

# Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133947
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	316225
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Parker

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>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	11
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Sutton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Cuttholme Road Chesterfield S40 4RD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 235395
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 235395

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook is one of a number of pupil referral units (PRUs) within Derbyshire Local Authority's Behaviour Support Services. It provides support for Key Stage 3 pupils from Chesterfield and surrounding areas who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Many have specific learning difficulties, half have statements of special educational need and their attainment on entry is generally well below national expectations. Nearly all pupils are boys and many come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The centre's core aims are to improve pupils' basic skills, address and reduce their emotional and behavioural difficulties and re-engage them to return them successfully to a permanent mainstream or special school, according to their needs.

The centre has experienced a very unsettled period since its previous inspection, with two moves to temporary accommodation, insecure referral of pupils and a number of acting heads of centre. A new teacher in charge was appointed in April 2007 and there are plans for a move into purpose-designed, refurbished accommodation in spring 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook provides a satisfactory and rapidly improving education for its pupils. Its main strength is the good care, guidance and support it provides. After their earlier, often negative experience of school, this enables pupils to develop a more positive attitude and to feel increased confidence in their ability to learn. Most of them consequently attend more regularly, make good progress in their personal and social development and achieve solid improvements in their basic skills. This in turn helps them to overcome their earlier sense of failure and prepares them well for successful reintegration back into appropriate mainstream or special schooling. The centre has a good record in this respect.

Staff have made the best use of the current, less than ideal, accommodation and provide engaging activities, which include imaginative use of community facilities, to support and motivate pupils. The curriculum has a necessarily strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, which are often well below what they need to be able to achieve effectively in other subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although the highly effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants and the provision of specialist support service teachers for English, mathematics and science often results in good, engaging lessons. The use of assessment to aid planning of individualised learning is limited. This makes it difficult for the centre to monitor and demonstrate pupils' progress over time, although informal identification of pupils' needs leads to a responsive and flexible provision of effective support, often on a one-to-one basis. As a result, pupils make satisfactory overall progress in their learning and achieve sufficiently sound results to move on successfully in their studies. Thoughtful procedures for managing challenging behaviour and rewarding effort and self-control, combined with effective relationships between staff, pupils and their families, instil a sense of mutual respect and personal responsibility in pupils. As a result pupils behave well making the centre a civilised and welcoming place of learning. Parents are helped to support their children more effectively and pupils and their families are appreciative of the positive effect that the centre's work has on their improved life chances.

The new teacher in charge has done well to develop a realistic picture of the centre's strengths and inadequacies. Although his work has been hampered by the previous lack of a structured approach to monitoring activities and their outcomes, he has made a good start on the actions required to bring about improvements. There is still not a sufficiently robust approach to analysing and utilising the information already available. His most important focus has, however, been to work on creating a sense of team-work and to raise staff morale after the centre's unsettled recent history. There are strong signs that he is being successful in this endeavour. The well-focused involvement of local authority personnel and other agencies and professionals help considerably, but he misses the support and challenge of a management committee. Sound progress has been made in those aspects identified as requiring attention at the previous inspection and the centre has satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve procedures for assessment to better inform teachers' planning and demonstrate the progress that pupils make.
- Develop a more structured approach to gathering information about the centre's work and using the data already available to demonstrate its effectiveness.
- In collaboration with the local authority:

- - Ensure that the planned move to new premises is effected rapidly
- - As a matter of urgency, establish an active management committee that fully meets the requirements of new regulations.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

As a result of their previous fractured education and specific learning needs, pupils' attainment is well below the standards expected for their age. The PRU's effective provision and setting of realistic but challenging targets helps them to make good gains in developing their basic skills, given their capabilities and starting points. As a result their achievements overall are satisfactory so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, either back in mainstream schools or, where appropriate, in more specialised settings. An important factor that helps many pupils to achieve more than in the past is the fact that their attendance is good, often for the first time in their school life. This is because they are helped to develop positive attitudes and come to see the importance of structure and the relevance of learning. There is no evidence to suggest any significant differences in the achievement of boys and the very few girls that attend or pupils with specific difficulties.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Good attendance at the centre helps pupils to develop much more confidence in their own capabilities and, as a result, their self-esteem is often significantly improved. They clearly think they are doing as well as they are because of the respect and support they receive as individuals. They feel they play a part in the success of the centre because of the weekly council meetings in which everyone's contribution is valued and taken seriously. This helps them to develop a sense of personal responsibility, mutual respect and the importance of valuing others. A well-structured system of rewards, linked to regular review of performance throughout the day is highly motivating. It is also an important contributory factor in their good behaviour, although occasionally short-term exclusions have to be used judiciously to ensure pupils' compliance with the centre's clearly stated rules. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural sensitivities are developed well through a wide range of activities and discussions. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. They certainly feel secure in the centre and out on community activities, knowing that any concerns they might have will be dealt with speedily and effectively by staff. Their new-found enjoyment of learning is a valuable basis for the next stage of their schooling and longer term for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers and their teaching assistants are successful in engaging previously disaffected pupils in their learning. Lessons are organised carefully to enable all pupils to succeed, and there is a strong focus on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Information and communication

