



The Secondary Behaviour Support Service

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134623
LEA Stockport
Inspection number 282619
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Jeffery Plumb CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Avondale Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		Edgeley
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		0, Stockport SK3 0UD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 480 0740
Number on roll	93	Fax number	0161 477 3909
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Janie Craig
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Alsion Bettles

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The unit was registered in April 2004. It relocated to a purpose built building in September 2005. Two separate sets of staff have been brought together on a new site. It provides full-time education for mainstream permanently excluded learners and learners at risk of exclusion, aged 10 to 16 years. In addition there is annexe provision for alternative curriculum experience (ACE) for fifteen pupils aged 14 to 16 who are involved with the Youth Offending Team (YOT); some are currently in custody. The unit manages the work based learning programme for learners from all the secondary schools in the local authority. It leads training programmes for secondary mainstream schools on behaviour management and care and control techniques and provides preventative outreach work across all local authority secondary schools to reduce exclusions. All learners are registered as having learning difficulties and disabilities because of their challenging behaviour. Some learners with very complex needs have been placed in the unit whilst a decision is made about the most appropriate placement for them. The vast majority of learners come from socially and economically deprived backgrounds. Four learners are in public care. There are few minority ethnic learners; none are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory pupil referral unit with good features; a judgement which concurs with its self-evaluation. Learners make good gains in confidence and self-esteem. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory overall, but fixed period exclusions are too high. These exclusions are not analysed to establish patterns and inform planning to reduce them. Not enough learners at the end of Year 9 are successfully re-integrated in mainstream schools. Outreach work in mainstream schools is good and this preventative work contributes well to a rapid decrease in the number of permanent exclusions, but they remain high in the secondary schools throughout the borough. The development of social skills lies at the heart of its work but learners' spiritual development is a weakness. Progress is satisfactory in English and mathematics. In information and communication technology (ICT) progress is satisfactory in the unit but unsatisfactory for Year 10 and 11 learners at ACE because their computers are of poor quality. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it ranges from outstanding to poor. There is not yet an effective system to track progress fully. The quality of care and the curriculum are good. Leadership and management are good but because this is a new unit it is too early to evaluate a number of programmes put in place to raise achievement; in particular the work related programme. The unit provides satisfactory value for money. Capacity for improvement bodes well for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the inadequate and satisfactory teaching to ensure that all teaching is consistently good.
- Introduce and implement an effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of the computers used by Year 10 and 11 learners at ACE.
- Carefully analyse the fixed period exclusions to identify patterns and then take action to reduce them.
- Increase the good work with secondary schools to further reduce the number of permanent exclusions across the borough and work in partnership with them to increase the number of learners re-integrated into mainstream schools in Key Stage 3.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Learners make rapid gains in confidence and self-esteem because of the high quality emotional support they receive. Most Year 6 pupils last year made good progress in managing their behavioural difficulties and all were successfully re-integrated to mainstream schools or other appropriate provision. Despite the efforts of the unit, too few learners at the end of Year 9 were successfully re-integrated due largely to the shortage of places in secondary schools. Because pupils feel secure, attendance is improving, particularly in Years 8 and 9 and this leads to better achievement.

Overall, progress in the main part of the unit in English, mathematics, science and ICT is satisfactory; standards in these core subjects are below average by the end of Year 6, 9 and 11 because of the gaps learners have experienced in their education before being admitted. Individually, by Year 11, a small number of learners achieve well above average General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results in a range of subjects. In 2005 GCSE results included: 'B' passes in English and mathematics; and an A* pass in Spanish. By Year 11 learners successfully achieve a wide range of accreditation matched to their needs. Art and design and food technology are particular strengths and learners make good progress in these subjects. Because of a good work related programme learners in Years 10 and 11 make good gains in their enterprise skills.

