

Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134390
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	316260
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Frank Price

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	108
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Jamie Skeldon
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2005
School address	5th Floor Shirehall Abbey Foregate Shrewsbury SY2 6ND
Telephone number	01743 254594
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Age group	5–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service caters for pupils from Year 1 to Year 11 who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and for those who are medically unfit to attend school through illness, phobia, or pregnancy. The Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service forms part of the County Council's Inclusion Services. At any one time, up to 110 pupils may attend the six Education Centres, which are spread across the local authority. Some pupils are taught at home by home tutors and some are taught in two hospitals. The majority of pupils who attend the Education Centres come from disadvantaged home backgrounds. The ethnic mix of pupils can vary according to who is on roll at any one time, but most are from a White British background.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service provides an excellent quality of education for vulnerable pupils. Pupils in the various centres and hospitals, or those who receive home tuition, are given excellent support so that, wherever possible, they can quickly return to their school. The home tuition and medical support service is seen as a lifeline by parents, who are also overwhelmingly positive of the whole service.

There are many reasons for its outstanding overall effectiveness. The headteacher provides excellent, determined and 'hands-on' leadership. For example, he personally visits every pupil at home before the commencement of the placement to explain how the service works and how parents can be active partners in the process. This pays dividends, as there is a very high level of engagement from parents, who are delighted with the excellent academic, social and emotional progress their children make. Another reason for the success of the service is the superb, strong and positive relationships that staff foster with pupils. As a consequence, the behaviour of pupils is excellent because they want to please staff, and new pupils entering the centres perceive this good conduct as the norm. The outstanding care, support and guidance shown by all staff ensures that pupils settle quickly, any barriers to learning are addressed effectively and they start to make rapid progress. The service successfully works closely with parents, schools and an array of external agencies to give pupils the best possible chance of succeeding.

The trusting and supportive relationships are also instrumental in bringing about pupils' excellent personal development. These relationships are an important ingredient in aiding pupils' successful re-integration into mainstream schools. Parents commented that they see their children start to thrive, develop self-confidence and self-esteem. One parent said of the improvements seen in her son, 'Every aspect of his behaviour and education has improved'.

Nearly all pupils have missed some part of their schooling through illness or poor behaviour, so that most pupils' attainment is well below average, although some older pupils reach national standards. However, the progress they make whilst attending the centres, receiving home tuition or in hospital, is outstanding. This is due to excellent teaching, which ensures pupils re-discover their enjoyment of learning and, as a result, pupils make impressive gains in a range of subjects over a short period of time. The curriculum is first-rate at meeting pupils' individual needs. It is flexible so that any subject, such as languages, can be delivered and there is a good emphasis on making learning stimulating. Pupils enjoy developing active and healthier lifestyles through outdoor activities such as fishing or sport and they understand how to keep safe when participating in high-risk activities such as canoeing.

The headteacher has ensured that from an already strong starting point, the service has continued to improve. The accommodation has been enhanced and there has been a major improvement in the use of information and communication technology for both management and teaching purposes. The service has an excellent capacity to improve. The use of succinct summary information to demonstrate more clearly pupils' progress and of whole-school challenging targets to help with the monitoring of the centre's work by the management committee has begun, but needs further refinement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop summary assessment information and refine whole-school target setting, so that the work of the service can be measured more closely by the management committee.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The standards reached by most pupils on entry to the service are exceptionally low because of their fragmented education resulting from their severe behaviour or medical difficulties. This impacts negatively upon their learning. However, some older pupils, particularly those who have medical needs, have achieved average or above-average standards. The achievement of all pupils, however, is outstanding. Pupils make remarkable leaps in their numeracy and literacy skills, often during the initial 16-week assessment placement. This is because pupils' needs are carefully assessed and met through very effective teaching. Individual targets are set which are tailored to their needs. Improvements in reading are particularly strong.

Pupils in Year 11 achieve extremely well in GCSE courses. Last year, one quarter of pupils gained A* to C grades in GCSE and all achieved in the range A* to G. The service has seen a sharp rise in the numbers of pupils who are also able to achieve in a wide range of vocational courses. A few pupils went on to achieve excellent A-level results and entered university.

Re-integration rates are an important measure of success. Currently, the successful return rate for primary-aged pupils is 98%, and for pupils at Key Stage 3 it is 73%. Pupils in Year 11 remain in the service to complete their final year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen learners. This is shown by their very good attitudes to learning and good attendance, which often is in marked contrast to the record of attendance in their previous schools. Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations and a supportive approach. As a result, their behaviour improves dramatically, which helps them to be receptive to learning. Consequently, pupils make substantial gains in their learning. They quickly gain in self-confidence and self-esteem and they are able to articulate moral values and act upon them in their relationships with each other and adults. They enjoy working together and, as a result, their social development is excellent. Although there is no school council, pupils participate in decision making through informal means.

