

# Heybridge Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132205
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	315966
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Trevor Watts

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lisa Crossley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	The Heybridge Centre Colchester Road Heybridge Maldon Essex CM9 4NN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01621 856275
<b>Fax number</b>	01621 851864

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	315966

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a pupil referral service for boys and girls from Reception to Year 11. The service is a part of the Essex Integrated Support Service and has five centres in Heybridge, Clacton, Braintree, Colchester and Wivenhoe. The aim of the service is 'to re-engage children and young people with learning'. The expectation is that pupils will return to mainstream education as soon as they stand a good chance of success. Pupils are admitted for widely varying reasons. Many have been excluded from mainstream schools but a small number are admitted for other reasons. A few have chronic illnesses, some are anxious school refusers, and a very small number are school-age parents.

Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average. This is because of their considerable difficulties prior to their admission, which result in their attainments being several years below their mainstream peers.

The whole service is currently being reviewed as part of a county-wide initiative. Some changes have already been made to the management structure.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Heybridge provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. They make sound progress in English, mathematics and science, but their progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is inadequate. Progress is good in art, humanities and business studies. However, standards overall remain well below average. Pupils' improvement in their personal and social development is satisfactory. Many pupils begin to enjoy their learning and the company of other pupils. Most learn to work cooperatively, and develop a clear desire to return to mainstream schools.

Most teachers are good at managing pupils' behaviour, but their levels of tolerated behaviour is inconsistent and so the overall management of pupils is satisfactory rather than good. Lessons are generally planned well for the range of pupils within each class. Most classes are very small and meet the pupils' different needs. Teachers use the skills of their support staff well. As well as having positive relationships in lessons, staff provide good pastoral care. The curriculum time has been increased since the last inspection, and now meets requirements. Pupils' attendance has improved and is satisfactory, although a few have been discouraged by the prospect of full-time schooling. Throughout the service, pupils feel safe, secure, and confident to approach an adult if they have concerns. Parents too, are mostly very positive about the staff and the service. 'She is a changed child for the better,' said one parent, about her daughter. Another added, 'My son has been more settled and happier in himself.'

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but some inconsistencies in staff expertise and accommodation across the different sites restricts the subjects available to some pupils in Key Stage 3. The provision for ICT is limited. This is principally for reasons beyond the control of the service and has recently been resolved through additional funding. Good links with mainstream schools help the service to return the majority of pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 to mainstream education within the target time of one term.

In Key Stage 4, the curriculum is good: it is relevant, motivating and flexible in meeting pupils' needs. Key Stage 4 pupils excluded from mainstream schools tend to remain for a longer period. The great majority settle well and study a good range of courses that are accredited by external agencies or are work-related. The service is successful in gaining purposeful placements for school leavers that include paid employment, college and university places.

The service is led and managed soundly. The new managers are aware of inconsistencies in the policies and practice across the different centres. Clear plans are in place to improve these weaknesses and the senior leaders demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve. Their review of provision focuses particularly on ways to make the curriculum more consistent and well matched to pupils' widely different needs. It also includes an evaluation of the varying ways that pupils' academic progress is assessed and the inconsistent use that is made of the assessment information in different subjects and centres. Other aspects of pupils' care, guidance and support are well provided for.

Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory overall, with improvements made on most of the issues identified and clear plans to finalise improvements on the two remaining ones.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more consistent approach to curriculum provision across the different sites, particularly in the provision for pupils to make progress in ICT.

- Make more consistent use of assessment information to guide pupils' learning across the different sites, and involve pupils more closely in understanding how well they are progressing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, although standards remain well below the national average. Pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 make satisfactory progress during their one term placements. With the improvements in their attitudes and behaviour, many are able to rejoin mainstream education successfully.

Pupils who enter during Key Stage 4 tend to remain for a longer period and take up courses they find very motivating, and thus make good progress. Pass rates in GCSE examinations are good in English, mathematics and science, with 90% of pupils gaining passes, at grades up to C. Art results are very good, with more than 90% of pupils gaining grades to level B. History and business studies are also well represented in GCSE passes. Pupils include a very small number of young mothers, who generally settle well to their new responsibilities, and try successfully to continue their studies in a range of subjects. Pupils with severe short-term medical conditions are helped effectively to continue their studies and to take examinations. One student recently gained A-level grades that qualified him for a university medical course. Less able pupils do well to pass the Youth Award at Bronze and Silver levels in a range of modules within the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Work-related courses and experiences successfully motivate some pupils to try hard and be successful in their studies and practical activities.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils feel that they have a second chance with their education and realise that their time at the referral unit is important. Accordingly, the majority have positive attitudes to their lessons and a sound enjoyment of education. Pupils feel secure and develop trust and mutual respect with staff. They have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy and behave safely but do not always choose to do so. Pupils who have specific health-related needs are helped to understand their problems and overcome them as far as possible. Pupils mostly develop a good understanding of moral and social matters through the personal, social and health education programme; discussions in humanities and English; and not least, the example set by staff. They develop a satisfactory understanding of spiritual and cultural matters.

