

Andover Education Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115837
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290341
Inspection date	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	63
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Middleton
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002
School address	c/o Cricklade College Charlton Road Andover SP10 1EJ
Telephone number	01264 354145
Fax number	01264 355847

Age group	5–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Andover Education Centre is part of the Hampshire Education Inclusion Service, being one of seven Education Centres in the county. It is based at Cricklade College. The Education Centre comprises:

(i) A secondary behavioural unit providing for permanently excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion. Pupils permanently excluded from primary school, of which there is currently one, are provided with a one-to-one support programme.

(ii) The Andover Centre Medical Referrals Provision providing for emotionally vulnerable and physically unwell pupils as well as for pregnant schoolgirls and schoolgirl mothers. (There are no pupils currently in the last two groups.)

(iii) A behaviour support service to secondary schools.

Currently, there are 36 permanently excluded pupils attending the secondary behavioural unit, 14 pupils in the medical referrals provision and 13 pupils supported in schools. Thirteen have a statement of special educational needs and four-out-of-five pupils have behavioural, emotional and social needs. Presently, seven permanently excluded pupils with statements for behavioural, emotional and social needs are awaiting special school places. Eight pupils are currently on orders from the Youth Offending Team. There are generally far more boys than girls on roll and all are of White British origin. The number of pupils joining and leaving the centre throughout the year is high. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The centre is subject to reorganisation proposals in line with structural changes shortly to be put in place as a result of Hampshire's new Children's Service developments.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Andover Education Centre aims to provide a 'caring, happy and secure environment, which provides high expectations both in behaviour and academic performance'. In this it is exceptionally effective and provides an outstanding quality of education and care for all its pupils. This is despite the fact that the centre is still not able to offer pupils a full-time education because of the cramped accommodation. Since the previous inspection, the head teacher and the management committee have relentlessly pursued this issue with the local authority and have done all they could possibly do, as yet to no avail.

A major strength is how well the centre works in partnership with local secondary schools, other education providers and a host of outside specialist agencies. This enhances considerably the quality of pupils' personal and academic development during their time at the centre. The centre also works very closely with parents and carers who are overwhelmingly appreciative of its work. One commented: 'I would like to thank the staff for all their help and support. My daughter is smiling and a lot more open, she will talk to us as before she would not.'

Pupils start the centre at different times throughout the year. Some stay for only a short time and older ones tend to complete their education there. Many have underachieved in mainstream school and have poor standards of attainment in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and use of information and communication technology (ICT). Many have missed much schooling and are disaffected. Some have emotional and mental health concerns, others may be physically unwell and some exhibit challenging behaviour. The centre works hard and successfully to rekindle pupils' enthusiasm for learning and, as a result, the great majority leave at the end of Year 11 with some form of accreditation. This enables them to continue on to further education, work based training or employment. Younger pupils in Years 7 to 9 are enabled to successfully reintegrate in to either mainstream school or other specialist provision. Those in Year 9 at the centre are enabled to sit the statutory end-of-year tests.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development is excellent. Older pupils, in particular, improve their motivation and self-confidence and their attendance improves considerably. One commented: 'I have grown up a lot and am not as childish as I used to be but still have my little moments.' During the inspection they behaved very well in lessons in the secondary behavioural unit. Those attending the medical referrals provision applied themselves very well to their individual tasks as well as improving their confidence, self-esteem and social skills through group-work.

Teaching and learning are outstanding and, as a result of the setting of effective short-term targets, close tracking and pupils' involvement in this, achievement is outstanding. Really strong working relationships between pupils and staff underpin the quality of learning. Despite only offering a part-time education, the curriculum is excellent and reflects very well and broadens that which pupils would experience in mainstream school. Extra opportunities are offered to pupils in the secondary behavioural unit as a result of the centre's links with other education providers and improve further their personal and academic development. Older pupils, for example, value the free membership of the local leisure facility they are given. The centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. Staff are dedicated and highly committed to working with their pupils in order to promote their personal and academic development. Parents value the work of the centre in this respect. One commented: 'I feel the staff are very approachable and give support to both parent and child.'

