



Craig Croft Education Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134534
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 282604
Inspection dates 31 October 2005 to 31 October 2005
Reporting inspector Alan Dobbins RISP

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

Type of school	Special	School address	8 Craig Croft
School category	Pupil referral unit		Chelmsley Wood
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		Solihull, West Midlands B37 7TR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7884 229
Number on roll	18	Fax number	0121 7884 224
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Dorothy Wain

Age group 5 to 16	Inspection dates 31 October 2005 - 31 October 2005	Inspection number 282604
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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 unit, registered in 2003, caters for vulnerable pupils who have difficulty in coping with the requirements of mainstream schools, looked after children and a number of unaccompanied asylum seekers who are not easily placed in mainstream schools.

One group of pupils, currently 26, attends the unit's centre, which is also the administrative base. Most of these pupils, 10 boys and 16 girls, do so for between two to five morning or afternoon sessions each week, depending on their level of need. They spend the rest of their time in their mainstream schools. Many return to their mainstream schools full-time after about two terms. Five Year 10 and 11 pupils spend all their time at the centre. Four pupils who attend the centre have statements of special educational need.

The second group, who can number as many as 200 pupils, are supported by unit staff, working out of the centre, in mainstream or special schools within Solihull and in the schools of 19 other local authorities. This is the outreach part of the unit.

This is the unit's first inspection. The inspection included all aspects of the unit's work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Craig Croft is an outstanding pupil referral unit that provides excellent value for money. Inspectors agree with most of the unit's own judgements but especially that made for the care and guidance offered to pupils, which is a strength of the unit and is outstanding. The head of unit is extremely capable. Part of her vision is to lead a unit that promotes learning that is relevant to each pupil. In this she is wholly successful. At the centre, excellent teaching and a curriculum tailored to the needs of each pupil help them make rapid progress in their basic skills, in controlling their behaviour and in their personal and social development. They become increasingly mature and responsible, so that they are better able to meet the demands and expectations of the mainstream schools. Parents, carers and past pupils agree that the centre is a base in which lives 'are turned around'.

The outreach provision places pupils in schools that are very well matched to their very specific range of needs. Records show that most make impressive progress in their learning and in their personal development. The recently formed management committee has made great strides towards meeting its remit but needs to do more before it can appropriately challenge the unit's leaders and act as a body that communicates with professional officers on behalf of the unit. The local authority rightly recognises the accommodation 'is not fully fit for purpose'. The unit's capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accommodation.
- Have the management committee meet its remit to the unit.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Over all parts of the unit, pupils make outstanding progress. Years 1 to 9 pupils attending the centre substantially improve their personal and social skills and make very good progress in their learning. This is because the teaching and support they receive help them become increasingly self-confident and self-assured, and they learn to behave well enough to apply themselves more purposefully to their learning. In reading, on average they gain two reading months for each month they spend at the centre. They make equivalent gains in spelling and in mathematics.

Years 10 and 11 pupils at the centre are prepared very well for the next stage of their education. They follow individual programmes that lead to the award of a wide range of Assessment and Qualifications Authority (AQA) units or to passes in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in subjects that include English, mathematics, human biology, art and design, travel and tourism, and French.

Pupils new to the country who are at a very early stage of learning English make very good progress and, usually, are transferred to mainstream schools after only a short time at the centre.

Outreach pupils, either in care or in their schools, work successfully against challenging targets. Most, when they leave school, have gained accredited qualifications appropriate to their capability ranging from ASDAN awards to good quality passes in many GCSE subjects.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

At the centre, the outstanding relationships between pupils and all adults make pupils feel safe and comfortable. They quickly learn to trust and respect staff and to confide in them when they are troubled. Staff are excellent role models. Their high expectations for behaviour and learning provide clear guidance on what is right and wrong and what are acceptable actions. Pupils see the work of the centre as important to them and, as a consequence, attend regularly. They behave very well, enjoy working hard at their learning and most make exceptional progress in becoming increasingly mature and independent. Many parents and carers attest to the centre's powerful influence in helping their children overcome their difficulties and in providing them with better future prospects. Past pupils are regular visitors to the centre. They chat with staff and are enormously positive about the way in which the teaching and support has given them a better chance in life.

Outreach pupils benefit considerably from the highly focused help and encouragement provided by the outreach staff. Often, this enables them to stay in care settings and schools that had previously not been able to contain them or meet their particular needs. Pupils' sense of self-worth and personal esteem is, as a result, bolstered and enhanced. This helps them make the best of their situations and most leave their schools capable of acting independently, with a very good chance of achieving success in the next stage of their education.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. At the centre, classes are small, with about four pupils. Consequently, lessons are less formal than those in mainstream schools. Pupils thrive on the skilled, intensive support, and the individual attention staff offer them. They enjoy being taught in a more relaxed way and quickly become very confident and comfortable as learners. For example, in a science lesson, one pupil who was very, very shy and would have been unlikely to offer an answer to a question within a

mainstream lesson, answered questions quickly and confidently and excited the teacher by asking a question for the first time. Lesson planning is very detailed and takes excellent account of information that is gained from the regular pupil assessments. This means that in lessons, each pupil works on tasks which are challenging and relevant. Targets, often identified by the mainstream schools, provide additional help in guiding learning and ensure that what pupils learn at the centre complements their learning in their other schools.

