



The SMART Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133754
LEA Merton LEA
Inspection number 282366
Inspection dates 15 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mark Evans AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Canterbury Centre
School category	Pupil referral unit		Canterbury Road
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Morden SM4 6PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8241 2005
Number on roll	42	Fax number	020 8286 6660
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Stella Croissant
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Sandy Waugh

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	15 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	282366

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The SMART Centre provides temporary education for secondary age pupils who have been permanently excluded, are at risk of exclusion, or are medically unable to attend their mainstream secondary school. It serves the London Borough of Merton. There are currently 48 pupils on roll, eight of whom have statements of special educational needs. The Centre in its current form was created in September 2005, when four out of five separate pupil referral units in the authority were brought together. They are now housed in the same building, and it is planned for the fifth unit to move onto this site in the next few years. There are slightly more boys than girls at the centre.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the development of the curriculum to meet the needs of all the pupils and in improving pupils' attendance. The Centre is not yet being effective overall, although it is providing an adequate education in some respects. The Centre has not been inspected before. Thus capacity to improve is judged to be good on the basis of changes and improvements made in the last few terms. Much work has been done to bring the separate units together under a single management structure, but there is still much to do. Pupils' achievement, in particular their attendance, is inadequate. Many pupils do attend well, but a significant minority have very poor attendance. Achievement is also significantly limited by a curriculum that does not ensure that pupils always learn in a logical sequence, without gaps in their knowledge. Although the curriculum has been improved, it still does not cover all subjects nor do all teachers use what is in place already to structure their lessons. There are good aspects in the quality of the accommodation, the way it is cared for and in the quality of the information and communication technology (ICT) resources. However, not all of the ICT resources are working yet and this hinders pupils' achievement. Teaching is satisfactory; much is good or better, but some is inadequate and there are inconsistencies in planning, assessment and marking. Pastoral care is good, with the work of the adolescent health worker and other staff supporting pupils very well. Day-to-day procedures to ensure their welfare are sound, but there has been no health and safety audit. There are good systems for gaining the views of the pupils. Links with outside agencies are very strong. The headteacher, management committee and local authority have a satisfactory view of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. Because the education provided is not yet effective, value for money is inadequate. Financial information given to the management committee is not yet in a format that readily informs decision-making process. This limits the effectiveness of the committee.

What the school should do to improve further

The centre and local management committee should: * improve attendance; * complete the development of the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all the pupils; * enhance the quality of teaching, rectifying the inconsistencies in planning, assessment and marking; * ensure that a complete health and safety audit is undertaken by the local authority.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The centre evaluated itself as satisfactory overall in this aspect. There is satisfactory achievement in the centre, but taking into account the attendance of all the pupils

on roll, the inspectors judged it to be inadequate overall. Pupils who do attend the centre often achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress. However, progress can be patchy, because of the incomplete curriculum. There is no pattern of underachievement, for example in groups of learners such as those that are looked after by the local authority or ethnic groups. In most cases, pupils are set formal or informal targets for academic work and for behaviour; many achieve them. Pupils with specific learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress. It is too early to know how well pupils reintegrate into mainstream or other schools, but the early signs are positive, in that the first few pupils who have returned to schools are being successful.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 4

Pupils' personal development and well-being are inadequate, mainly because of poor attendance. Pupils' attendance is less than 70% overall. Although 30% of pupils do attend more than 90% of the time, most of these are from one site and overall, one pupil in every five attends less than half of their sessions. When teaching is at its best, pupils do become engaged and their attendance improves over time. Those who do attend, enjoy their education. This is reflected in their positive attitudes and their predominantly good behaviour in and around the two sites. One pupil wrote '...being in such a comfortable situation has helped me build up my confidence and made it possible to concentrate on my work...' Pupils comment that they feel safe in the school and that all are friendly to one another. Pupils are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles, but a lack of indoor accommodation at the main SMART Centre site is currently limiting the amount of physical activity that pupils can participate in. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are inadequate as a result of the curriculum not yet being fully developed. Initial attempts to form a school council are, however, enabling pupils to begin to make a contribution to the work of the centre and improve their social and moral development. Some older pupils successfully develop workplace and other key skills that will contribute to their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, although there is much good and some inadequate teaching. Learning follows the quality of teaching: when teaching is clear and focussed, the quality is good. The key strength of teaching is the positive attitude that staff have to their pupils and there are good working relationships. However, a few staff do not adhere to the same high standard of discipline as others, and inconsistencies in the implementation of the reward and behaviour management policies means these are not yet fully effective. In the best lessons, pace is brisk and clear explanations provided at the beginning focus the pupils' efforts. Teachers give time deadlines within the sessions and ensure that work is evaluated before the lesson ends, encouraging further