Pupils take increasing responsibility through achieving success in academic work and their involvement in numerous enrichment activities, such as outdoor education experiences. They develop a good understanding of parental responsibilities, for example, through the 'maybe-baby' programme where they care for a programmed 'baby' to enable them to understand the role of being a parent. They develop an excellent awareness of how to lead safer lifestyles. Pupils become aware of health-related issues through the curriculum. Through their academic work and the rich provision in the range of vocational courses, pupils acquire good knowledge and useful skills which prepare them very well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning throughout the service is outstanding. Staff quickly establish excellent relationships with pupils which very effectively help to develop pupils' self-esteem and re-establish their interest in learning. Consequently, pupils start to thrive and enjoy lessons. Teachers and their very experienced support staff work in effective partnership to support pupils' learning well. All have high expectations of pupils and make good use of marking and assessment to monitor their progress and to plan the next steps in learning. Planning is well informed by accurate assessment of pupils' earlier learning and activities are suitably challenging. Resources are used very effectively to capture pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, the Internet was used to play an original recording of Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade, to the fascination of pupils. Praise and encouragement are used realistically to stimulate and motivate pupils to give their best and, as a result, they do so. Classrooms are well organised and routines are well established, resulting in a good ethos for learning where pupils feel secure and challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is broad and flexible and matches the diverse needs of individual pupils extremely well. For example, pupils can pursue a wide range of examination and vocational courses. The school makes excellent use of outside specialists, for example, the Football Association, and uses local facilities well in order to enrich the curriculum in outdoor education, physical education and art. The service offers a wide range of accredited opportunities in courses such as kayaking and land-based activities and this makes a strong contribution to both their personal development and healthier lifestyles. Visitors, such as artists in residence, also enhance the curriculum well. The curriculum prepares pupils very effectively for life after school. Through work experience placements, pupils are made aware of the expectations of employers and colleges. The service's strong liaison with local colleges helps to ensure that pupils benefit from a wide range of taster courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support are given to all pupils throughout the service. Parents are kept fully involved in decisions about their children's education, target setting and personal development. Academic guidance is very effective and so pupils have a very good awareness of their starting points in learning and what they need to do to in order to improve. Many excellent community partnerships support pupils' activities. For instance, the Connexions personal adviser, in conjunction with the various centre staff, offers comprehensive advice and guidance to pupils to help them make decisions about what they might do once they leave school. A wide range of vocational experiences enables them to make informed choices and, through well-planned opportunities, they have an excellent understanding about the world of work. Very effective links with a range of health and other professionals add greatly to pupils' well-being. Arrangements to ensure child protection and health and safety are in place and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher manages a complex service extremely effectively. He provides focused and determined leadership and instils confidence in both staff and parents. The strong senior management team is knowledgeable, committed and enthusiastic. There is a clear shared vision, which focuses on raising standards, and a determined resolve not to accept second best. Despite the service being dispersed across a large geographical area, very effective management ensures staff are well supported and that there is a consistency of approach across all centres. The use of the virtual learning platform is an excellent management and teaching tool that staff and pupils use well to access documentation and learning resources, as necessary. Development planning is thorough, with each centre having its own individual plan and an overall service plan which concentrates on raising standards and improving provision.

The use of summary information to demonstrate pupils' progress in a wider range of subjects is not yet fully in place, although in English this has been achieved. Similarly, the management committee has started to make use of whole-school challenging targets, such as attendance and re-integration rates, to measure the effectiveness of the service. Currently they do not focus on the quality of teaching and learning. The management committee provides a good level of challenge and support and is starting to analyse assessment information. The committee is kept well informed through comprehensive reports from both the headteacher and centre coordinators. Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation has ensured the headteacher and the management committee have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the service.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

My team and I enjoyed our visit to your centres and meeting and talking to you. Your centres, including the home tuition and hospital teaching service, are excellent. You are making excellent progress, often over a very short period of time. Many of you become much more confident, mature and independent, so that you can return to school quickly. All the staff in the service look after you extremely well; they work hard to get the best out of you and they are very skilled at helping you to settle in quickly. You are taught very well. Teachers know how to make lessons interesting and many of you enjoy learning, improve your behaviour and take part in lessons enthusiastically. Learning is made stimulating through a good range of activities, such as outdoor education programmes, visits and projects.

The headteacher, together with the centre coordinators, does a first-rate job in running a complex service, but they are always looking to see how things can be made even better. For example, one centre has new accommodation and the use of technology to improve management and teaching has improved dramatically since the last inspection. It was clear your parents also think the service does an excellent job. They were extremely pleased with the progress you make whilst attending the various centres.

To make the service even better, I have made the following suggestion.

- Ensure information on how well you are doing is clearer so that the management committee can check on the work of the service more closely.

You can help play a part in continuing the service's excellent efforts by working hard, so that you are in a good position to return to school and continue your studies.

30 January 2008



Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service, Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND**

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Yours faithfully

Frank Price
Lead inspector