

# The Eston Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111520
<b>Local Authority</b>	Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Inspection number</b>	288982
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Debbie Clinton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Stafford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Normanby Road Middlesbrough TS6 9AD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 440225
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 463751

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<b>Age group</b>	5–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Eston Centre has 120 full time places. It is the administrative centre for pupils requiring 'education other than at school' (EOTAS) in the district of Redcar and Cleveland. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage; none speaks English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational need. A few pupils are looked after in public care. The centre holds the Healthy Schools Award. A new headteacher took up post in January 2007. At the time of the inspection, the youngest pupils in the centre were those in Key Stage 2.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The Eston Centre (known locally as the EOTAS Centre) provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It has suffered significant leadership difficulties in recent years. The headteacher, working very effectively with his new leadership team, provides good, decisive leadership, which is reinvigorating the whole centre. The introduction of new systems and procedures has raised the aspirations and expectations of staff and pupils alike. Staff morale is high. The centre's major strength lies in the way it successfully accelerates the personal development and well-being of the pupils, through the close attention paid by all members of staff to raising the self-esteem of pupils. It is a calm and peaceful place. Pupils say there is respect between staff and pupils and they feel safe and happy.

Standards are below average because all pupils have experienced significant disruptions in their education. The achievement of all pupils, whether on short-term respite or longer-term placement, is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best lessons are exciting and interesting, and hold pupils' attention really well. Some outstanding practice was seen. However, information about what pupils know and can do is not always used effectively to plan challenging work for all the pupils. Work is not always marked. When it is, it does not always tell pupils what they have to do to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Many new courses have been introduced into Key Stage 4, both academic (GCSE) and vocational (GNVQ), to better meet the needs of pupils who have a very wide range of capabilities. These have only been introduced recently and have yet to show their full impact on pupils' achievement. A carefully selected group of external providers supply effective vocational courses. A good range of outdoor activities is well appreciated and enthusiastically undertaken by large numbers of pupils on a regular basis.

The centre takes its responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously, and parents report no concerns in this area. Good procedures for supporting pupils help them to develop as responsible young citizens, and build their self-confidence. As one parent noted: 'Since my daughter has been attending the centre, her attitude, behaviour and personality have noticeably improved.' The very good personal relationships pupils develop with staff contribute to the good progress they make in their personal development, including their behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory. The centre tracks the attainment of pupils closely in reading, writing and mathematics, but despite strenuous efforts, it has yet to find an effective way of finding out what pupils understand when they first arrive at the centre. This means that the centre is unable to meet fully pupils' needs quickly enough, and is also unable to provide appropriate academic guidance when it is often most needed.

Leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory. The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils, and his initial evaluations of the centre are largely accurate and very honest. He has swiftly taken appropriate actions to improve provision, including the appointment of a new leadership team, and the reorganisation of procedures for gathering and evaluating information on pupils' attainment. However, the centre's improvement plan lacks specific detail on how these and other initiatives will be evaluated. There are not yet sufficiently close links between the centre's staff, the district alternative education panel, and the pupil inclusion team, and schools which send pupils to the centre. This limits the centre's effectiveness, particularly in helping pupils to make rapid early progress in learning. The time pupils spend being taught is too short, limiting time for learning. It does not replicate closely enough that found in most

