

The Davenport Centre

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	886/6089
Unique Reference Number	133298
Inspection number	301628
Inspection dates	20-21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

This is the first inspection of The Davenport Centre since it gained full registration in 2004. The centre opened in 2000 and is one of four educational establishments within Ethelbert Children's Services. The company offers residential provision for children and young people and pupils are referred to The Davenport Centre through the company. There are seven pupils on roll and all are looked after by a local authority. The school is registered to take boys aged seven to twelve years, but the age range of the current pupils is from nine to twelve years. The centre has started to offer places to girls and the company is liaising with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to update the registration to include girls as well as boys.

It is thought that The Davenport Centre was the first independent school in the country to be located on the same site as a mainstream school, Newington Junior School. The main aims are to improve the children's behaviour and attitudes to learning and to facilitate their return to mainstream schooling when appropriate.

Evaluation of the school

The Davenport Centre provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and some aspects of its work are good. New pupils settle quickly and make good progress in their personal skills as a result of the calm, caring and professional work of the staff team. In particular, pupils make impressive improvements in their behaviour, enabling all to re-engage quickly with learning, with some transferring successfully to mainstream schools. There is a good working relationship with Newington Junior School. Whilst The Davenport Centre provides the great majority of the education for its pupils, it benefits from the use of some facilities and the opportunities for social interaction provided by the junior school.

Although all regulations for registration are met in respect of the curriculum, teaching and assessment, there is still work to be done. Curriculum plans need to be refined so that teachers can plan work to meet pupils' different needs and abilities more easily. The staff have an accurate view of the centre's strengths and have already identified the areas for development through their recent evaluation of the provision. The centre, quite rightly enjoys the confidence and support of carers and social

workers. They are especially appreciative of the way in which staff keep them informed of how well the children in their care are doing.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides pupils with a broad range of learning experiences within the National Curriculum, with English and mathematics given high priority throughout each week. Schemes of work are sufficiently detailed to guide teachers in planning activities to be taught during the year but they are not sufficiently focussed on what is to be learned across the full range of pupils' needs, abilities, interests and ages, and how each unit of work will be assessed. Planning for physical education, design and technology, personal, social and health education and music is not focused sufficiently on skills that will be taught. There are good opportunities for pupils to improve their skills for speaking and listening, particularly in circle time. This helps them to develop good social skills. The information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum is planned and delivered by a member of staff in the junior school, with weekly lessons in their ICT suite.

The curriculum is enhanced significantly by visits within the locality. These activities increase pupils' enjoyment and leave them with lasting memories of what they have learned. It also helps with pupils' personal development because they learn how to meet high expectations for appropriate behaviour in the wider community.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Pupils are taught as a whole group and whilst this supports their personal and social skills well, it is sometimes difficult for teachers to meet the needs of all the pupils within lessons. There is a wide range of age and ability within the group and activities are not always sufficiently individualised to maximise opportunities for learning. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to apply knowledge and skills independently are sometimes missed. Nevertheless, teachers have high expectations for pupils to complete tasks and to express preferences and opinions. Behaviour in the classroom is very skilfully managed, to the extent that when pupils have difficulty and require time away from the group, they want to return as soon as possible to the lesson. Teachers have sufficient resources to deliver the basic curriculum but opportunities for independent learning and practical activities could be enhanced with more technological and practical resources.

Procedures to assess pupils' skills are satisfactory. Teachers track pupils' personal skills well. Weekly targets complement those in their statements of special educational need and individual education plans. Progress towards these targets is tracked weekly. Recording and assessment of academic achievement is less systematic and although pupils are given a good amount of praise for effort and behaviour, they do not get as much feedback about how to improve their work. Similarly, pupils are not always actively involved in assessing what they have done well and why. Staff use National Curriculum levels to make general assessments of

pupils skills twice each year and keep details of progress for reading, spelling and mathematics. They are now looking at ways to assess pupils' work in more detail so as to provide more information about how much progress is made by pupils during their time at the centre. The pupils make satisfactory progress overall, with good progress in their personal skills and satisfactory progress in their academic skills.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. They make good progress in their personal skills, as is demonstrated by the fact that, in time, they all transfer successfully to other schools. Some pupils return to mainstream schools, others transfer to a special setting at the end of Year 6. This success is made possible because the pupils accept the warmth, security and high expectations that staff at the centre provide for them. Pupils are very happy to come to school and, although they know that they may only be at the centre for a short period of time, they take their education seriously and work hard to learn and apply strategies that will help them to manage their own behaviour. The school is successful in positively including pupils and engaging them in education to which they have not previously responded well. There are very few absences.