Attendance is satisfactory. Staff strongly encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually, and transport arrangements have been improved considerably since the last inspection.

Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils behave well, but when lessons do not provide challenging and interesting work, behaviour sometimes deteriorates and learning time is lost. When activities change, some pupils are too quick to leave their work and equipment without waiting for the teachers' instructions. This is the area of behaviour management currently targeted by the service's managers.

Pupils enjoy sport and leisure opportunities in the local community. The 'pupil voice' is heard through a council in each centre, with representatives joining a service-wide council. When offered responsibilities, many pupils take them willingly, and show their maturity well.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Teachers and assistants know their pupils well. They understand the pupils' often complex backgrounds and individual learning needs. As a result, staff teams on each site are generally skilled at supporting pupils' personal and academic development. Classrooms usually provide a positive atmosphere where relationships are pleasant and friendly. Typically, work is planned well to provide good learning challenges for the differing needs of individuals and groups of pupils. However, in a few instances, teachers have too formal an approach and learning slows as some pupils may lose interest, leave the room, or become disruptive.

Teachers soundly assess pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. However, assessment is inconsistent in other subjects, particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 9. As a result, assessment records are not always used well enough to match the work to pupils' individual needs.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 benefit from a broad range of subjects that are in most respects tailored well to their needs and abilities. However, facilities and staffing restrict the curriculum at some sites. For example, at Braintree there is no accommodation for physical education and, whilst some sites offer a modern language, others do not because of a lack of staff expertise. This is a major focus for improvement as part of the review of the service. Provision for ICT does not meet statutory requirements, as at the time of the last inspection. There is an extensive programme of life skills and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) that supports pupils soundly in developing their personal skills, attitudes and behaviour.

In Key Stage 4, the range of courses is extended to include many opportunities for accreditation in both academic and non-academic subjects. Some courses are practical or work-related, most take place at colleges or work placements. Thus, pupils with different needs can benefit from an appropriate choice of subjects and opportunities.

The service offers a good range of visits and additional activities outside the centres. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and all staff assign a high priority to their welfare. Child protection and health and safety procedures are secure, following major improvements to staff training, policies and procedures. Good use is made of many of the county's career, care and support services. Positive links with many local schools ensure that pupils are effectively supported to return to mainstream education when possible.

There are good procedures for promoting and recognising progress in personal development. Pupils' needs are well known to staff and information is shared frequently. Targets in individual

education plans are clear and regularly reviewed. Classroom assistants provide valuable additional support to pupils' care and progress.

The assessment of pupils' academic progress and guidance on how they should improve is not sufficiently consistent across the centres or between different subjects. While information about pupils' progress is collected in some subjects, it is not satisfactorily analysed to see if, for instance, there are differences between the progress made by different groups of pupils. Most pupils have a limited understanding of how well they are progressing or what they need to do to get better grades.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The service is soundly led and managed. It gives sound value for money. Leaders focus clearly on preparing most pupils, both academically and personally, for an effective return to mainstream education and to provide a good education for older pupils who are less likely to regain a place in mainstream schools.

The newly appointed senior managers are rigorously evaluating the service and have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses, which they are using to formulate proposals for future developments. Managers at each centre continue in their present roles confidently. They look forward to the challenges that will come when decisions are made about these roles and the service as a whole.

The management committee fulfils its role satisfactorily. It is actively involved in the review of provision and in considering the impact of new proposals on the opportunities for pupils.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

### 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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

17 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of the Pupil Referral Service at Heybridge, Clacton, Colchester, Braintree and Wivenhoe

I hope you remember when you were visited recently by members of the inspection team. We would all like to thank you for talking to us sensibly, politely and honestly.

We found that you are attending a service which is giving you a sound education that allows you to continue your learning in a variety of subjects. It helps you to think about how you can help yourselves to improve your prospects in the future, whether by quickly getting back to mainstream school, or studying for longer in one of the centres. Some of you told us that you see this as a second chance to do well for yourselves, and want to make the most of it. Your parents also told us that you mostly enjoy your education and want to do well. Even so, some pupils do not attend as regularly as they could, and a few can disrupt lessons, or are rude to staff and each other. You can help here by turning up as often as possible, and trying to make the most of what is being offered to you. We think that you are safe and well looked after in each centre. You are mostly taught an appropriate selection of subjects, especially in Key Stage 4, where there are good chances to do work experience as well as GCSEs. Teachers are well helped by their support assistants. Mostly, staff and pupils get on well together.

You do not have enough opportunity to learn skills in using computers and other high technology equipment. Also, the choice of subjects you learn can depend partly on which centre you go to. We have asked the senior managers to find ways of improving your choices, and to develop the teaching of ICT. We are also asking staff to assess how well you are learning, to talk with you about your progress and see if you can work together to do even better.

With my best wishes for the future

Trevor Watts

Lead inspector