Indicative of the excellent leadership and management is the whole staff ethos of continuing self-evaluation to ensure the centre's core aims are fully met. All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully dealt with and development planning is used effectively to ensure there is a focus on continuing improvement. The management committee works very closely with the centre and is highly effective as a supportive and critical friend. Highly effective leadership and management and the centre's improving track record show there is excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide full-time education to enhance the life chances of pupils even more.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards on entry, particularly for those pupils in the secondary behavioural unit, are generally well below what is expected for pupils' ages. For those in the medical referrals provision they are more variable. Standards at the end of Year 11 remain below average but compared to pupils' starting points their progress is outstanding. As a result of highly effective tracking procedures the centre is able to show that over 90 per cent of pupils made measurable progress in core subjects in 2005 to 2006. Two-thirds of pupils achieved at least 1 A* to G grade pass and eight-out-of-ten achieved some form of external accreditation. Most met or achieved better than their estimated grade. As a result, almost all pupils continued into further education, training or employment. Because of small numbers of pupils taking statutory tests at the end of Year 9, it is not realistic to compare results to those nationally. Tracking data for current pupils in the centre shows that almost all have made measurable progress and a significant number are progressing better than expected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The difficulties pupils arrive with diminish as their confidence and self-esteem improve and their interest in learning is re-kindled. As a result, many younger pupils are successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools or other specialist provision, including those with statements of special educational need for behavioural, social and emotional needs. Outreach work in a local secondary school has resulted in a number of pupils at risk of exclusion being enabled to stay on and take their GCSE examinations. Attendance at the centre is good overall and for some pupils is a considerable improvement on their attendance at mainstream school. Pupils say they enjoy their education, feel safe and get along well with each other, adding that the small group sizes are particularly useful in this respect. All feel confident that there is an adult to speak with should they feel the need to seek personal advice. Many relish the opportunity to take part in extra physical activities on offer but the attendance of some younger pupils at these is not always as high as it could be. The nature of the centre's provision makes it difficult to organise a school council. However, pupils are fully involved in target setting and reviews of these and they are enabled to express their views at weekly individual tutorial sessions in the secondary behavioural unit. They are involved in the wider community as a result of their raising money for local charities. Pupils are prepared very well for their future economic well-being because of very effective work-related learning activities, including work experience for older pupils, and the centre's focus on improving their key skills and personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers know their pupils very well and highly effective assessment procedures inform them of pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils have individualised learning programmes with clear short-term targets for each topic in every subject. Teachers' planning is thus highly focused to ensure each pupil's learning needs are fully met. Lessons are calm, purposeful and challenging, pupils are fully engaged and, as a result, they make significant progress towards their targets. Effective questioning by teachers involves pupils very well and improves their literacy skills in all subjects, as well as reminding them of what they need to do to improve their assessment levels. This was particularly effective, for example, in a Year 8 food technology lesson where pupils were making cheese scones and in Year 11 revision lessons for GCSE mathematics and science. Pupils' work is regularly marked and they are fully involved in assessing how well they have done in relation to their targets at the end of each unit of work. However, there is some variability in the quality of teachers' written comments on pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Despite the constraints of not being able to offer full-time education, the curriculum is highly effective and contributes significantly to pupils' academic progress and personal development across the centre. There is a particularly effective focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as ICT. A broad range of other National Curriculum subjects is also provided. Personal, social and health education provision has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' personal development and includes input from other specialist providers. Pupils value the extra opportunities added on to their half-day's provision, which include sporting and outdoor and adventurous activities. Where appropriate, extra provision is arranged within the host college for other courses. In the medical referrals provision, the curriculum is tailored specifically to pupils' needs. A recent innovation has been the provision for some pupils of a lap top computer so they can take part in a virtual learning programme working from home. Provision for ICT resources is excellent. These are used very effectively to support teaching and learning throughout the centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The centre provides a particularly strong, caring and supporting environment where pupils feel safe, develop their personal qualities and make excellent progress towards the targets set for them. Those with particular learning difficulties, those with mental health and medical concerns and other vulnerable pupils are really well supported. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed and discussed with pupils. Weekly tutorial sessions in the secondary behavioural unit are very effective in offering high quality pastoral and personal support, adding considerably to the progress pupils make whilst attending the centre. Older pupils are particularly appreciative of the careers advice they have received. Pupils also receive very effective support from the centre during their settling-in period on reintegration programmes. Provision for ensuring health and safety is very strong. Child protection and risk assessment procedure are securely in place and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. The centre's multi-agency approach and use of outside professional agencies greatly enhances the quality of support pupils receive.

Information on attainment and progress against baseline information is analysed carefully so that the centre is clearly aware of how much progress pupils make. This enables staff to support and guide pupils very effectively in terms of their academic progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The dynamic head teacher and her two deputies are a highly effective team and have been instrumental in developing the excellent ethos for learning and achievement in the centre. The leadership team is particularly proactive, self-evaluation being continuous and reflective with really strong monitoring and evaluation of the centre's effectiveness. As a result, improvement planning is robust, areas identified for development are highly appropriate and challenging targets are set. All staff are highly committed to ensure every pupil really matters, improving their motivation for learning and ultimately enabling them to achieve their full potential. Leadership has ensured the centre provides a high quality, well resourced learning environment, which makes the most of the cramped conditions. The centre's management committee, with key local representatives, is highly effective in its role as a supportive and critical friend of the centre.

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.

Annex A

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

21 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Andover Education Centre, Andover, SP10 1EJ

You may remember that I visited the centre for a day recently. I saw some of you working in lessons and I had a chat with individuals as well as groups of you to seek your opinions on the education provided for you. Thank you all very much for being really friendly and making me feel welcome. I was impressed with your honesty and openness when explaining your views. I would also like to thank the three Year 8 boys who provided me with samples of freshly cooked cheese scones made in their food technology lesson. They were very tasty!

The quality of education you receive at the centre is outstanding, which means you are able to make excellent progress in your academic and personal development. On the whole, you behave really well and get along fine with each other and your teachers. You are also pleased with the way the centre has enabled you to settle down and improve your skills. I agree with your comments about the cramped conditions in the secondary behavioural unit - you really could do with more space! The head teacher knows this and is trying to make sure this happens in the near future. I also agree with the positive comments made by those pupils I spoke with in the medical referrals provision. I have prepared a short list of what is particularly good about your education and at the end I have suggested one thing that could be improved.

The things that are particularly done well for you are these:

- the staff make sure you are safe and extremely well cared for
- the staff are dedicated and really have your best interests at heart and want to make sure you will be able to do well in the future
- the curriculum and other activities make your education very interesting.

The one that would prepare you even better for the future:

- the centre needs to provide you with a full-time education in the secondary behavioural unit.

Once again, many thanks for your welcome and I would like to wish you all the best for your future.

James Bowden Lead inspector