



Oaktree Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134328
LEA Middlesbrough
Inspection number 282556
Inspection dates 31 March 2006 to 31 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Alan Tattersall

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	First Floor
School category	Pupil referral unit		Whinney Banks School
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Fakenham Avenue, Middlesbrough
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 354352
Number on roll	13	Fax number	01642 354366
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Jan Brunton
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Eileen Hinds

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 31 March 2006 - 31 March 2006	Inspection number 282556
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Oaktree Centre is a small pupil referral unit (PRU) which serves the whole of Middlesbrough. Pupils are either excluded or at risk of being excluded from their primary schools. In the week of the inspection, all the pupils were boys. Eight are at risk and attend the centre for part of the week. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in one class. There is only one pupil in Year 2 who is mainly taught alone. There are no minority ethnic pupils. Two pupils are in public care. A very high percentage of the pupils receive free school meals. A Head of Complementary Education Service has recently been appointed to oversee the work of the centre and other local provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's managers are accurate in their judgement that this is a good PRU. Their judgements match nearly all of the inspection findings. Pupils enter the centre with severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are too few pupils for a meaningful separation of the provision for them and their achievement into two key stages. Taken overall, pupils achieve well, although the school's own assessment is that their achievement is satisfactory. Teachers establish good relationships and ensure that pupils develop good attitudes to learning. Consequently, teaching and learning are good. Pupils make good progress in academic subjects and personal development even though standards are below average for their age. The staff work as an effective team in class to help pupils to learn. However, opportunities are occasionally missed to use the generous staffing to help pupils to learn even more effectively. A good curriculum and enrichment activities meet pupils' needs well. The centre recognises the need to plan more effectively for pupils who attend for part of the week to build on what they are learning in their mainstream schools. Good quality care results in pupils feeling safe and supported, behaving well and improving their attendance. Leadership and management are good. Managers and the management board have a clear view of how the centre should develop. However, their plans for improvement do not consistently identify how much developments will cost or appropriate success criteria. Nevertheless, the centre has the capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

The school should

- make more effective use of available staff to provide consistent support for pupils' learning
- find out more about what the pupils who attend for part of the week are learning in their mainstream schools and take this into account when planning their work
- ensure that plans for improvement take into account the cost of developments and provide criteria to enable the centre to judge its success more accurately

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the centre with standards below those expected for their age because of poor attendance or difficulties caused by their behaviour in mainstream schools. The good emphasis upon pupils learning basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) provides a good basis for them to learn in other subjects. This motivates them and helps them to catch up. They therefore make good progress in all subjects because of effective teaching. Achievement is good, although standards remain below average. The school's records show that pupils' progress is

only satisfactory when they start but, as they become settled, they make good progress towards challenging targets and achieve well. Both excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion, who spend part of their week at the centre, make similarly good progress in improving their behaviour and many return full time to mainstream schools. Pupils receive effective support for their individual needs and, as a result, all pupils make equally good progress. Parents confirm that pupils consider that they are making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the measures to improve their behaviour and, consequently, it is good. This enables them to cooperate well with teachers and to have positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils say that they like coming to the centre to learn. Attendance is satisfactory and is a good improvement on pupils' attendance prior to entering the centre. Exclusion rates were high last year, soon after the centre opened on the current site, but have fallen dramatically and are currently low. Pupils make good progress in learning how to stay safe and develop a healthy lifestyle. They understand for instance, the importance of drinking water rather than fizzy drinks. They develop good skills in numeracy and literacy that prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Staff ensure that pupils improve their social skills and learn responsibility to the community. Pupils are well aware of the need for rules and the importance of keeping them. They develop their spiritual awareness well. Pupils learn about life in the local area and the wider world. Although they learn about some beliefs and customs, they do not learn enough to prepare them fully for life in a multicultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils have developed good relationships with staff and each other. This results in calm, thoughtful and purposeful learning. Teachers know pupils well and pitch the tasks at just the right level to enable them to participate fully and experience success in challenging work. This improves pupils' motivation and raises their self-esteem. Lessons have clear objectives for pupils to learn and they know how successful they are because they discuss whether they have achieved their objectives. The centre has a clear code of conduct for behaviour and pupils know their targets. Staff discuss these frequently so that pupils understand how their behaviour is improving. Pupils receive good information about their academic progress. Their work is marked well to assess how they are doing and to provide helpful guidance on how to improve. The pupils' understanding of how much progress they are making is an important contribution to their good progress. The interactive whiteboard is used effectively to encourage pupils to use computers and ensures that they make good progress. Lessons are planned well and teachers and teaching assistants usually work

