

# Complementary Education

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121789
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314100
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Barter

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bobby Kelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cromwell Street Northampton NN1 2DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 239734
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 239792

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<b>Age group</b>	11-16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

### Description of the school

Complementary Education ('the Unit') provides for pupils in seven different pupil referral units ('the centres'). Most pupils are of White British background, with a small proportion from minority ethnic groups. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The centres are located across the county as follows:

Northampton: Cromwell for boys and Overleys for school-age mothers  
Wellingborough: Fairlawn for girls  
Corby: Forest Gate for boys/girls and Oaklands for school-age mothers  
Kettering: London Road for boys

From September 2007, the Unit has admitted pupils aged 11 to 14 in the William Knibb Centre in Kettering.

The Unit caters for pupils with behaviour difficulties who are excluded from their mainstream or special school and school-age mothers. For many, standards on entry to the Unit are below average because of the time they have missed from school. The Unit also takes pupils who are excluded from mainstream or special schools and have statements of special educational need. At the time of the inspection, ten of these pupils were in Years 7 to 9 and 15 in Years 10 and 11. These pupils are not educated in the Unit but follow individual learning programmes, including, for the older pupils, some college placements.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Complementary Education is a good pupil referral unit. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is in great contrast to their negative experiences of school and this enables them to achieve well. Parents are very pleased with the work of the Unit and the high levels of support their children receive. Their positive views are summed up in one parent's comment that, 'Nothing is too much trouble. They really know how to read a child and get the best out of them.'

Good quality teaching helps pupils enjoy learning, work hard and believe in their own abilities. Teachers and support staff work successfully in teams and provide good care, support and guidance that motivates pupils and gives them determination to persevere, even when things get tough. Specialist teaching across the different centres enables pupils to make good progress academically. Pupils in the Unit gain at least one pass in a GCSE subject and over half of them gain five or more passes, including English, science and mathematics. The progress made by pupils who take GCSE art is excellent, with a significant proportion gaining A and B grades.

Pupils' personal development is good, particularly in the considerable improvements they make in their attendance and behaviour. They are very positive about the Unit because they feel welcome, know they are listened to and are expected to work hard. As one pupil put it, 'We respect the staff because they respect us and are extremely helpful when we are troubled.' The curriculum for the majority of the Unit's pupils, that is, those in Years 10 and 11, is good. The planning for their personal, social, citizenship and careers education is particularly effective. Pupils in the Unit are prepared well for their next stage in life, with all but a few moving successfully on to college, training or employment.

Pupils admitted to Years 7 to 9 are frequently challenging on arrival because of their poor behaviour and attitudes. Through good management and consistent support and guidance, pupils' attendance and behaviour are greatly improved as they settle. However, the Unit's role in providing for these pupils is not yet defined clearly. It is developing a curriculum to meet the needs of this age group to enable them to return to mainstream or special school. However, this is at a very early stage and the curriculum at present for Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. The Unit has made good progress against the issues raised at the previous inspection which were within its power to resolve. However, through no fault of the Unit, it has been unable to address the issue relating to the provision for pupils with statements of special education need, and progress in this respect is poor. The Unit does as much as it can for these pupils through individual learning programmes but pupils, particularly those in Years 7 to 9, are still not receiving an education which fully meets their needs and which ensures that they achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management are of good quality. The headteacher is highly experienced and very effectively promotes a clear vision for the development of the Unit amongst all staff. Senior leaders work well together across the centres to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. They do extremely well, against the odds, to manage the wide range of pupils who come to the Unit.

All staff are committed to supporting pupils' welfare and personal development, and rigorously question the effectiveness of their practice in helping young people to regain positive attitudes to learning and reach their potential. Together they have good capacity to improve the Unit further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the Unit's curriculum supports pupils in Years 7 to 9 in returning to mainstream or special schools.
- Work with the local authority to ensure that a) all pupils with statements of special educational need receive the education to which they are entitled and achieve as well as they can; and b) the role of the Unit in providing for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is clearly defined.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 join the Unit with negative attitudes and a history of underachievement, poor attendance and difficult personal circumstances. Their good improvement in attendance and behaviour enables them to progress well and reach satisfactory standards in a range of GCSE subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Most school-age mothers achieve well in GCSEs in child development and religious education. Pupils' art is of high quality and the standards achieved greatly exceed previous expectations. Standards overall continue to rise, with 59% of pupils gaining five or more GCSE passes in 2007. Pupils achieve well in the developing range of vocational courses, gaining accreditation in practical skills such as bricklaying, hairdressing and computing.

The new Key Stage 3 pupils are making satisfactory progress as they improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. However, pupils who have statements of special educational need in Years 7 to 9 make inadequate progress because the limited individual learning programmes do not ensure they receive their full entitlement to education. Those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have statements of special educational need make satisfactory progress because they have access to a wider curriculum through college placements.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The good personal development of pupils is a significant reason for the positive progress they make. They enjoy lessons and speak highly of the positive relationships they have with staff that contribute well to their emotional well-being. Pupils feel safe because bullying is rare and staff take good care of them. Pupils learn much about the importance of living healthy lives, particularly avoiding the misuse of alcohol and drugs, although some find this difficult to put into practice. Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong and understand how their actions affect others. Most behave well, although occasionally behaviour is not as good out of lessons as it is in them. Pupils are proud of what they achieve and delight in sharing their successes with visitors.

Pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory but limited by few opportunities to take responsibility. Nevertheless, they are well prepared for the future through developing their basic skills and working hard at preparing for their examinations.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Pupils progress well because teachers with specialist subject knowledge plan activities that make learning relevant to them. In small classes, teachers and support staff quickly provide

specific help to pupils. The excellent relationships they have with the pupils make lessons friendly and sociable events in which pupils enjoy working hard and try their best. Pupils' behaviour is generally managed well and consistently across the Unit. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well, through interactive whiteboards and computers, to make lessons interesting. They deploy their assistants effectively in supporting learning, maintaining pupils' appropriate behaviour and, in most cases, helping them assess how well they have learned against the objectives for the lesson. As a result, pupils find lessons meaningful and realise, some for the first time, that learning can be fun. The tracking of academic progress provides a clear picture of pupils' achievements. However, teachers' marking does not always show pupils how to improve and pupils are not consistently involved in assessing their own work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum helps pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are educated in the Unit or who are school-age mothers to achieve well. The introduction of single-sex centres is improving learning opportunities for boys and girls, although it is too early to evaluate the impact on their achievement. Through its college links and plans for workshops in a new centre, the Unit is striving to develop the range of vocational courses on offer to give pupils greater choice in meeting their aspirations and capabilities. There is a clear focus in the Unit on developing pupils' basic skills in terms of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The personal, social, health education, citizenship and careers course is a major strength, encouraging good personal development and having a strong impact in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is at the early stages of development. It reflects the National Curriculum, but is not yet adjusted to meet pupils' individual needs to help them move back into school. The Unit recognises that the time allocated for pupils with special educational needs is inadequate and does not meet the requirements of their statements.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good care, guidance and support make this a successful Unit where pupils feel safe and valued. They use words such as 'sensitive' and 'sympathetic' when talking about teachers. Parents are very appreciative of the way staff look after their children. As one said, 'I am absolutely sure that if it was not for the Unit, my son would now be in care and off the rails of life.

I thank them every day for their help and support.' Staff monitor and record pupils' personal development well and this enables them to provide effective support to improve behaviour. Rigorous systems to reduce absences have made a big difference to attendance rates and given pupils every opportunity to learn. The child protection and health and safety procedures meet legal requirements, and pupils' welfare, and that of the babies in the nursery, is at the core of the Unit's thinking. Good relationships with a wide range of other professionals ensure that pupils benefit from expertise which meets their particular needs. The Unit is acutely aware that the support and guidance for pupils in Years 7 to 9 with statements of special educational need is inadequate. It has raised this with the local authority as an area of concern.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

A hard-working senior leadership team which shares the goal that pupils will achieve as well as they can is what makes this Unit effective. The headteacher is highly committed to ensuring that pupils receive an equal quality of education across the centres. Although all staff support this vision well, they have been unable to resolve the longstanding issue relating to the pupils with statements of special educational need. Centre coordinators ensure that the day-to-day management runs smoothly and that Unit policies and procedures are carried out effectively. The strong ethos of care and value of pupils is evident across the Unit. Self-evaluation is well established and regular reviews of performance by the curriculum groups enable all staff to reflect on successes and to set clear targets for improvement. The management committee is well informed about pupils' progress through detailed headteacher reports and supports the Unit's caring ethos well. However, it is hampered in its role by the absence of strategic planning about how to support pupils with statements of special education need and its role in providing for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

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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?	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	3

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

<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>	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	2
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	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

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Complementary Education, Northampton NN1 2DR

Thank you very much for making the inspectors welcome when we came to visit your centres recently. We are grateful to those of you who gave your time to talk to us and to tell us how you feel Complementary Education is helping you to improve your behaviour and attitudes to learning. You told us that staff care for you and value you as individuals and we agree with you. We found that Complementary Education is a good Unit and because of that you improve your behaviour and attendance and do well with your learning.

It is very pleasing that you do well with your GCSEs, particularly in some of the fantastic art that we saw. It's good that the Unit is developing more opportunities for some of you to take courses at college and learn practical skills which you can take on with you to the world of work. I know that they are looking to develop these even more when the new centre, with special workshops, is opened next year.

Many of your parents wrote to us to tell us how pleased they are with the Unit and with the progress that you are making. The staff want you to be successful and they all work hard to make sure that they are providing you with the right lessons and activities which interest you and help you to do well.

We have asked the Unit to work with the local authority to make sure that some pupils who have additional difficulties get exactly the right education they need. Also, the Unit needs help to make sure that those of you in Years 7, 8 and 9 are provided with the right curriculum and guidance so that you can get back to school as soon as you can.

Keep working hard and attending and behaving well. You are sure to meet with success.

With best wishes for the future Yours sincerely

Helen Barter Lead inspector