Learners in Years 10 and 11 at ACE make satisfactory progress. A few individual learners are achieving well in their GCSEs. These learners make rapid gains in their social and independence skills. However, their progress in ICT is unsatisfactory because of the poor quality of the computers available to them. Because of high quality preventative work in mainstream schools an increased number of learners at risk of exclusion are becoming more settled and achieve satisfactorily as a result. A few learners with very complex learning difficulties are inappropriately placed because there is nowhere else for them to go; however, they make satisfactory progress. Minority ethnic learners and those in public care achieve satisfactorily. It is too early to evaluate achievement for learners on the recently launched work based learning programme. Targets set last year were challenging and although they were not met overall some learners exceeded their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, learners who attend the unit enjoy their learning. They say: 'We enjoy our teachers and the Breakfast Club'. At the end of the day the majority of learners are reluctant to return home. Those supported at ACE like the safety and security provided for them in the annexe. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory when the teaching is good but inadequate when the teaching is dull as seen in a Year 9 science lesson. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory but becomes poor when the teaching is inadequate. Many made polite conversation with inspectors and demonstrated maturity in what they had to say. Some learners experience too many repeat fixed period exclusions and this may be related to the small amount of inadequate teaching. It is recognised that more work is required to further promote learners emotional well-being. However, learners are encouraged to express their feelings as evidenced in some profoundly moving poems where children expressed vividly what it feels like to be what they described: 'a care kid'. Anger management inputs and counselling contribute well to better behaviour and self-esteem. Because of preventative work in mainstream schools, permanent exclusions are falling rapidly. All learners who enter the unit have an allocated school to return to and although reintegration figures are rising they are not rising fast enough, especially in Key Stage 3. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, particularly in Years 8 and 9 because of the new build and enjoyable curriculum. Parents said that their 'children love coming to school'.

Learners' views are heard and acted upon through questionnaires; there are plans to re-launch a student council on the new site with clear terms of reference. There is thorough and regular consultation with all learners about their behaviour targets; learners are encouraged to set their personal targets. Learners are listened to carefully at regular review meetings with their key workers. Social development lies at the heart of the unit; learners played an important role in the recent opening evening. Moral development pervades the curriculum and learners are encouraged to make the right choices and to learn from making wrong choices. Cultural development is good: including the raising of awareness of cultural diversity but spiritual development is weak.

The unit very successfully promotes a healthy lifestyle: learners are encouraged to eat healthy food; good and flexible provision is made for physical exercise. The outdoor education programme for Years 10 and 11 learners at ACE is outstanding and builds their social skills as well as promoting their good health. Smoking is not allowed on the site and relationships and drugs education promotes learners' health and safety very well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall; it ranges from outstanding to inadequate. In the best lessons teachers use their subject knowledge to demonstrate to the learners what they need to do to achieve the learning outcomes planned for them. Teaching in these lessons is characterised by skilful behaviour management and clarity of instructions to the learners. The pace of such lessons is cracking and questions are used effectively to challenge and extend learners' thinking. A significant feature of success is the manner in which transition from one activity to another is managed. Relationships are a strength and learners are keen to succeed in the activities they are given. In a Year 9 food technology lesson the teacher's enthusiasm rubbed off on the learners who enjoyed the activities they were given. As a result they made good progress in planning and making an apple turnover.

On the few occasions where teaching is inadequate, teaching is dull and the pace of lessons is pedestrian. In these lessons objectives are not made clear to the learners and they are not corrected when they misbehave and swear as seen in a Year 9 science lesson. Because learners on these occasions are not engaged in productive learning their progress is inadequate.

The progress of learners against their specific behaviour and learning targets is carefully monitored and regularly reviewed. Effective testing in English and mathematics on entry to the unit is used to track learners' progress but this is not yet pulled together on an effective tracking system. Learners' work is well marked and learners are given clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and flexible to meet a very wide range of emotional and academic needs. Personalised curriculum programmes are a magical ingredient and motivate learners to work hard. In Years 6 to 9 the curriculum mirrors the National Curriculum to support reintegration back into mainstream schools; but there is no provision for religious education or for a modern foreign language. A good programme is in place to promote learners awareness of cultural diversity and challenges racist attitudes. The National Strategy for literacy and numeracy is well planned and all learners receive a specific ICT programme. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is innovative and creative: learners develop key skills and follow a range of interesting options including the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The range of national accreditation opportunities is rich. The work related learning and citizenship packages are strong and make a valuable contribution to learners' economic well-being. However, the 'participation strand' of citizenship is underdeveloped. Provision for sex education and raising awareness of the harmful effects of drug misuse is good and makes a valuable contribution to learners' health and safety.

