



# The Linden Education Centre

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 115836  
**Local Authority** Hampshire  
**Inspection number** 290340  
**Inspection date** 16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Kay Charlton

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 address</b>	Queens Road
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		Farnborough
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-16		GU14 6JU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01252371819
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	93	<b>Fax number</b>	01252554079
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Liz Beckwith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The centre caters for pupils who have been or are in danger of being excluded from schools in the North East Hampshire area. The provision includes home tuition and distance learning, as well as on-site learning. At the time of the inspection there were 93 pupils on roll. Ten per cent have statements of special educational need, mainly concerned with emotional and behavioural difficulties, but often allied to learning difficulties. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British origin. All have been underachieving in the past and, on entry, attain standards well below those expected in mainstream schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Linden is a good education centre with some outstanding features. The pupils interviewed made comments such as, 'They always try to help you get the best grades you can'. These views are echoed by parents who, without exception, speak highly of the work of the centre. One said, 'The staff are wonder workers'.

The centre works extremely well with a wide range of local agencies to give exemplary care, guidance and support to its pupils. As a result, pupils are successful in re-engaging in learning. Pupils' personal development is good and there are some outstanding features. All make significant improvements from first starting at the centre. They show an excellent sense of enjoyment in the wide range of interesting activities that the centre offers and rapidly gain self-confidence. Relationships are excellent and pupils learn to understand their own feelings as well as those of others. Pupils' behaviour is good. They talk with real insight about their behaviours in their previous schools and they explain why these had upset staff and pupils alike. Pupils' attendance is good. It is much improved compared with that in their previous schools.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well, although standards remain very low because of their starting points on entry. Teaching and learning are good and staff expect the most of pupils whatever their needs. Staff constantly praise and encourage pupils in their efforts and, in turn, pupils of all ages show determination and try hard. As a result, they invariably meet or exceed their targets. The centre places a strong emphasis on practical work in science, art and design and technology, including food technology, and pupils achieve particularly well in these areas. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' achievements are satisfactory because, over time, teaching in this subject has not been as good as it should be. Not all staff are fully confident in challenging pupils' thinking in ICT and do not use it to full advantage across all subjects of the curriculum.

The head of centre gives very strong leadership and has ensured that good improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. Along with the senior leadership team, she has a clear view of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. Improvements which have been implemented in ICT are already having a very positive impact on teaching and learning, and on the overall management of the centre. The senior team encourage staff at all levels to engage in a high level of professional development and this plays an important part in moving the centre forward. The local authority (LA) asks challenging questions and provides a good level of support in the centre's drive for improvement. There has been marked improvement in the procedures for monitoring and evaluation since the time of the last inspection. The senior team provides the LA with an accurate view of the overall effectiveness of the centre. The centre is run very efficiently, but ICT is not used well enough as a management tool to demonstrate the centre's effectiveness, notably in showing trends in pupils' attendance and achievements. The way the school has responded to the key issues raised at the last inspection shows that it is well placed for further improvement.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievements in ICT and make more use of modern technology in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Use ICT more effectively as a management tool to demonstrate the quality of the provision.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils of different abilities and backgrounds make good progress and achieve well. Although attainment is very low most pupils meet and some exceed the challenging targets that are set for them. In most years at least 90% of pupils attain at least one GCSE. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. They make very good progress in science, art and design and technology, including food technology, because staff take full advantage of the practical nature of these subjects to extend pupils' learning.

In ICT, pupils' progress is satisfactory. They are now achieving well in lessons, but because of previous inconsistencies in teaching they are having to make up lost ground. Some opportunities to use ICT in other areas of the curriculum are missed since not all staff use it well enough.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good and there are some outstanding features. They show an excellent sense of enjoyment and take great pride in being part of the centre. Their attendance is good. It shows marked improvements during their time at the centre. Several pupils have improved their attendance from a very low baseline to close to 100% in a very short space of time. Relationships are excellent and pupils are aware that their opinions count. They say that, 'You are an equal here and teachers listen to you'. The school council eagerly discuss what matters to them, for example about the lunchtime menu. All pupils develop a good understanding of healthy living. They are extremely aware of the need to be safety conscious, particularly when taking part in activities such as canoeing and archery. They make a positive contribution to the local community and during the inspection all were actively engaged in raising money for Children in Need. The school prepares pupils well for the world of work through its good range of vocational opportunities. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong. They learn to work together exceptionally well and show loyalty and respect towards each other. Occasions, such as 'The Gathering' provide excellent opportunities for them to reflect and they do this very well showing a very good sense of reverence for the situation. Pupils make noticeable gains in developing their cultural awareness and speak openly and extremely positively about differences in their own backgrounds and beliefs.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff have detailed knowledge of the pupils' needs so that work is well matched to their levels of understanding. They make careful assessments and set challenging targets for each pupil. These 'small step' assessments are used well to challenge pupils in the next stages of their learning. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team and set high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. Lessons are very well organised and proceed smoothly. There is a very good working atmosphere and pupils are keen to contribute their ideas, often showing a very good sense of fun.