other schools making successful reintegration unnecessarily more difficult. The centre provides satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Identify key areas for improvement more sharply in the improvement plan, and clarify the arrangements for checking the effects of actions taken.
- Make better use of information on pupils' performance to set challenging targets for learning for all pupils.
- Ensure that pupils' work is marked regularly and that marking shows pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that the time pupils spend being taught more closely replicates that found in most other schools.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory but standards are below average because of the difficulties and disruption that pupils have experienced in their education. The centre's information on pupils' progress confirms that almost all pupils make satisfactory progress. Many make good progress in English and food technology, and satisfactory progress in other subjects. A small minority of pupils do not attend frequently enough to make satisfactory progress. Apart from these pupils, there is no evidence to suggest that any other group of pupils, including those permanently excluded from school or those at the centre for respite, underachieves. There are no significant differences in the progress made by girls or boys or within key stages.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress in their personal development because the centre is successful in its pursuit of raising pupils' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-confidence. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, and they have a good appreciation of the values of their own and other cultures. Most pupils feel that behaviour in the centre is good, because they gain a clear understanding of tolerance and patience through regular 'group time' at the beginning of every learning session. Pupils say they enjoy being in the centre, and attendance has improved markedly in recent times and is satisfactory. Pupils clearly understand the importance of a good diet in relation to living a healthy life. This was shown to very good effect in 'local food week' when pupils grew, prepared, served and ate, a balanced, typically English dinner. They actively participate in sport and other physical activities, making good use of local resources both indoor and in the hills around the centre. Their good attitudes to personal safety are clearly demonstrated in the calm atmosphere which pervades the centre, with pupils walking from lesson to lesson calmly and happily. Pupils are very active in charitable work, for example, raising funds to sponsor the education of a child in Africa. Their purchase of a hectare of land in the Ecuadorian rainforest helped to prevent deforestation and raise their awareness of ecology. Leaders in local schools are impressed with pupils' better attitudes to learning, the better control they have over their own behaviour, and their greater maturity shown through an improved work ethic which prepares them well for the next stage of their lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Typically, a wide range of resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used in lessons to attract and hold pupils' attention. High expectations that pupils will succeed, entice pupils to work independently and enthusiastically. Pupils respond well and this raises the pace of learning. Good relationships in lessons and throughout the centre between adults and pupils promote good behaviour and enjoyment of learning. As one parent noted: 'My daughter has enjoyed everything the school has done for her.' In other lessons, work set is sometimes not matched closely enough to pupils' needs. This occurs when the information on what pupils know and can do is not used effectively to plan work. Marking is a weak aspect of the teaching; some work is unmarked, and too much marking gives little indication to pupils about what they must do next to get better.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. An appropriate range of courses and subjects are now provided in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils in Key Stage 2 follow an appropriate course planned and led by a primary specialist. English and food technology are particular strengths, along with art and photography, and are well liked by the pupils. A strong drive to improve the links between subjects is helping to improve pupils' skills in mathematics and science. Pupils on short-term 'respite' are taught the knowledge and skills they will need for their successful reintegration into mainstream school. A good range of interesting extra-curricular activities, including outdoor pursuits, voluntary work and accredited courses, are used to cement relationships, and build and sustain pupils' interest in learning. The time pupils spend in lessons is shorter than in most schools, limiting rates of learning. It does not prepare pupils well for moving back to mainstream school.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The centre pays very close attention to safeguarding its vulnerable pupils. Risk assessments, health and safety issues, and other statutory requirements are dealt with meticulously. Pupils receive good support for their personal development, because teachers and care staff treat each pupil as an individual, and know their needs very well. The centre now works closely with parents to negotiate challenging targets with pupils for their behaviour and academic progress. As one parent noted; 'The school has worked well with my son and myself.' Targets for behaviour are met particularly well, because of the detailed knowledge the centre has, and uses effectively, to plan short but rapid steps in improvement. Targets aimed at improving achievement and raising standards are less effective, because teachers do not consistently specify what pupils need to do to improve in lessons, based on the information they have.

The centre's tracking system is reliable, but is slow to generate accurate information on how well pupils are doing. This is because some schools and other agencies do not provide enough information about the work pupils have been doing before entering the centre. This hinders pupils' initial progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The recently appointed senior leadership team has quickly gained an accurate picture of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has moved with purpose to undertake improvement, though these have not yet shown their full effect. For example, broadening the curriculum in Key Stage 4 has yet to raise the number of GCSE passes gained, and the work started on using assessment information better to support pupils' learning, has yet to show a measurable change in the effectiveness of teaching. The centre's improvement plan includes insufficient details to show how the impact of actions taken will be evaluated. Staff morale is good, and there is a growing sense of teamwork, though there is still some lack of clarity over individual roles and responsibilities. A fresh and proactive way of working with partners is already showing a positive effect, opening new channels of communication, and shorter response times. The centre's hours are too short and limit pupils' opportunities, for example in mathematics and science. The management committee is supportive, and is becoming more challenging under the vigorous and aspirational guidance of the chair. In spite of significant leadership difficulties in the recent past, the centre has made improvements since the last inspection, and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

8 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Eston Centre, Redcar and Cleveland, TS6 9AD

Thank you for helping me to find out about your centre. I enjoyed being there, and judging from the very positive atmosphere, so do you.

I found that the centre provides you with a satisfactory education, and I was pleased with the following things.

- You can see the benefit of being at the centre. You realise that it is helping you to become more settled, and is helping you in your learning. You are responding very well and clearly have respect for each other and the staff.
- The headteacher and his colleagues have already made changes which will help you to make better progress, for instance by providing many more subjects and courses to attract your interest.
- The very careful attention the centre staff pay to ensuring that you are safe whilst you are there.

However I also found some things that I would like to see improved.

- The length of the centre's working day is too short. Whilst you might understandably like it that way, it is not giving you enough opportunity to learn those things which need to be learned, for instance in mathematics and science. Nor does it give you an accurate representation of what is normally expected.
- You are not always set clear and meaningful targets for your learning, based on what you already know and can do.
- Work is not marked often enough and does not always show you what to do to improve.
- The centre's leaders do not yet have a good enough written plan of what they are going to do to improve the provision available to you, nor how they are going to check to make sure that everything is working as well as it can.

Please continue to behave in the mature way that I saw on my visit.

I would like to wish you all the very best luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector