



# Ashdale Centre

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 134346  
**LEA** Middlesbrough Borough  
**Inspection number** 282559  
**Inspection dates** 16 March 2006 to 17 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr David Smith

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit	<b>School address</b>	Marion Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Middlesbrough
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 to 16		TS4 3RX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 354352
<b>Number on roll</b>	60	<b>Fax number</b>	01642 354 366
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Cllr Jan Brunton
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Eileen Hinds

<b>Age group</b> 14 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 16 March 2006 - 17 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282559
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© 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 two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The Ashdale Centre is a pupil referral unit with 40 full-time places. There has been an increase in the demand for places and, at the time of the inspection, there were 60 pupils on roll, 17 girls and 43 boys. However, owing to the very low levels of attendance, pupil numbers in the centre at any time are low. Ten pupils have a Statement of Special educational Need for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils are from a minority ethnic group but no pupils speak English as an additional language. Two pupils are looked after in public care. The centre has interim management arrangements and is subject to reorganisation proposals.

## **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 centre 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 centre are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the centre.

The centre's overall effectiveness and the value for money it provides are inadequate. The centre's leaders and managers judge that because of their determination to make progress, the capacity to improve is satisfactory. Although inspectors agree with their judgements on all other aspects of the provision, owing to the number and significance of the centre's weaknesses, they disagree on this point. The very recent introduction of an interim leadership team has started to improve the provision, but there has been insufficient time to effect major improvements in pupils' achievement and personal development. Although pupils respond well to a small amount of good teaching, weak behaviour management, flawed subject knowledge and low expectations contribute to inadequate teaching and learning. Consequently, standards are below average, pupils make unsatisfactory progress and their achievement is inadequate. Assessment systems do not provide enough information to check pupils' progress or set them challenging targets. The curriculum is inadequate. It does not provide a balanced range of courses that develop pupils' basic skills while preparing them for leaving school. In addition, there are very few enrichment activities. The quality of care and support provided for pupils is inadequate and fails to provide a generally safe environment. Leadership and management are inadequate and self-evaluation is not developed within the centre. Pupils' negative attitudes are reflected in their inadequate attendance. The small number of parents that responded to the questionnaire are happy with the education provided by the centre. However, there is limited evidence of the centre and parents working together to help promote effectively aspects such as pupil attendance.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attendance and behaviour of pupils.
- Provide greater challenge through more rigorous target setting, higher expectations for pupils' learning and improved subject expertise.
- Strengthen the centre's procedures to ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils are secured.
- Develop a more motivating and enriched curriculum with a balance between the core subjects and accredited vocational opportunities.
- Provide a strong leadership team to facilitate improvements in leadership and management at all levels, and to boost pupils' achievement and personal development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are below average because pupils have experienced considerable disruption in their education. However, relative to their starting points when they join the centre, pupils make insufficient progress so their achievement is inadequate. This is the case for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in public care. The targets set for pupils do not, in most cases, reflect their achievement at the end of Year 9. As a result, the targets are not challenging enough to ensure that pupils develop their skills and knowledge and some pupils are working at levels far below their abilities. For example, in mathematics, high ability pupils are completing simple fractions that they find too easy. The achievement of pupils with poor attendance and those presenting challenging behaviour is a major weakness, as they do not make enough progress in any aspect of their learning. There are no significant differences in performance between boys and girls. Pupils show good potential in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design but their interest is not maintained and, as a result, their progress is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, Year 11 pupils were able to cooperate and make good progress in racket sports.

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

### **Grade: 4**

Personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are inadequate. Most pupils do not enjoy their education and their attendance is inadequate. This contributes to their inadequate achievement and personal development. Pupils often display a lack of respect for each other and the staff, creating tense and often negative relationships. Distraction by pupils wandering around the centre, beyond the control of staff, contributes to the loss of learning time. Staff do not have the skills or training to manage this challenging behaviour and, as a result, the frequency of serious incidents and fixed-period exclusions is very high. When an activity is relevant, pupils behave in a mature and sensible fashion, such as when attending the breakfast club or visiting a local college. However, overall, pupils fail to develop a work ethic and are not prepared for the next stage of their education or the world of work. They are encouraged to exercise and make good use of the community resources for physical education. The lunch menu has been improved but still does not promote healthy eating. Pupils do not adopt safe practices, especially in some practical subjects. They put themselves at risk by absconding and despite staff efforts pupils continue to smoke on site. There are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to understand their own culture or the diversity of cultures in Britain.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Many pupils are reluctant learners and the teaching does not provide the high expectations and urgency needed to motivate them. Teachers do not have sufficient information from assessment to set targets or to plan lessons accurately. Pupils are not involved in setting learning targets and teachers' marking of work is inconsistent. Consequently, pupils are not provided with enough advice on how to improve their work. In addition, some teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of their subject to provide a suitable range of motivating tasks. Pupils disrupt most lessons, because activities do not challenge them sufficiently and their behaviour is inadequately managed. Teachers' use of ICT in lessons is very limited so that opportunities are missed to extend pupils' learning, for example, to improve their understanding of analysing and using data in mathematics. As a result, pupils' learning and progress are inadequate. In the one lesson where teaching and learning were good, the teaching was enthusiastic with high expectations and a good emphasis on the practical aspects of science. The pupils were absorbed in their work, and one was delighted in being able to explain the freezing process.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 4