The staff present pupils with very clear boundaries for their behaviour and this helps them to develop quickly a strong sense of what is right and wrong and to accept the consequences when they go beyond those boundaries. The pupils are keen to talk about problems and have confidence that the staff are helping them.

Pupils' spiritual development is supported well. For example, pupils of all ages reflect on the opinions and beliefs of others in circle time. Similarly, their cultural development extends to an understanding of the beliefs and customs of others and of how children in other countries or times in history have different experiences from their own. They have an appreciation of the work of different artists and really enjoyed a recent trip to the theatre.

Pupils' behaviour is good. In lessons they get on well with one another and generally their social relationships are very good. They may squabble from time to time but are generally able to express opinions and concerns without resorting to inappropriate behaviour. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to mix socially with those of their own age at the junior school, such as at lunch and playtime. These are well supervised by staff at the centre and the pupils rise to the occasion and behave well. This is also the case when they are on visits outside school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The Davenport Centre benefits from policies that are common to all aspects of the work of the company, which includes meeting the required standards for social care inspections. As a result, the centre implements a wide range of policies effectively to promote good levels of welfare, health and safety for its pupils and staff. Most

centrally provided policies are referenced to the needs of the centre but some need to be updated so that particular requirements of the centre are highlighted for staff. Staff have a high commitment to the health and safety needs of the pupils. They are highly skilled, experienced and trained well in managing difficult behaviours. This contributes significantly to the pupils' good personal skills because most inappropriate behaviour is managed through discussion, in non-aggressive ways and within the context of being part of a group. Staff also give good attention to pupils' health and emotional well-being. Pupils are actively encouraged to take care of appearance and only to bring healthy food into school.

Arrangements for emergencies and first aid are understood well by staff but there is no written policy to ensure appropriate procedures. This policy need to be in place in order to meet the requirements for registration. The school has a plan to increase access to the building used by the centre, which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The company conducts thorough, rigorous checks on all staff prior to their employment at the centre. These procedures extend to checks for drivers and maintenance workers.

School's premises and accommodation

The centre occupies a large classroom and small office area, separate but attached to the main school building. This works well to give the centre its own identity whilst also able to enjoy a sense of belonging as part of the main school. The main school's hall, library and computer suite, as well as dining and play facilities, enhance the curriculum and social opportunities for the pupils. In general, the classroom accommodation is only just sufficient for the centre's nine pupils. Space for storage is limited. Similarly opportunities for small group work and practical activities are limited.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The company brochure, together with the centre's prospectus gives parents, carers and local authorities all the required information.

Procedures for handling complaints

The centre has not received any complaints, but appropriate procedures are in place to address any should they arise.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- have a written policy on first aid to reflect the particular requirements of the centre (paragraph 3(6)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop medium-term curriculum plans to focus on what is to be learned, how to assess learning and how to prepare activities that will support the full range of pupils' needs, abilities and interests
- develop systems for tracking pupils' progress over time by establishing a regular cycle of levelled assessments that are sufficiently detailed to show rates of progress
- ensure consistency within centrally provided policies to reflect particular considerations and procedures for the centre.

School details

Name of school	The Davenport Centre		
DfES number	886/6089		
Unique reference number	133298		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	29 September 2000		
Age range of pupils	7-12 years		
Gender of pupils for which school is registered:	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 1	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 6	Girls: 1	Total: 7
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 1	Total: 7
Annual fees	£23,161		
Address of school	c/o Newington Junior School Princess Margaret Avenue Ramsgate Kent CT12 6HX		
Telephone number	01843 589018		
Fax number	01843 589018		
Email address	franklynbrown2003@yahoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Franklyn Brown		
Proprietor	Ethelbert Children's Services		
Reporting inspector	Heather Yaxley HMI		
Dates of inspection	20-21 June 2007		