technology (ICT) is not so well integrated with teaching, but planned investment in new computers and software will enhance this aspect. Good teamwork, high quality relationships and good ongoing training are significant factors in ensuring that staff are responsive to particular learning needs. Teachers also take every opportunity to deal with wider social issues as they arise, and this keeps the lessons lively and interesting. The individual daily skills lessons that every member of staff provides, as an assigned key worker, focus very effectively on identified needs such as reading, anger management or relationship difficulties. While some of the assessment arrangements have been improved since the previous inspection, for example in English, there is not a consistent approach across all subjects and aspects, and information thus collected is not used as well as it could be to inform the planning of pupils' next steps in learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are provided with a varied and relevant range of learning opportunities. The centre rightly concentrates on developing the basic and social skills pupils need to succeed, but ensures that lessons include most subjects of the National Curriculum for appropriate amounts of time. The well-planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development and their ability to stay safe, healthy and happy. Pupils benefit from well-taught art and design lessons and their good quality, sensitively displayed work around the centre testifies to this. There are currently limited opportunities provided for design and technology and physical activity. Imaginative use is made of wider community resources to enhance learning and provide tangible rewards for good performance and behaviour. Pupils are not, however, so well involved in local community activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are cared for very well. Pastoral support and academic guidance are well focused and effective. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place and pupils' welfare is central to the PRU's work. Productive relationships are nurtured and sustained with other professionals who support the often complex needs of pupils and their families. Pupils value the sensitive, objective guidance that they receive from all staff, although there are no suitable programmes for careers guidance or for pupils to learn about the world of work. Good quality records of any challenging or difficult incidents and daily reviews enable constructive responses and the development of appropriate preventative action. Challenging behaviour is managed consistently well and very effectively, ensuring that disruption to the education of others is minimised. Parents are particularly appreciative of this aspect of the centre's work. A typical comment was, 'my son enjoys school, and his behaviour has improved a lot. When any problems occur they are handled brilliantly. No problems.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The new teacher in charge has established a solid, productive relationship with staff and pupils, and is working in effective partnership with his line manager and link adviser. Together they have a clear focus on the quality of what the centre is currently providing and what needs to be done to ensure that its provision supports pupils properly to make progress in their studies.

They are developing good plans to support their intentions, but this work is more challenging than it needs to be, because of the centre's limited approach to using available information and the lack of an active management committee. Established systems and procedures ensure that everyone works productively together and that the centre runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis.

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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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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?	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>	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	4
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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook, Cuttholme Road, Chesterfield, S40 4RD

Thank you for making me welcome and talking to me when I visited the centre. It was clear that you feel attending The Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook makes a big difference to your lives. You think you learn well and gain in self-confidence because of the support you get from all the staff. You say that you have enjoyed your time there, feeling respected as individuals, and think that you will now be able to do better in your next school.

I judge that the Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook is making sound provision for your academic education and offers good pastoral care and support. Teaching is effective and you have very good relationships with staff. This encourages you to behave well, work hard and take advantage of the wide range of learning opportunities available to you. You clearly enjoy these activities and this has resulted in most of you attending regularly, often for the first time in your school careers, and making solid gains in your learning. You obviously appreciate the individualised support you get, especially for developing skills like reading and dealing with any personal difficulties you might have. The centre is successfully helping you to deal with all those issues that made being in school so difficult in the past, and you are being prepared well for the next stage in your learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the new teacher in charge is quickly getting to know you and all his staff and finding out what needs to be done to improve the centre's work.

For the Creswell Support Centre at Ashbrook to be more effective I have suggested that it should

- Develop better ways of finding out how well you are getting on, so that staff can plan your work even better
- Collect and better analyse more information about the centre and its work to inform planning of any necessary improvements.
- Work with the local authority to speed up the planned move to new, better accommodation and set up a proper management committee (a bit like school governors) to help Creswell do its work even better.

Good luck in the future, and remember that you cannot benefit from school unless you are there. Do try to continue attending regularly when you go to your next school.

Yours sincerely

Steven Parker

Lead inspector