



Greys Education Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134032
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 282427
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Margaret Goodchild LI

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Manor Drive
School category	Pupil referral unit		MK42 7AB
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01234 408477
Number on roll	269	Fax number	01234 408478
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms.Sue Raffe
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms. Sue Raffe

Age group 5 to 16	Inspection dates 7 June 2006 - 8 June 2006	Inspection number 282427
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a new pupil referral unit, established in 2003 by the merger of four previous units and two local authority support services. On its two sites in Bedford, a site in Houghton Regis and a hospital school, it serves the needs of pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream or special schools or are at risk of exclusion; those returning from youth custody; pupils who have medical or mental health needs; looked after children in need of support; pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers. Outreach services, also based at the centre, provides support to pupils of all ages who are unable to attend the centre or who are reintegrating into mainstream school. Many pupils join the centre with below average attainment and significant learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Greys Education Centre is a good pupil referral unit with a number of outstanding features. It is held in high esteem by parents, pupils and mainstream schools. Although staff judge the centre to be outstanding overall rather than good, their evaluation of the individual elements of its work is accurate. The senior leadership team provides outstanding leadership and direction to the centre's work and has a clear understanding about what more needs to be done. The centre provides good value for money and is exceptionally well placed to improve further. Pupils achieve well academically and make exceptional progress in their personal development. An outstanding curriculum and very high quality care enable large numbers of pupils to return to mainstream schools, to overcome difficulties associated with their medical conditions and to turn their lives around. Teaching is good with some outstanding practice, but teachers do not consistently match work to the needs of different pupils or review pupils' learning at the end of lessons. Curriculum managers and coordinators lead their subjects well. They are developing their skills in checking the quality of teaching. The centre has only recently gained access to a database containing information about pupils' previous attainment and what they are expected to achieve by the end of Year 11. The analysis of performance data is therefore not as well developed as it could be. The local authority provides good support to the centre but the management committee is not making as big a contribution as it should to the centre's work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the existing plan for strengthening the analysis of performance data and make greater use of data in evaluating the centre's effectiveness. - Develop the role of the management committee so that it effectively supports and challenges the centre in its work. - Improve the quality of teaching, so that there is more outstanding teaching, by increasing the skills of curriculum managers and coordinators in checking the quality of teaching and helping staff to act on the findings.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and there are examples of individual pupils making rapid progress with their coursework and of exceeding the expectations of their mainstream schools. The most able pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations. Overall standards are below average, however, because the previous learning of many pupils has been adversely affected by their emotional and behavioural difficulties and past patterns of poor attendance. At Key Stage 4, about half the pupils gain four or five A* to C grades at GCSE, together with a number of other awards. Pupils with medical needs, who tend to be among the most able, are particularly successful in examinations but other pupils also do well in gaining a range of qualifications. Pupils make good progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, and their progress in personal, social and health education is outstanding. They achieve well in other subjects

and make good progress towards the learning targets in their individual education plans. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those of minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are looked after. On occasion, a few pupils do not make as much progress as they could in lessons where work is not matched to their individual learning needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Exceptionally good relationships exist between pupils and staff and pupils relate well with one another. The overall attendance rate is close to that expected in mainstream schools and pupils' attendance improves dramatically in their time at the centre. Behaviour, too, improves. In class and around the centre, pupils behave very well, respecting the staff and the facilities. This is because of the confidence that pupils have in their teachers, the respect that is given to them by all members of staff, and the way they are involved throughout the day in reviewing their behaviour targets. Pupils are proud of their work, the progress they are making and show tremendous appreciation for what the centre has to offer. As one pupil said 'This place has changed me, my Dad gives me pocket money now'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are continuous opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and their moral understanding. Pupils increase in their self-awareness and in their understanding of others and empathise with those less fortunate, willingly raising funds for charity. They respond well to the encouragement from staff to adopt healthy lifestyles and they take part enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils grow rapidly in their ability to control themselves and respect the rules and structures to keep them safe. They contribute to the community through activities like planting hanging baskets for the centre's entrance and providing ideas about how the centre could improve. Pupils make good progress in gaining basic skills and exceptionally good progress in developing the skills needed to return to school or go on to further education, training or employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are experienced specialists in the subjects they teach and are highly skilled in managing pupils' behaviour. In many lessons, outstanding relationships between staff and pupils create a climate in which pupils readily engage with their work and feel confident to express themselves. The best lessons are planned exceptionally well. However, teachers do not consistently match tasks to the different needs within a class. At the end of each lesson, pupils contribute to judgements about the progress they have made towards their personal targets, but teachers do not always make clear how much progress they have made with their learning. Teachers make good use of homework to extend and consolidate