The curriculum and other activities are inadequate. A suitable range of subjects is provided but the organisation of pupils' time fails to ensure that their time is used effectively. The provision of vocational opportunities and the range of accredited courses have improved recently, with an increased focus on courses that provide relevant accreditation, but many pupils are entered for subjects that are too easy. As a result, few fulfil their potential. Pupils are keen to attend motivating ventures, such as a horticulture course or an enterprise initiative with a local football club. The Connexions adviser is a regular visitor and commented on the positive way that pupils responded to her in the centre. However, overall, the curriculum lacks enrichment. Visits to places of interest are limited and there are few visitors to enhance pupils' learning in the centre. Limitations in resources, for example, in ICT and design and technology, contribute to pupils' inadequate achievement. The curriculum therefore fails to stimulate and challenge pupils and, as a result, their attendance and behaviour are inadequate.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 4

Care, guidance and support are inadequate. The centre does not have strong enough systems to ensure that pupils are where they should be. There is no code of conduct so pupils are not clear about expectations and exploit situations to defy staff. The systems to ensure attendance are inadequate. Contact with parents on the first day

of absence happens either too late or not at all. Child-protection procedures are inadequate to provide a safe environment and pupils can easily leave the premises unsupervised. There is no safe area for pupils to play outside. Shortcomings in the use of assessment mean that pupils do not receive the level of support that they need to make progress. Planning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate and the centre fails to give them the help that they need. It is unacceptable that some pupils are not being offered full-time education. Links with other schools are inadequate so a large percentage of pupils spend too much of their school career in the pupil referral unit, rather than a school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management at all levels are inadequate. The interim leadership team has introduced some changes to the day-to-day management of the centre, but they have not had time to make a real difference. Based on a generally accurate evaluation of the centre's performance, the leadership team produced a clear action plan containing aspirations for improvement. However, subject coordinators make an inadequate contribution to pupils' learning and to the centre's self-review. As a result, there is no common commitment to promoting high standards or a shared focus on improvement. There is a sufficient number of staff but they do not have an appropriate range of expertise or training. There are gaps in training for ICT and behaviour management and these contribute to inadequate achievement. Membership of the management committee has been strengthened but members spend too little time in the centre to contribute effectively to its improvement. In addition, the arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils are inadequate and the centre is disorderly.

**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>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	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>	4	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	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	4	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>	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	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	4	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	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	No	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	No
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	No
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	No
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	No
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	No
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	No
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	No
<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	No
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	No

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

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

Ashdale Centre

Marston Road

Middlesborough

TS4 3RX

16 March 2006

Dear Pupils

I enjoyed my visit to your centre. You showed us respect for most of the time. You have a wealth of skills and abilities and I hope that, in the future, you will use this potential to the full.

This is what I found out about your centre:

You have good opportunities to use the local sports facilities.

You enjoy your horticultural course and programme at the local football club.

The Connexions adviser is pleased with your response to her support.

You worked well in a science lesson and made good progress.

I thought that there are quite a few things that could be improved at the centre. I have asked the headteacher, staff and management to concentrate on the following areas:

I would like to see major improvements in attendance and the management of your behaviour.

You are capable of working towards more challenging targets with greater expectations for your learning.

Your timetable must ensure you are taught an appropriate range of motivating subjects and courses within an exciting curriculum

Procedures in the centre must ensure your safety and well-being.

There must be an effective team in place to lead and manage the centre.

I have recommended that the centre needs 'special measures'. This means that it will receive extra help and that inspectors will return to check what progress is being made. I hope that you will work with the headteacher and staff to improve the centre and ensure you make the best of your abilities.

Best wishes.

David Smith

Lead inspector