improvement. In very good lessons, teachers assess and mark pupils' work quickly and regularly, for example in mathematics with Year 11 pupils, when very regular feedback was given throughout the lesson. This allows teachers both to encourage pupils, and to challenge them when work could be further improved. Lesson planning does not always focus pupils and teachers effectively enough on the individual skills that need to be taught and learnt, with too much attention given to the activity itself, rather than what is to be learnt by an individual. For pupils who are vulnerable or who have additional special educational needs beyond the main reason for being at the centre, appropriate individual education plans are in place. Regular reviews of the targets set take place and involve staff, pupils and their parents or carers. However, a few teachers do not use these targets to inform day-to-day and longer-term planning, which hinders the progress made by some pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory, although much good work has taken place trying to develop it. It has not yet been sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of all pupils at the centre and it does not support teachers in setting appropriate learning targets for pupils of all abilities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not planned. Schemes of work are not in place for all subjects offered. Nevertheless, a range of alternative courses has recently been introduced for older pupils thus broadening their experience. Gaps in curricular provision inherited from some of the previously separate units have yet to be addressed fully, though new arrangements are being put in place. The leadership of the Centre is well aware of the issues; already the recently appointed whole-Centre curriculum leadership is beginning to plug the gaps and formalise the best practice. For example, the concept of the Learning Zone is well understood by many staff and pupils, and this is an effective means of further development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

In day-to-day terms, pupils are well cared for and arrangements are in place to promote their health and safety. However, there has not been a full health and safety audit of the new accommodation. Otherwise, there are robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils and a programme of personal, social and health education, including some citizenship and work-related learning activities, contributes further to the quality of pupils' support. Effective careers guidance helps them make appropriate courses or career choices both within and beyond the centre. Pupils generally feel that they have someone to talk with, should they feel the need to discuss personal matters. Care, guidance and support for pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities are effective and they contribute well to the personal progress made. New assessment procedures allow staff to build up useful profiles of pupils' attainment and progress. However, use of this by teachers, both in recording the learning and in using the

information to plan further work, is inconsistent, leading to learning for a few pupils not being as good as it could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and governance are satisfactory. The headteacher has managed the transition of four units onto one site well and is an energetic and passionate advocate for the pupils. After appropriate consultation, a clear vision for the centre's future work has been set out. Leadership and management contribute well to the centre's capacity to improve, in the light of the recent improvements, for example in development planning, in creating an ethos for the centre and in beginning to formalise the curriculum appropriately. The management committee has new terms of reference which make it clear that it has the responsibility for monitoring of key performance indicators of the Centre, such as attendance and attainment. There is no secondary school headteacher serving on the committee, which limits its effectiveness in some aspects. The headteacher and the senior management team are well aware of the importance of self-evaluation processes for the future improvement of the Centre as a whole and are developing good procedures. These are already having an impact in improving teaching and the curriculum. All issues identified in this inspection have also already been identified in the Centre's own improvement plan, demonstrating good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Nevertheless, the quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation is not fully embedded at all levels: some teachers are not as involved in the ethos of improvement as they should be. The extent to which parents are consulted and involved in the overall development of the centre could be improved further. Subject management at the main site and at the college site is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies. The best is high quality and drives the development of the subject to the benefit of the pupils' achievement. However, a few subject leaders are not as proficient in securing improvement in learning or progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	4	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

When we visited the SMART Centre some of you were kind enough to talk to us during the day, at the Medical Group and at the Canterbury Road building. You may have seen us in some of the lessons. Thank you for making us feel welcome, for showing us your work and for telling us a bit about the Centre.

At the end of the day, I prepared a list of things that I think the Centre does well, and another list of things that it could do even better. Some of the good things you and your parent/s told me about, like the way that the teachers look out for you and the adults who listen to you, are on my first list. Other good things I saw were the building, and the ICT resources, which will be great.

I also talked to Ms. Waugh about some ways of making the Centre even better - that's my second list. The main things are to [1] make changes to the curriculum that is provided for you, so that it meets your needs better; [2] look at the ways in which staff keeps an eye on what you already know and what you need to learn; [3] ensure that someone who really knows about health and safety has a detailed look at the Centre; and finally [4] make sure that your teachers have a chance to learn from one another, making teaching even better. I know that Ms. Waugh has already started on some of those things. I hope you will help her and all the staff at the SMART Centre, by continuing to work well in class. Hopefully that explains a little bit about what we were doing at the Centre. Thank you again for putting up with us in your lessons and around the building.