

# Burnley and Pendle Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	128089
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	293597
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Johnson HMI

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>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	55
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Bather
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Hargher Clough Centre Venice Street Burnley Lancashire BB11 4BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 421142
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 426775

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<b>Age group</b>	14–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Burnley and Pendle Centre is a Key Stage 4 pupil referral unit which caters for up to 72 students. The school provides education and support for permanently excluded students and those at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. All the students have histories of very difficult behaviour or poor attendance. A high proportion are vulnerable young people who have been supported by social services or the youth offending team. The majority of students are boys although in recent times the proportion of girls has increased to around a third. About 30% are eligible for free school meals. A small number have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups reflects the diverse community of the area although none of the students are in the early stages of learning English.

The centre was established two years ago as a result of an amalgamation of two pupil referral units in East Lancashire. Originally it was the school for all Key Stage 4 students who had been permanently excluded in the region. In September 2007, following a reorganisation, its remit changed and now it only takes students from the Burnley and Pendle area. The headteacher was appointed in 2006 and almost all the current teachers have been appointed since that time. The chair of the management committee left this position in July 2007 and a new chair will be appointed at the next meeting.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school makes a significant difference to the life chances of students. At this late stage in their school career many students take the opportunity to turn previous educational failure into success. Many are angry about their previous experiences and enter the school with little hope for the future. They make significant progress in their attendance, behaviour and attainment. Many feel pride in achievement at school for the first time. The centre succeeds because staff refuse to give up on students. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has given staff the right tools and attitude to meet the very demanding needs of students.

When students join the centre they bring a legacy of underachievement. Many have difficulties with literacy and numeracy. When they leave, about half progress onto college courses and a quarter gain apprenticeships, go on to further training or jobs. The number of students obtaining GCSEs and other qualifications has increased dramatically in the last two years and almost all students who attend the centre regularly gain qualifications that enhance their future economic well-being. Students are set challenging targets and most work hard to achieve them.

Most students have histories of very poor attendance but this improves because they enjoy learning. When they enter the school some students' behaviour and attitudes are very poor. As their confidence improves students begin to realise that learning is important and behaviour improves significantly. The implementation of the behaviour policy is usually effective in resolving problems quickly and preventing them from happening again.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory although there are variations in the quality of lessons and good practice is not shared effectively. Students enjoy lessons because of the individual attention they receive. Teachers get to know their students very well. The school has recognised improving teaching is a priority and a new lesson observation system has recently been introduced. It is too early to see much impact on the quality of lessons. The school has started to plan with a mainstream school to work jointly with students who are at risk of permanent exclusion. This work is not as effective as it should be and requires further development.

There is a strong vocational element in the curriculum, which is complemented by effective tuition in literacy, numeracy and ICT. This meets the needs of the majority of students who have aspirations to progress to vocational college courses. The work of the external partners who provide alternative courses for students is usually good, but these courses are not adequately quality assured by the school. For example, it has no way of checking the quality of teaching and learning of students when they attend college or work based learning. There is great emphasis on personal, social and health education which allows students to recognise the potential implications of some of the harmful habits they have developed and many try to change.

The links with outside specialist agencies ensure that students receive good physical and emotional support. Poor attendance at school is followed up meticulously and often improves. Very few parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, but those that did commented on their confidence in pastoral care and the improvement in students' attitudes at home. Information on students' prior attainment is sometimes difficult to collect and this slows down the process of recording baseline information, which in turn means that targets cannot be set promptly enough. Extensive data is collected on students' academic progress in the centre and used by teachers and key workers to set challenging targets.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has created a culture of optimism and self-belief. She clearly and calmly demonstrates her high expectations of both staff and students. The deputy headteachers and management committee provide good support. The significant staff changes and reorganisations of the centre have been very well managed and as a result the school has a good capacity to improve.