as an effective team. Staffing is generous. However, when occasionally there are few pupils attending the centre, opportunities to take advantage of the favourable staffing are missed to provide more individual support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs well. The good emphasis upon literacy, numeracy and information technology prepares pupils well for moving on. Pupils participate in a good range of creative and physical activities. Consequently, they improve their physical and practical skills well. Accommodation is good and provides pupils with plenty of room for independent work and to follow practical lessons such as design and technology. Lessons and discussion times provide good opportunities to develop personal and social skills and to improve their knowledge of health. This helps pupils to manage their emotions and increases their knowledge of fair play and making moral judgements. Visitors enrich pupils' learning well. For example, the local fire service encourages pupils to be conscious of fire safety. Pupils enjoy extra curricular activities such as planting bedding plants and this enhances their understanding of community responsibilities. Pupils make useful visits in the community such as meeting American visitors at the local church. The centre recognises the need to find out more about what the part time pupils are learning in their own schools so that they can build on this when they attend the centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for well. Arrangements for child protection are well established and systems are in place to ensure health and safety. The centre works well with parents and carers to involve them in their children's education and personal development. Parents have good opportunities to express their views through meetings and questionnaires. Most are very appreciative of what the centre does for their children and feel that they have received good support and advice. Systems to track pupils' progress are good and ensure that pupils know how well they are doing. Pupils understand the clear rules for improving behaviour. They value the rewards they receive for behaviour and good work. Pupils are confident that if there was any bullying, they could talk to an adult and it would be dealt with quickly. Pupils are pleased with the opportunity to give their views through questionnaires and the school council and feel that their ideas to improve the centre are valued.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The Head of the Complementary Education Service and the head of centre work as an effective team. Their leadership has established a good PRU in a short time. The management board shares the aims of the school's management team to create a secure environment and positive ethos for

pupils to learn within. There is a clear focus on raising standards and on the important activities of returning pupils to mainstream schools and preventing exclusions. The good emphasis upon monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has led to improvements that are apparent in lessons and this, in turn, has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Parents and carers are fully involved and their views taken into account. The quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation are good and, together with pupils' good achievement and effective financial management ensure that value for money is good. Managers and the management board are acting well on their evaluation of the centre's work and have set out clearly the main areas that need to be improved. The plan for development, however, lacks sufficient information about costs or how success will be measured. Nevertheless, the centre demonstrates a good ability to make the required improvements.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2	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	2	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	2	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	NA
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

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The Pupils

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Middlesbrough

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31 March 2006

Dear Pupils

I enjoyed my visit to see you. You made me feel welcome and I was pleased that I was able to talk to you to find out more about what you do.

I thought that you worked hard.

This is what I found out

Your teachers plan interesting lessons to help you learn.

I agree with your parents and carers that you are making good progress.

You like coming to the centre and enjoy lessons.

You get on well with each other and behave well.

Adults take good care of you and encourage you to keep safe and develop a healthy lifestyle.

I have asked the centre to do a few things to make it even better

For those pupils who attend the centre for part of the week, I have asked your teachers to find out more about the work that you are doing in your mainstream school. This will help them to improve the way that they plan work for you.

The centre has good plans for improvements but the managers need to know more certainly how much all improvements will cost and to measure their success more accurately.

Teachers should make the most of the good staffing to help you to learn.

I hope that the centre continues to improve to make it an even better place to be.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Tattersall

Inspector