The alternative curriculum for learners supported by YOT is good. It focuses on the development of basic skills and social skills but is very flexible enabling learners to be accredited in areas in which they shine. An intensive eight-week outdoor pursuit programme helps them to develop skills required to work effectively as a team and promotes a healthy lifestyle. Learning mentors and family workers are deployed effectively to ensure that learners are fully included. Support staff help learners to re-integrate into mainstream and ensure that they are included in a rich curriculum programme with the minimum of anxiety. Therapy is integral to the curriculum and there is an effective anger management component. There is an enjoyable extra-curricular programme provided in the evening to support learners interested in developing youth worker skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care is good. Every pupil is visited at home and risk assessed before being admitted. On entry pupils are allocated a key worker who ensures they are valued and their needs are known and catered for. Each pupil has a target sheet with behavioural targets that are reported on in every lesson and reviewed weekly, rewards being given for good behaviour. It is recognised, though, that a robust electronic system needs to be implemented to track learners' academic progress.

Support given to a pupil when re-integrating into mainstream or a fresh start school is good. The most vulnerable learners say: 'We feel safe and have a trusted adult we can turn to'. Because teachers and support staff know the anxieties learners face, support and advice is targeted very well. Use is made of a 'chill-out' room with a scented candle to calm learners who have extreme outbursts of temper.

Training to manage specific medical needs is good. Robust child protection procedures are in place and there are clear protocols for restraint. Thorough risk assessments are carried out and correct checks undertaken on employers used for work experience. Good partnership with a range of agencies and voluntary organisations results in promoting learners' health and safety. For instance, a commercial counselling programme provides the basis for some excellent work. There is effective liaison with YOT and learners are given good support for every eventuality. Whilst in custody, educational links are maintained to ensure continuity on release. Those with mental health difficulties receive good quality support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. The careers guidance offered to learners is good and Post 16 transition arrangements are well managed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Because of the unit's role, success is measured far more broadly than purely in academic achievement. The headteacher has a clear vision which focuses on reducing exclusions in the local authority's schools. Also in improving the re-integration of learners who have been excluded back into mainstream school as quickly as possible. She recognises that the re-integration figures in Year 9 need to be improved. She has successfully managed change and brought two very distinctive staff teams together on one site and empowered them to work effectively. She has taken robust action to address weaknesses in a short space of time and is well supported by the management committee in achieving this aim. The newly structured senior team is effective. The outreach programme is well managed as is the provision for learners supported at ACE. To date the management of the work related programme is good, but it is too early to evaluate its impact on outcomes for learners. A very capable deputy headteacher manages the curriculum effectively and is an innovative and creative thinker; she is developing assessment procedures well.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is good and provides the headteacher with a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is effective. There is a clear strategy to deal with inadequate teaching. However, the analysis of fixed period exclusions and the relationship with the inadequate teaching is not so robust. The management committee is aware that learners with very complex needs are placed in the unit and are monitoring this situation very carefully. The management committee has a representative membership of health, social services, and education professionals and is effective in its role. The unit is well positioned to provide high quality education and care for vulnerable learners.

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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?	3	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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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	2	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	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

Thank you for your welcome to me as a visitor to your Centre. I enjoyed talking with you. It was good to meet your teachers and support staff.

What I most like about your centre

- All that the centre does to support your gains in confidence.
- The way in which the centre encourages you to eat healthy food, keep yourselves fit and safe.
- The good curriculum it provides for you.
- The work done to improve your reading, writing and use of number.
- The opportunities you have to succeed in a wide range of GCSEs and receive other high quality accreditation for your work.
- Your improved behaviour; attitude to your work; and increased attendance.
- Where teaching is good the way in which it enables you to make good progress.
- The good leadership and management provided by your headteacher and senior leadership team.

What I have asked your centre to do now

- To improve the small amount of poor teaching.
- To modernise the computer equipment in the annexe for Years 10 and 11 learners.
- To get more Year 9 learners back into mainstream schools more quickly and reduce the number of short exclusions from the unit.
- To track the progress you make a little better than at present.

Please work hard and behave well so that your headteacher and her team of teachers and support staff can work with you to make this a good place to be.