



# Challenger Centre

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 134325  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 282553  
**Inspection dates** 2 February 2006 to 2 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jacque Cook AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Ufton Lane
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		Sittingbourne
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 14		Kent ME10 1JB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 436936
<b>Number on roll</b>	19	<b>Fax number</b>	01795 425417
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Bob McFarlen
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jenny Chapman

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 14	2 February 2006 - 2 February 2006	282553

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Challenger Centre was established in 2004 and serves schools in the Sittingbourne and Isle of Sheppey areas. The centre provides for pupils who have been excluded or who are at risk of exclusion, those who are hard to place in a school or have no school place. Fourteen of the pupils are also on the roll of a school and attend the centre part-time, usually for two days a week. The other nine are full time in the centre. Most pupils join the centre with levels of attainment that are below what would be expected for their age. There are three looked after children and almost all pupils are of white British ethnicity.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The centre's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money. This judgement confirms the centre's own view of its effectiveness.

Key strengths are in the personal development of the pupils. Largely as a result of the strong relationships the adults form with them, most of the pupils improve their behaviour. Many who were poor attenders at their previous schools increase their attendance. Pupils enjoy the afternoon activities, particularly those in the community. There is good care, guidance and support for pupils and effective links with local schools. This enables many pupils to return to mainstream school full time.

The leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory. Significant improvements have been made and the good team work of the staff and the support from the local education authority show that the centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, as the centre is aware, the effectiveness of its work is not monitored as well as it should be. As a result, much of the quality of education it is providing is no more than satisfactory. Data about pupils' progress are not adequately analysed to enable challenging targets to be set. This leads to priorities being established that are not linked well enough to improving pupils' achievement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of its work to ensure that it prioritises future developments more effectively.
- Analyse the data available about the progress pupils make and use this more effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Establish targets for pupils to achieve in academic subjects and make the targets for behaviour clearer so that pupils' progress towards them can be easily measured.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Many pupils have levels of attainment that are below what would be expected for their age when they start in the centre. This below average attainment is often a result of periods of absence or unsatisfactory behaviour which impeded their learning in school. Once in the centre, both full-time and part-time pupils make steady progress towards gaining several unit awards in aspects of subjects including English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and food technology.

Frequently, pupils have difficulties with literacy and numeracy because these are the areas in which their skills are particularly underdeveloped when they start in the centre. However, the emphasis on learning basic skills, coupled with pupils' growing confidence, leads to satisfactory improvement. Pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT because they are taught skills in specific lessons. However, they do not apply these skills well enough in other subjects because they have too few opportunities to do so.

Last year, because of the progress made, a satisfactory number of pupils returned successfully to their original school or were reintegrated into new schools. A failure to set academic targets leads to an insufficient focus on what pupils should learn to improve their progress to a better than satisfactory rate.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils say they enjoy what they do, particularly the more leisure orientated activities in the afternoons. As a result, attendance overall is good. Most pupils with a high level of absence prior to joining the centre increase their rate of attendance. Pupils also become more confident and are prepared to ask for help when they need it.

Pupils often make good progress towards improving their behaviour. However, progress towards their behaviour targets is not so marked because they are not sufficiently sharp enough to enable success to be easily measured. The number of incidents of misbehaviour decrease and pupils do not need to spend as much time out of their classes.

Pupils adopt safe practices well, for example using kitchen equipment safely in the centre and participating in a range of sports successfully following safety rules. They know about healthy eating and the value of exercise. Pupils' increasing understanding of the appropriate ways to behave prepares them well for the world of work. Their improving basic skills and increasing knowledge of money management develops their economic awareness.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They extend their social skills well and develop positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils' contribution to the wider community develops as they learn to support the community in the centre through putting away equipment and offering to do tasks.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff build strong relationships with the pupils which lead to mutual respect. The adults model appropriate behaviour well and, as a result, pupils learn to value the contribution made by others. As a result of the high expectations that staff have of neat work and good behaviour, most pupils present their work well and behave appropriately for a great deal of the time. In the best lessons, staff provide a sufficient level of support that ensures pupils are able to successfully complete their work. Pupils' learn well, because praise and encouragement are used appropriately to maintain their attention and concentration. The quality of lesson planning varies and is not always sufficiently detailed for pupils to know what they are expected to learn. This leads, for example, to the use of too many worksheets that are not always matched to what each pupil already knows. There are instances