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

- Improve teaching and learning by building on the strengths of the best lessons.
- Work with mainstream schools more effectively to reduce the permanent exclusion of students.
- Introduce more effective ways of measuring the impact of providers of alternative courses.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Students make good progress from low starting points. In 2007 more students than ever before entered GCSE examinations and the school achieved its best results. Students who attend the centre on a regular basis make the best progress and usually obtain their predicted grade or exceed it. Students are particularly successful in Art, where 70% achieved A\* to C grades, although standards are generally below the national average. A wide range of vocational qualifications were achieved and a high proportion of students passed tests in literacy and numeracy. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in their lessons and are well supported by teaching assistants. For many students, simply attending this school on a regular basis and developing good relationships with their teachers is a significant achievement in itself.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students' make good progress in their personal development and well-being. The attendance of the majority of students improves significantly; however, the school recognises that there are still a small number of students whose attendance is very poor. Using a combination of a personalised curriculum, work experience and distance learning through the internet, the school has begun to make a difference, even with this hard to reach group. Students' behaviour improves and is very much better than their behaviour in previous schools. A minority of students can be very volatile and verbally abusive especially in the first few days after their arrival. Students do not smoke in the school or playground because of the strict enforcement of the no smoking policy. They eat healthy food at lunchtimes and many participate in life skills and cookery lessons to develop an understanding of the basic principles of health and well being. The improved quality of students' social and moral development is expressed through their good relationships with peers and adults. The incident book records that there are few incidents of bullying and racism and these have declined significantly over the last two years. Workshops on cultural awareness and tolerance are successful in raising awareness of cultural diversity. Students participate in several successful charitable events and raise considerable sums of money. Students have few opportunities to participate in decision making about the school community. The school has recognised this lack of consultation and plans to establish a school council in the near future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, there is some variability in the quality of teachers' work. There are examples of both good and less effective practice in most elements of teaching throughout the school. For example lesson planning, assessment, use of interactive whiteboards and marking is sometimes very effective but not consistently so. The subject knowledge of new staff brought in to teach English, science and mathematics is good and this has had a positive effect on students' progress. Teaching assistants are encouraged to work in particular subjects and this means they can be more effective in their work. The main strength of teaching is the way in which teachers and teaching assistants promote positive behaviour and enjoyment of learning. Lessons are less effective when all the students work at the same pace and are not set individual targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good because it is matched to the individual needs of each learner.

Vocational courses are plentiful. Work experience provides good opportunities for students to blossom and develop mature relationships with adults. Students participate in a range of formal and informal leisure activities during lunchtime that complement the work done in lessons and ensure there is a positive atmosphere in a structured environment. The school is clear that one of its key objectives is to improve the way students interact with each other and with adults. They have recently introduced a programme of 'emotional literacy', however, the lack of adaptation of this programme to meet the needs of students sometimes leads to poor behaviour.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Students receive good care, guidance and support. Pastoral care is excellent. Key workers are very well informed about the needs and progress of students and make helpful suggestions about the ways in which students can be encouraged and supported. Students' achievements are celebrated and reinforced in awards ceremonies. Students are given good guidance about progression to employment and future training and, as a result, many go on to take up courses at local colleges and work based learning providers. The school has good arrangements in place to promote students' physical and emotional health through the use of support sessions specifically for boys and girls and specialist outside agencies. The school building has been adapted by staff to provide a very attractive environment that promotes learning. Procedures to protect students and keep them safe are in place and follow the recommended guidelines.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 1**

As a result of the leadership of the headteacher, staff believe that they can make a significant difference to the achievement of students. This shared vision provides the impetus for the significant improvements to be made to the progress of students. The school knows it can go

even further and there is a shared determination to do so. The school provides good value for money. The self-evaluation provides an accurate representation of the strengths and areas for improvement and the school improvement plan identifies priorities for the future. The school management committee provides good support for the school.

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## 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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	1

### 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

28 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Burnley and Pendle Centre, Lancashire, BB11 4BA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed spending time with you and seeing what good progress most of you are making.

I think the Burnley and Pendle Centre is a good school because of what you are achieving. Most students who attend the school on a regular basis make good progress and move on to college, apprenticeships or jobs. After you settle into the school your behaviour improves and you make really good strides in personal development. A high proportion of you gain useful qualifications. For most of the time there is a positive atmosphere and people get on well. You begin to realise that you must take responsibility for your actions and the consequences that result from them.

All of these things don't happen by accident! They are the result of the excellent leadership of the headteacher and the very good support she receives from all the staff. The staff never stop trying to make a difference and help you, no matter what problems you have.

I agree with the headteacher that there are a few things to do to make things even better, they are:

- Teachers should share the good things they do in lessons.
- The school should work with local mainstream schools more closely to prevent students from being excluded.
- Staff need to make sure that the work that goes on outside the school is as good as in the school itself.

Many of you were unhappy at your previous schools and got into trouble there. Now you have a second chance. This school has proved that if you continue to attend regularly, cooperate and try hard then you will succeed.

With best wishes for the future

Andrew Johnson HMI