pupils' learning. Pupils who receive some tuition and who study on their own for part of the time benefit from the individual learning packages that have been developed for them. Exceptionally thorough systems are in place for assessing pupils' personal and academic needs when they join the centre. This sometimes results in the discovery of learning difficulties that have not been diagnosed in pupils' mainstream schools. Individual education plans are of high quality and staff often set targets for parents to use at home to consolidate their children's development. Learning targets and those concerned with pupils' personal development are regularly reviewed. The centre works in close partnership with a range of other agencies, including medical staff and mental health professionals in identifying pupils' needs and tracking their progress. Parents and carers are kept exceptionally well informed, and involved as much as possible in their children's education.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The centre provides pupils with outstanding learning opportunities. The curriculum focuses particularly on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and those required in science and information and communication technology. There is an excellent programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Other activities, such as assemblies, personal and social education and drama, further develop pupils' understanding. Pupils have opportunities to take part in work-related learning, which is carefully matched to their interests, to find out about enterprise and to increase their knowledge about healthy living. For many pupils, the curriculum is extended by a broad range of subjects that ensures they continue to develop academically, physically and personally during their time at the centre. There are good opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications there, with some additional accredited courses at college. A new project has begun to raise pupils' achievement by giving them the opportunity to use computers at home with links to study resources provided free by the centre to support their examination courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. Exceptionally high quality links with a wide range of external agencies ensure that support is focused on pupils' needs. The quality of care for pregnant pupils and those with medical needs is exemplary. The centre is also very sensitive to the needs of looked after children. Staff are thoroughly trained in child protection, and pupils' safety is assured by careful risk assessments. Staff are extremely effective in meeting pupils' personal needs and in helping them come to terms with their difficulties. Expectations are high and staff are very consistent in the way they manage inappropriate behaviour. Rewards are motivating to pupils and their work is celebrated well around the school. As a result of skilled intervention by the outreach teams, many pupils are able to remain in school who would otherwise be permanently excluded. Pupils who are reintegrated after a period of time out of mainstream are supported very effectively during the transition.

Staff from the centre work in close partnership with schools, and placements are kept under careful review. The Connexions service provides effective guidance and support for pupils moving on to college or training.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The unit is led and managed well. The headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team provide exceptionally clear vision and direction to the centre's work. As a result, four previous units and two support services have been successfully merged into a coherent whole and the centre is exceptionally well placed to improve further. Recruitment and retention of staff are outstanding, teamwork is strong and all the staff are committed to including pupils as fully as possible. Staff training opportunities are extremely good and the centre is outward looking in embracing new initiatives. Systems for gathering the views of parents, pupils and other stakeholders are thorough and inform decisions about what could be improved. The centre is continuously developing and now needs to refine some aspects of its work. Staff who manage subjects fulfil their leadership roles well and are becoming increasingly involved in detailed checking of the quality of teaching in their subjects. This aspect of monitoring requires further development to ensure that pupils are consistently challenged to try to fulfil their academic potential. The centre is at an early stage in using performance data to check its effectiveness. Through the local authority, it has just gained access to vital academic data from pupils' mainstream schools. The local authority provides good strategic leadership to the unit so that its role is clear and senior leaders receive valuable support from the school improvement adviser. There have been several changes in the membership of the management committee and not all members attend regularly. The committee is, therefore, not making as effective a contribution as it should to the centre's work. Links between the centre and mainstream schools are outstanding and schools value the way the centre responds rapidly to requests for support.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited Greys Education Centre. We really enjoyed our visit and I am writing to tell you what we thought about the centre. Greys is a good pupil referral unit with a number of outstanding features. The staff are extremely committed to helping you and provide you with first class care and support. It was good to hear how much you appreciate the excellent support you receive and how the centre is helping you to make changes in the way you feel and, for some of you, in the way you behave. We could see that you are making excellent progress in your personal development. You are doing well with your work because the teaching is good and the curriculum meets your needs very well. The headteacher and other senior staff provide outstanding leadership and want to make the centre as good as they can for you. I have asked teachers to make sure that work is always matched to your different needs in lessons and to review your academic progress at the end of lessons as well as your personal targets. Staff need to make more use of information in checking how effective the centre is, and the management committee needs to become more involved in the centre's work. In every other way, we thought the centre was doing a fantastic job. Carry on enjoying your time at the centre and make the most of all the opportunities it's giving you.