

# The Park Education Support Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130348
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328525
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Smith

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 (total)	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Dunton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	New Barnfield Travellers Lane Hatfield Hertfordshire AL10 8XG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01707281460
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Park Education Support Centre (ESC) is a Pupil Referral Unit that provides for students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school, or who may be at risk of exclusion. Students have varying degrees of social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, and many are known to other professional agencies, including the police. The ESC is located on two sites, providing separately for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. A variety of programmes are in place to suit individual needs, which may involve a return to mainstream schooling. Students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and a higher than average number are eligible for free school meals. Almost all of the students are White British and there are twice as many boys as girls. Attainment on entry is generally low and often due to poor attendance, exclusion and disaffection with learning. The ESC holds the Healthy School Award and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark. The ESC offers outreach support and advice to both primary and secondary mainstream schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding provision because leaders, managers and all staff put students' achievement and personal development at the top of their agenda. The dedicated and highly effective headteacher has a clear vision for driving improvement, which is widely shared across both sites. She offers excellent support to all staff and is supported very effectively by highly competent centre managers. Committed and enthusiastic staff work hard to ensure the best care and education for all students.

There are well established cycles of consultation, monitoring and self-evaluation that involve the whole school, parents and schools. Development planning shows that staff have a clear understanding of what needs to improve and how to achieve success. Teamwork amongst staff and support for each other is a strength of the ESC, as is the relationship between staff and students, which contributes significantly to students' outstanding personal development and well-being. One student, reflecting the views of many, said, 'Staff treat you with respect here and encourage you to do your best'.

Both sites generate a strong sense of community, nurturing students' personal and academic development and celebrating their achievements. Very effective partnerships with external support agencies, schools, colleges and the community, ensure students' personal needs are extremely well met. This demonstrates excellent improvement since the last inspection. The outreach service provides valuable support to teachers and pupils in other schools, which is very well received and appreciated. Support for students in schools and for those on a short-term programme at the ESC lead to improved personal and academic achievement, as well as helping to prevent future exclusion from school.

Due to the disruption in their learning and the often significant periods of time out of school, standards on entry are generally low when compared to those expected for their ages. Given their starting points, and the nature of their difficulties, the progress and achievement of most students are outstanding. Confidence and self-esteem increases rapidly as students realise that they are capable of achieving in areas where they had previously given up. Before leaving the school many students achieve a range of grades in their GCSE examinations and others achieve well in entry-level examinations and vocational courses. The standards of artwork by some students are outstanding and are in line with those achieved by mainstream students. Displays of students' artwork help to illustrate the high expectations made of students and the very positive learning environment that has been created on both sites. Students learn skills that help them very effectively prepare for their return to school, entering college, or the world of work.

Students' outstanding progress is undoubtedly due to; excellent relationships, exemplary care, support and guidance, the relevant and exceptional curriculum and the consistently good teaching they receive for their individual needs. Students' progress is monitored, recorded and analysed effectively, which ensures they receive the level of support and challenge they need to progress. The use of ICT to support learning is outstanding and students' skills are excellent. The curriculum and the emphasis on personalised learning supports students' personal development very effectively. Pupils learn quickly to take responsibility for their own learning. Practical and interesting activities motivate students to learn. Visits into the community, work-related placements, college courses and visiting specialists all enrich students' learning experiences. Teachers use assessment information together with what they know about students'

learning styles very effectively to plan lessons and meet individual needs. Some teachers are more effective than others in managing students' behaviour to ensure learning is maximised in every lesson. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they make an excellent contribution to the community. Students show consideration and support for each other and their behaviour overall is good as a result. Parents are consistent in their praise for the centres. One wrote, 'Thanks to the Park recognizing and encouraging our daughter to reclaim her great potential, we have seen her self-esteem and self-worth gradually develop as she achieves in her lessons'. The Management Committee are well informed of the work of the centres and are fully involved in monitoring, evaluation and strategic management. The capacity to improve even further is excellent.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency in the use of effective behaviour management across all the provision to maximise all learning opportunities and to reinforce the need for students to manage their own behaviour and attitudes.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Assessment procedures on admission lead to agreed individual targets, which are regularly reviewed with students, and invariably achieved. Students begin to re-engage with learning after their previous disaffection because of skilful teaching, interesting and well-planned activities and the individual support they receive for their individual needs. This results in their outstanding academic and personal development. Students make excellent progress in vocational skills because of the effective provision for work-related learning. The outstanding progress in their personal and social development is because of the highly effective promotion of their social, emotional and collaborative working skills, which are promoted in all lessons. As a result, students' preparation for the future is excellent. Assessment and progress tracking systems have developed very effectively ensuring there is progression in students' learning. Many students are beginning to manage their own behaviour and attitudes well, which represents excellent achievement.

