

Triple Crown Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104038
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308488
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascal

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeanette Essex
Headteacher	Sue Maden
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
School address	Lode Lane Solihull B91 2HW
Telephone number	01217 090080
Fax number	01217 052617

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a pupil referral unit (PRU) for those pupils who are unable to attend their full-time provision for health reasons. Many pupils have a history of medical and mental health issues. The range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broad and at the time of the inspection there were seven pupils with a statement of special educational need. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Although the centre no longer takes primary aged pupils, at the time of the inspection there were a very small number of pupils of primary age who were awaiting appropriate placements.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Triple Crown is a good PRU that enables pupils to make excellent progress in their personal development. This is a direct result of the very high quality care and welfare provided by staff. The excellent links that have been established with other agencies do much to contribute to pupils' welfare. Parents in particular value the support of the centre and many comment positively on the changes in their children. These comments can be summarised by one parent, who said how her daughter had 'changed dramatically; she is happy now, loves going out and they've helped bring her confidence back'.

Pupils are very positive about what the centre has done for them. They are proud of the fact that almost all of them now come to school regularly, and importantly they feel they are making progress in their work. This is evident in the fact that the majority of pupils achieve well and make good progress. Whilst all gain passes in GCSEs and Entry Level accreditation, the centre recognises that not all achieve as well as they should. Those who study art achieve very well and this is reflected in the high number of A - C passes at GCSE. The curriculum is good and supports pupils' opportunities to achieve well.

Pupils benefit from good teaching and the very positive relationships they have with staff. The excellent subject knowledge of staff enables pupils to make good progress but the centre recognises that its assessments of what pupils should be achieving are not sufficiently secure. Whilst pupils are made aware of the grades they should achieve in accredited courses there is no system for checking whether these are suitably challenging. Younger pupils are not given an indication of what they should be achieving and teachers' marking does not always indicate what pupils need to do to improve their work.

The centre's leaders have a clear vision of how they want it to develop further. The innovative work with mainstream schools in sharing resources and staffing is an example of its focus on giving pupils the best possible chances. Senior staff are now analysing all the information they have on pupils' progress to ensure that all pupils do the best they can. The management committee now has good representation from local secondary schools and other groups. It is in the process of developing its role further so that it is more effective in challenging and supporting the centre.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the systems for analysing pupils' progress so that the centre can use this information to ensure that its pupils are making the best possible progress.
- Improve the systems for guiding pupils, particularly teachers' marking, so that they have a better understanding of how to improve their skills

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' standards are average in comparison to national expectations. Nearly all start with low levels of attainment but by the time they leave several successfully undertake the same courses and examinations that they would have done in mainstream education and achieve the grades they were predicted. For pupils in Years 7 to 9 achievement is good and there are clear improvements in their literacy and numeracy skills. However the centre has not been effective in ensuring that this is the case for all pupils because it has not had the systems to check

individual pupils' progress. In a few cases pupils do not make the progress they should because their limited attendance prevents them from doing so. The lack of clear information to enable pupils to know what they should achieve by the time they leave makes it difficult for staff to ensure that all make the best possible progress. Pupils with a statement of special educational need and those of primary school age make similar rates of progress to those of their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils clearly value the centre and what it does for them. They speak very highly of the staff and the positive relationships they have. Many commented on how safe they feel in the centre and how if they do have problems there is always someone they can talk to. Their positive views reflect the good improvements made by most pupils in their attendance. A small number do not attend regularly enough despite the best efforts of the centre, but the levels are good for a PRU. Pupils show a good understanding of staying healthy and this is particularly the case for those who in the past had been smokers. They have responded to the centre's regime and do not have a cigarette all day. In response to the views of a small number of pupils who feel they would benefit from being able to go off site, the centre is reviewing its approach to enable pupils to have more independence at break and lunchtimes. Opportunities to participate in sport are welcomed and there is a lot of enthusiasm for the activities on a Thursday afternoon such as Laser Quest.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and this is reflected in the exceptional behaviour of pupils in the PRU during the day. Despite the diverse mix of characters, they get on very well together, accepting the differences between each other, and staff take good account of their helpful and considered views on how to develop and improve the centre. Close bonds are built up and many pupils mix socially after school, something many had found difficult in the past. The improvements pupils make in their achievements and self-esteem ensure that they are well prepared for life when they leave school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers ensure that the work covered replicates the work in mainstream and this enables many pupils to complete coursework and undertake examinations. The skills and knowledge within the teaching of art result in pupils achieving very high standards. They experience as full a range of activities as the accommodation will allow. Teachers are very skilled at ensuring that all pupils are involved in lessons and use questioning well to encourage pupils to contribute. Because of the very good relationships with staff, pupils are confident enough to respond in discussions and are not self-conscious if they make a mistake.

