skills selected by adults and the amount they spend choosing for themselves is appropriate to their stage of development.
- The early years leader has accurate understanding of what is working well and is aware of the improvements that are required.

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	104286
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	447924

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Alex Chillcott
Headteacher	Frances Pass
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2011
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