English as an additional language is taught very well. Teaching focuses precisely on meeting the learning needs of each pupil, so that all pupils, irrespective of their proficiency in English or their capabilities, make equivalent progress.

Outreach teachers and their very able support staff are highly effective in helping promote successful learning. They work very well with teachers in the outreach schools. They also give sensitive pastoral guidance, which often involves agencies outside of education that provide valuable additional help for learning.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is relevant to pupils' learning and additional needs and meets the local authority's aims for pupil referral units. For pupils in Years 1 to 9 at the centre, the focus is to improve basic skills and personal and social development. This is achieved very effectively through emphasising the teaching of English and mathematics. Promoting personal and social development permeates all the work of the centre. It is geared to individual pupils and guided by the targets that are included in their individual education plans. Personnel from other many other agencies very effectively extend the curriculum by providing specialist help and advice.

Outreach teachers frequently advise and support their mainstream colleagues in how best to adapt pupils' curricular experiences to meet their learning and additional needs. This often results in pupils re-engaging back into their learning in their current school. Older pupils successfully participate in relevant vocational or academic studies in other more suitable settings, such as colleges of further education.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are looked after and cared for very well. At the centre, child protection requirements and safety procedures are firmly established and understood by, all staff. Outreach staff work very closely with staff in the local authorities Children's Services and with staff in the schools in monitoring the safety and security of outreach pupils.

At the centre, targets for learning are precisely set. They are used very effectively in ensuring that learning matches very well with pupils' needs. Pupils' files contain detailed information of what they have learned and how well they have achieved. They provide

convincing evidence of the outstanding progress pupils make, as well as information that is very helpful to teachers in the pupils' other schools.

The procedures for promoting and recognising progress in personal and social development are exemplary. Targets in individual education plans are very effectively supported by detailed information in the daily report sheet. For each pupil, these sheets contain comprehensive information on how he or she has been throughout the day, what has worked well for them and what might have triggered troubled behaviour. The daily report sheets provide detailed and compelling evidence of changes in behaviour, attitude to learning and how pupils' feelings about themselves change during their time at the centre.

A particular strength of the unit is the way in which it expects, and embraces, the contributions of specialists from a large number of agencies. These include all aspects of Children's Services, the education welfare and health services, Connexions, educational and clinical psychologists and mental health specialists.

The care and guidance provided by outreach staff, both in mainstream schools and foster settings is also exemplary. It is never sentimental. It is always aimed at ensuring pupils' safety, welfare and personal development. It is focused entirely on helping pupils to continue with their learning with as few limitations as possible, in preparation for further training for career progression or work.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The head of the unit has the determination and capability to ensure that all aspects of the unit's work function at the highest level. She is an excellent role model and is fully supported by the equally competent senior teachers in charge of the day-to-day management of the centre and the outreach provision. Together, they form a team who work exceptionally well with each other and demonstrate outstanding capacity to continue to develop the provision. The outreach provision has grown quickly and considerably. The collaborative work with other professionals and service providers is managed outstandingly well in ensuring that seamless, fully integrated care and education promote pupils' well-being and successful learning.

The head of the unit recognises that to sustain improvement, there needs to be a sharp grasp of how well pupils are progressing and an accurate judgement of the quality of all the unit's provision. Already, this is substantially achieved. For example, it is reflected in the detailed procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and well-being and in the speedy way in which performance management procedures have been put in place for all staff. It will be fully achieved when the plans already in place for recognising the unique contribution the centre is making to the progress of pupils, and those for recognising the achievement of outreach pupils in their many schools, yield sufficient data.

Since its very recent formation, the management committee has made a remarkably good start at meeting its remit to the unit, but needs to be more precise in the ways in which the head of unit is challenged and supported. Also, the local authority recognises the requirement for developing the building to match with the aims of the unit and, to date, the management committee has played only a minor role in ensuring that the new building is fit for purpose.

Grade: 1

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?	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	1	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	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?	1	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	1	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	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

Craig Croft Centre 8 Craig Croft Chelmsley Wood Solihull West Midlands B37 7TR

01 November 2005

Dear Pupils

We very much enjoyed our time with you and would like to thank you for talking with us about your work. Now, we want to let you know what we think about your unit.

We think that you gain great benefit by attending the unit for a number of reasons:

- You make excellent progress in your learning and in becoming more mature and responsible.
- What you learn in your lessons is right for you and helps prepare you well for your life after you leave school.
- You are looked after exceptionally well.
- You enjoy visiting the centre and this shows in the very good way you behave in lessons and the polite way in which you greet visitors.
- The unit is very well led and managed.
- The centre buildings are not very good and we agree with the local authority that they should be better. The committee that helps manage the unit is new and, even though it has made a very good start, does not help the head of the unit as much as it should.

With best wishes

Dr Alan Dobbins Lead inspector