Improvements in the planning of lessons have ensured that teachers are clear about what they will teach and most share these well with pupils. The centre is refining planning further so that teachers also consider the skills they want pupils to acquire during the lesson. Pupils are often given detailed verbal feedback on the work they have done and what they need to do next to improve their work. However, systems for recording this formally are not in place to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. The quality and detail of marking of pupils' work vary considerably from very good to poor.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The centre has ensured that pupils have the opportunity to study a good range of subjects. This enables the majority of pupils to continue with the same subjects as in their mainstream school. Pupils are also able to develop vocational skills in subjects such as bricklaying and catering. The centre has listened to pupils and is developing the curriculum further so that there are opportunities to take a wider range of courses such as child care and business studies. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and the centre is planning to extend these further so that pupils are enabled to be as independent as possible when they leave.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The systems for supporting the care and welfare of pupils are excellent and contribute greatly to improving their personal development. The very good arrangements to get to know the pupils and their families before they start at the centre do much to build parents' and pupils' confidence. These arrangements establish very close links with the pupils' families, which continue throughout the time the pupils are in the centre and do much to support pupils' learning. Every opportunity is taken by staff to make sure parents know how well their children are doing and this is much appreciated by families. The exceptionally close working relationship with external agencies means that any concerns about pupils are dealt with very quickly and pupils receive the care and support they need. The procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe are effective.

The systems for guiding and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' achievements well in Years 10 and 11 through examination coursework, but there is no effective formal system for monitoring pupils' progress and ensuring that they are doing as well as they should. The newly established assessment of pupils' skills when they start at the centre is beginning to help teachers ensure that pupils' next steps in learning are planned more effectively but this is at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Much of the centre's success is the result of the headteacher's vision to develop the facility. She has established very good links with a number of local schools and these enable staff to support pupils' learning and ensure their smooth return to mainstream. She has done so in spite of having temporary responsibility for the day-to-day running of another centre as well as overseeing the work of Triple Crown. Staff have a very good understanding about what they do well, even though the leadership team have not given enough time to formalising the strategic aspects of the school. They have taken quick and effective action when weaknesses have been identified. This is evident in the improvements to teachers' planning of lessons and recognition of the need to improve it even further. There has not, though, been sufficient focus on analysing all the information the centre has to enable it to have a more accurate understanding of its effectiveness. As a result, its assessment of its overall effectiveness is more positive than that of the inspector. The centre has made a start in analysing the data it has gathered on pupils' progress so that it can set challenging targets and measure its successes more effectively, particularly in terms of the impact it has on pupils' achievements.

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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

Thank you very much for your time when I visited you on 30 and 31 January. I enjoyed talking to you and was very impressed by your positive approach to having a visitor in your midst. I agree with the view of many of you that Triple Crown is a good centre.

You told me how much you valued the centre and how much it had done for you. Many of you were rightly proud of the fact that you are coming to school more regularly. Many of you achieve well and gain passes in GCSEs. You benefit from good teaching and your teachers are very good at explaining things to you. It would help you more though if teachers' marking of your work was better so that you know what you have to do next to improve. I have asked them to do this and ensure that you are clear about what you have to do.

The centre's systems for making sure you are looked after are excellent as a result of staff working very closely with your parents and with other professionals who can help you. You are able to study a good range of subjects and the centre is looking to improve opportunities to do even more things to help you develop your independence.

The centre is well led. Senior staff have a good understanding of what they do and do not do well and I have asked them to make better use of all the information they have on your progress so that they can ensure everyone does as well as they can.

I wish you all well for the future.



01 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Triple Crown Centre, Solihull B91 2HW

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I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah J Mascal
Lead inspector