Generally, a wide range of teaching and learning strategies are used and pupils are highly motivated. Good use is made of 'hands on' activities to engage pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy using the school's ICT facilities and they are now doing this well in ICT lessons, after a period when teaching was not good as it should be. In other subject areas, opportunities to use ICT are sometimes missed, for example by not seizing the chance to engage pupils by making best use of the interactive whiteboards.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The centre provides a good and innovative curriculum for all age groups. It moulds its provision very well to meet the needs of all its pupils. There is a high emphasis on pupils' personal development where most have the greatest needs and a very systematic development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. A recent audit of the ICT provision undertaken by the newly appointed co-ordinator shows that these skills are not developed systematically across all subjects. A very comprehensive action plan is now in place to address this issue.

There is an excellent programme of enrichment. Pupils are very impressed with all the extra activities they can take part in and talk with enthusiasm about residential visits and the activities at a local outdoor centre. There is a wide range of visitors into the centre who make an extremely positive contribution to the curriculum. For example, pupils say that they really appreciated a recent input from a prison guard about the dangers of drugs.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding, with staff showing a high commitment to putting the pupils first. Child protection procedures are robust, and risk assessments and health and safety checks are undertaken thoroughly and systematically. There is an extremely well thought out policy about placing pupils in situations that they will often find difficult to cope with, for example when undertaking a night-time walk.

This is very effective in helping them to overcome their fears and develop an 'I can' rather than an 'I can't' approach which spills over into their learning. Excellent one-to-one support is provided by a wide range of staff, including mentors, counsellors, home tutors, teaching staff and the behaviour support team. This is very effective in guiding pupils in both their personal and academic development. Information about the pupils' academic performance is used extremely well to set challenging and yet realistic targets for pupils. Highly effective advice is provided both to support pupils returning to mainstream settings and also for those leaving the centre at age 16. As result, virtually all re-integrations of pupils into mainstream settings are successful and at age 16, pupils move to college or into employment with confidence.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior team provide very strong leadership and staff work together with a clear sense of purpose. There is a high commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and staff ensure that pupils are given every chance to succeed. As one pupil said, 'They don't give up on you here'.

The centre's self-evaluation procedures are good with very strong input from the senior leadership team. There is a systematic programme to monitor the overall effectiveness of the centre and the information is used effectively to target priorities for development. However, insufficient use is made of ICT as a management tool in order for the centre to demonstrate its effectiveness. This is particularly to draw out patterns and trends in the data about pupils' attendance and achievements. Subject co-ordinators have developed their skills well and make an active contribution to school development. Staff are well qualified for their areas of responsibility and resources are managed efficiently. Recent recruitment to the school has been handled well and staff appointments are very actively supporting ways forward.

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## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

Thank you for your help when I came to inspect your school on 16 November 2006.

You said that Linden is a good education centre and that you are very proud of it. You think that the staff help you to learn a lot so that you make good progress. The inspection agrees with your view that it does provide a good education and there are some outstanding features.

I could see that you try hard and that really enjoy your work. You achieve well and most of you reach your targets and some of you do even better. You all show respect towards each other and work together very well. Your behaviour is good and you recognise that you have all improved a great deal in this area. You say that, 'You will not get another second chance' and your attendance is now much better than it was when you were in school. Teaching is good. Staff work very well as a team and they make learning enjoyable. They organise extensive range of events and visits out of school and you are very enthusiastic about these activities, particularly the residential visits and the visits to outdoor centres. All staff look after you exceptionally well and give you excellent support and advice to help you improve. You are extremely well informed about the importance of staying safe.

The headteacher supports the staff very well and helps everyone to develop their skills so that the centre improves. At present, staff are working to improve the way you are taught information and communication technology (ICT). You have an important part to play to be sure that you achieve as well as you can in this area. The staff are also working on ensuring that they make better use of ICT in managing the school, particularly when showing the improvements that you are making in your work and attendance.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector