



# Ashwell Centre

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 132026  
**Local Authority** Kingston-upon-Hull  
**Inspection number** 293921  
**Inspection date** 1 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** David Smith

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>	Ashwell Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		Hull
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		HU9 5LJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01482 798606
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	29	<b>Fax number</b>	01482 331724
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Shave
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	1 February 2007	293921

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Ashwell Centre educates up to forty pupils but the number on roll varies throughout the year. Pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and many have statements of special educational needs because of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils are in Years 7, 8 and 9 but a small number remain at the centre for Years 10 and 11. A minority of the pupils return to mainstream schools after a short stay. A very high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals and five pupils are in public care. The pupils are predominantly White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The centre has been awarded Investors in People and the National Healthy Schools' Award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ashwell Centre provides a good education. It is well led and managed; consequently, it has improved well since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. The good use of assessment and effective teaching ensures that pupils make good overall progress. Pupils eligible for free school meals and those in public care make the same progress as their peers. The staff have high expectations and meet pupils' challenging individual learning needs effectively. Pupils' make good progress in mathematics and science but only satisfactory progress in English because they do not have enough practice at writing in the full range of subjects. Pupils learn the skills of information and communication technology (ICT) well but lack enough opportunities to apply their skills to their learning of other subjects, such as mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and enjoy their time at the centre. They are proud of their achievements and the displays around the school celebrate their good work. Pupils relate well to each other and have positive relationships with the staff and confidence in the support provided for them. Pupils say that they like the staff and the way that they work. Attendance is satisfactory, which compares favourably with the poor attendance of many pupils in their previous schools. The centre effectively fosters an awareness of healthy lifestyles and, as a result, has gained a National Healthy Schools' Award. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make a positive contribution to the school community.

The curriculum is good and the centre makes effective use of local facilities to compensate for limitations in its accommodation. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their enterprise skills and understanding of the world of work as they develop their economic well-being. Every opportunity is taken to provide activities that motivate pupils and provide relevant qualifications. There is also a strong focus on personal achievement through involvement in courses such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Importantly, some of the courses pupils take provide links with evening and holiday activities in the community.

Care guidance and support are good and pupils are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong. Safeguarding procedures are in place and provide a safe environment for these vulnerable pupils. The centre has particularly good links with a wide range of agencies and these make a valuable contribution to advice and guidance. The senior managers monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively; however, the middle managers are insufficiently involved in this process and this limits the sharing of best practice. The school's self-evaluation shows that the senior staff understand what it does well and what could be improved, although their evaluation of some aspects of the school's work tends to be a little too generous.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' writing skills in all subjects.
- Ensure that pupils make enough use of computers to enhance their learning in all subjects.
- Ensure that the middle managers play their part in the formal monitoring of teaching and learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Boys and girls achieve well. It is not appropriate to compare standards with national figures because of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 make good progress in science and mathematics but satisfactory progress in English. This is because many pupils join the centre with low levels of literacy. Although they make good progress in their speaking and listening and reading, and use correct vocabulary in mathematics and science lessons, they make too little progress in their writing. Although the teachers work hard to improve writing in English lessons, they do not plan enough opportunities to extend pupils' writing in other subjects.

The small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in a range of accredited courses, including GCSE. Pupils make good progress in ICT lessons but do not apply their skills enough in their work in other subjects. Pupils are motivated by practical activities; for example, they enjoy constructing electrical circuits and, as a result, achieve well in such lessons. Their artwork is high in quality and makes use of a good range of media; through this subject they learn a good deal about the work of established artists.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the motorcycling course provided by the Youth Service. This course motivates pupils and leads to success in a range of appropriate accreditation.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils enjoy their learning and have positive attitudes and generally behave well. The incidence of fixed-term exclusions was quite high last year but the school has improved behaviour management and reduced exclusions this year to an acceptable level. The school has effective strategies in place to improve pupils' attendance. Pupils are confident that they can talk to staff if they have any personal concerns or problems. Most pupils take pride in their work and respect their surroundings. The school places a very high priority on safe practices and pupils feel safe. Most pupils eat healthily at school and take part in physical exercise. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school's community, for example, by their involvement in the centre council. One parent wrote, 'Pupils are listened to and can express their opinions'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is enthusiastic and purposeful. The consistent use of effective assessment procedures ensures that pupils' work is neither too difficult nor too hard. Support staff make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' learning and, as a result, their individual learning needs are met. Expectations are high and this encourages a positive work ethic. Pupils' good work is celebrated and this helps to boost their self-confidence. Relationships are particularly good and contribute to the positive management of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to practical and investigative work and make good progress in their decision-making and independence skills. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to extend pupils' writing in subjects other than English and some undemanding worksheets require only short answers and hinder the teachers' ability to advise pupils on how to improve their work. Computers are used effectively in English but insufficiently in other subjects, for example, in the analysis of data in mathematics and science.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. A wide range of courses is provided at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils take their national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, which helps to boost their confidence and prepares them effectively for Key Stage 4. The 'short-term placement' group of pupils are taught the knowledge and skills necessary for their successful return to mainstream school. An attractive and well cared for learning environment has been developed in the centre but the condition of much of the accommodation is poor. The centre has many positive working relationships with other agencies and these help pupils' good personal development; for example, work with the fire brigade extends pupils' awareness of the need for safety. Lack of transport prevents many pupils from participation in after-school activities.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Care guidance and support are good. The support staff make an essential contribution to boosting pupils' achievement and personal development. Members of the support staff are attached to specific groups of pupils and provide effective educational and personal support for them. Despite the challenges posed by staff absences, the support staff ensure that pupils experience stability in their learning. This is a very inclusive environment where pupils with a wide range of challenging needs are readily accepted and every opportunity is taken for them to succeed. Pupils with complex needs are managed on long-term placements in the centre. As a result, a significant minority of pupils spend too long there and the local authority is currently reviewing the admissions policy. The centre has positive working relationships with local colleges and mainstream

schools which prepare pupils effectively for the next stage of their education. Also, staff are increasingly involved in work with mainstream schools which helps to improve pupils' behaviour. Parents are confident that the centre provides good care. A parent said, 'The family would have struggled without the help and support you have all shown us'. Although many parents believe that the centre is excellent, a small minority of parents would like to see improvements in communication between them and staff.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads a very inclusive centre where staff are determined to dismantle barriers to pupils' learning and, as a result, ensure that they achieve well. Continual improvement is firmly based on clear priorities identified by an accurate self-review process. However, some action plans do not focus enough on pupils' achievement and planning is, therefore, good rather than outstanding. Performance management is very thorough and well-organised. It enables the centre to plan effective staff development and ensures that the pupils' wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met. As recommended in the last inspection, a management committee is now in place which provides adequate support. However, the members do not know the centre well enough to provide an effective challenge and, as a result, their contribution is satisfactory rather than good. The centre provides good value for money.

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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?	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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>	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.

## 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	3
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

Ashwell Centre

Ashwell Avenue

Hull

HU9 5LJ

1st February 2007

Dear Pupils

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Ashwell. You made me feel very welcome and I was impressed with the displays of your work. You clearly enjoy your activities and I was very tempted to ask for a ride on one of the motorcycles at the off-road centre.

This is what I found out about your school.

- Your headteacher leads the staff well and is determined that you to get a good education. Consequently, the staff work well together and ensure that you are well cared for.
- You enjoy your time at the centre and behave well. The attendance for most of you improves whilst you are there.
- Staff have a good understanding of the things that you are good at and the areas in which you need help and this enables you to make good progress.
- The staff encourage you to be healthy and you enjoy your physical activities.
- You enjoy a good range of courses on visits in the centre and in the local community.

Even though I thought your school was good it could still be improved by:

- More opportunities to practise your writing skills.
- Using computers more often in all subjects.
- More checks on lessons to see how they could be even better.

I hope that you will continue working hard, enjoy your learning and help the headteacher and staff to make the improvements I have suggested.

Yours sincerely

David Smith (Lead inspector)