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

### **Grade: 1**

As students begin to realise the benefit of attending the provision and they achieve success, they rapidly grow in confidence and self-esteem. Their very positive attitudes are reflected in their good attendance, behaviour and in their enthusiasm for learning in all lessons. For some students, their increased attendance represents an outstanding improvement and supports their excellent achievement. Students very clearly understand all aspects of keeping safe. Healthy choices are made most of the time and students can take part in a wide range of sporting opportunities. Students make an outstanding contribution to their community through a variety of fund-raising events, building projects, through the work of the school council, and by helping and supporting each other. The cup cakes made to support the MacMillan cancer campaign, were delicious. There are partnerships with national art galleries and in lessons students discuss and show their knowledge of national and global events, current affairs and human rights. One student reflecting the views of many on both sites, said, 'It's good here, they treat you like an adult and you have time to think about what is the best thing to do. The work is always made interesting and I am making more progress now'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Students are always encouraged to do their very best. A parent said, 'My daughter now enjoys talking to me about her day and how well she has done in her lessons'. The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning, and leaders give excellent support and guidance to ensure that the quality remains high. Information on students' progress is used well to help set challenging targets. The ongoing feedback and support by teachers and the very effective teaching assistants make it very clear to students how they can improve. Students' behaviour is not always consistently managed which can lead to unnecessary interruptions in learning. Excellent teamwork and use of resources, particularly interactive whiteboards, together with the close observation of students' needs, ensure all students get the very best out of all their learning opportunities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is continually being refined and adapted to ensure its relevancy for all groups of students. Practical and interesting activities ensure most students are fully engaged in their learning. The curriculum effectively supports those students who return to school and is also relevant to the needs of those who remain at the centres. Personal, social, health and citizenship education fully supports all aspects of students' personal development and their understanding of the world around them. Learning is very well supported and enhanced by a range of outside providers and visits into the community. Skills are taught to help and improve behaviour and emotional development as well as attitudes to learning and social integration. Students participate in work-related learning, vocational courses at college and work experience opportunities. These opportunities greatly enhance academic and personal development and make an outstanding contribution to students' enjoyment and understanding of life in the community.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Efficient and consistent procedures and practices across both sites keep students safe and secure, while promoting independence. This results in confident students with positive attitudes. The very high quality teamwork and planning between senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants and external support agencies ensure students' personal needs are particularly well met. Vulnerable students are identified and monitored carefully to ensure their well-being. Parents say that communication between home and the ESC is very good. A parent wrote, 'I am very grateful to all the staff for the care and understanding they show my son and the continual support that enables him to achieve'. It is made very clear to students in lessons how they may improve and they receive very effective guidance on future opportunities. The transition from one stage of education to another is planned and supported very carefully.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and leads by excellent example. Leaders and managers at all levels have clear roles and responsibilities and promote high quality care and learning. The outreach support to schools is highly effectively led and managed. All work undertaken by staff is valued, and consequently their morale is high. The impact of everyone's work is clearly seen in the outstanding care, guidance and support for students, which in turn leads to their outstanding personal development and achievement. Staff induction and support arrangements are carefully planned to ensure all staff are clear on how to meet the needs of all students. Training and professional development is very effective and is clearly based upon the school's priorities for improvement and students' individual needs. Teaching assistants contribute very successfully to students' achievement and well-being. Links with external providers, services and other organisations successfully support the integration of care and education to enhance learning and to outstandingly promote well-being and community cohesion. A parent summed up the feelings of many when she said, 'I am so pleased with provision at the centre. They have given my son the incentive to carry on with his education and not to give up on himself'.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

24 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Park Education Support Centre, Hatfield, AL10 8XG

Thank you for making my visit to both your sites such a pleasurable one. I really enjoyed meeting you all. A particular thanks to those students I met formally and who told me all about their experiences at the ESC. You are all good representatives of your centre, being polite, well behaved and friendly. You seem to get on very well with each other and many of you greatly improve your attendance. I agree with you and your parents that the ESC is excellent and helps you all to do your very best. I think that you make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development. All staff work really well together to make sure you get the extra help you may need. Many of you are starting to manage your own behaviour and attitudes, which is so important for your future success. I particularly liked that:

- you quickly gain confidence and start believing you can succeed
- you consider the needs of others and show support for each other
- you enjoy your lessons which are interesting, and you work very hard to improve
- you learn to work collaboratively together as well as independently
- you like to take responsibility and you very effectively support your community
- you learn useful skills that help you return to school, start college or work
- the ESC works very effectively with other people to ensure you receive the support you need to succeed
- all staff attend training to ensure they are skilled at meeting your various needs
- the ESC is very well led and managed and always has your very best interests at heart.

There is an area that the ESC wishes to develop further, and I agree that they should. It is:

- to ensure all staff manage your behaviour consistently to help you get the best out of your learning, and to help you to manage your own behaviour and develop positive attitudes.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and I wish you all every future success.

Best wishes

Mike Smith Lead Inspector