when worksheets are either too easy or too difficult. Also, at times, question and answer sessions are too long. As a result, there is too little time for pupils to tackle work themselves and, for example, to learn through investigations in science. Overall, pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects although skills are taught accurately in ICT lessons. Assessment is satisfactory and staff mark pupils' work regularly.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a suitable emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Much of the work in these subjects is focused on gaining unit awards which increase pupils' self-esteem and support their successful return to schools.

Practical skills and recreational interests are developed through sessions on cookery, which also have unit awards, and art and craft. There is a broad range of leisure activities also during the afternoons. These give pupils good opportunities to use facilities in the community, developing their interests into appropriate channels. Pupils gain skills and also learn to be self-reliant in activities such as sailing and canoeing. However, because a large amount of time is spent on these activities, there are limited opportunities for pupils who are at the centre full time to study the humanities or creative subjects. This results in some imbalance in the learning opportunities provided.

The personal, social and health education and citizenship programme is developing satisfactorily, although it is not planned systematically. There have, though, been sessions on the effects of smoking and substance misuse and there are plans to involve a nurse to provide education in sex and relationships.

An annual residential trip to Wales enriches pupils' experiences well. They enjoy the opportunities to work as a team on activities and the experience of living with others.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support provided by the centre are good. Staff know the pupils well and work hard to support them so they can make progress while they are in the centre. Staff are also committed to helping pupils to improve their behaviour. The certificates they award for high numbers of merits are valued by the pupils. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Risk assessments are carried out well for activities. There is a high level of supervision and pupils comment that any incidents of bullying are quickly dealt with. Child protection procedures are effective and training to up-date staff is scheduled for early next term.

There is good liaison with the social workers from different local authorities who work with the looked after children that attend the centre. The progress and well-being of these pupils is monitored well and, because meetings are often held at the centre, centre staff are able to attend more easily. The quality of information and advice for pupils about their future options has improved since the Connexions officer recently

began attending the centre each week. Links with local schools have been developed effectively, which supports well the reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools. Links with parents are particularly effective. For example, attendance has been improved by the parent support worker contacting parents by telephone if their child does not arrive at the centre.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory. The headteacher is well regarded by the schools in the area that the centre serves and has successfully built a strong team of staff that ensures equality of opportunity for pupils is promoted well. Staff meetings and briefings, for example, are very focused on discussing individual pupils and strategies for managing any difficulties. The personal development of all pupils is given a high priority.

The centre is aware that the quality of its self-evaluation is weak and the data relating to pupils' progress are not analysed sufficiently. As a result, prioritising improvements is not sufficiently focused on pupils' progress and improving it further. Although, teaching and learning are now being formally monitored, staff have not been given sufficient support to know how to improve the quality of their teaching. However, since the centre was opened, the headteacher has made enormous improvements to the building. A Victorian primary school has been transformed into a welcoming and very suitable centre for secondary aged pupils, which contributes well to their good personal development. Good facilities for ICT have been developed but are not used well enough by all staff. Opportunities for pupils to gain awards have been introduced. This track record, together with the supportive team and the current training and advice from the local authority, leads to a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

**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](http://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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	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	NA	NA

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making me feel welcome when I visited the centre recently. I enjoyed seeing you in lessons and looking at your work. May I particularly thank those pupils who told me about the centre, which was very helpful.

This is what I liked about the centre: •Most of you are improving your behaviour well. •Many of you are coming to the centre more often than you attended school. •You are looked after well at the centre. •You enjoy the activities in the afternoon. •The centre has good links with local schools, which helps many of you to return to a school. •There have been good improvements made to the building and the facilities.

This is what I have asked the staff to do now: •Improve how well the work of the centre is checked, so that planning to develop the centre is more effective. •Analyse the information about your progress in your work and your behaviour more effectively so that the teaching is improved. •Set targets for your progress in the subjects you study and ensure your behaviour targets are clear so your progress can be easily assessed.