

# Cotswold Education Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131626
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328625
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Charles Hackett

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>	6–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Beech
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	Charborough Road Filton Bristol BS34 7RB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 868600
<b>Fax number</b>	01454 868601

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the centre and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the provision in meeting the needs of students and enabling them to successfully return to, or remain in, mainstream education
- pupils' achievement and personal development while at the centre
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in matching work to students' needs and the quality of guidance given to students to support their learning
- the effectiveness of senior leaders in monitoring the centre's work and bringing about improvement.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, discussions with students, staff, the school improvement partner, two senior staff of mainstream schools who have close links to the pupil referral unit (PRU), and the chair of the management committee, as well as centre documentation and assessment information. Other aspects of the centre's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the centre's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

- Cotswold Education Centre (PRU) comprises five different individual units on three sites, each one delivering educational programmes to students out of mainstream schools. The units are:
- Severnside Education Centre (Filton, South Glos) – for secondary excluded pupils and those requiring behaviour interventions.
- The Learning Centre (Mangotsfield, South Glos) – for medical referrals and school-aged parents
- Primary Pathways (Mangotsfield, South Glos) – for primary excluded pupils and those requiring behaviour interventions
- The Access Centre (Mangotsfield, South Glos) – for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 who have a statement of special educational needs, awaiting placements (pending completion of the new South Gloucestershire BESD Special School)
- The Barbara Russell Children's Unit (Frenchay Hospital) – a school room which provides for hospitalised children and young people

The centre serves 15 secondary schools, 100 primary schools and three special schools. No pupils under the age of five have been admitted. The head of centre also manages the local authority behaviour support service.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cotswold Education Centre is a good PRU. Given the complexity of the centre, this reflects good leadership and management. The head of the centre manages the overall organisation very well ensuring there is a very clear sense of purpose for each unit, and that there are good systems in place to monitor their effectiveness. Each individual unit is well managed and the quality of provision is consistently good throughout the centre. Performance management of staff is a real strength and this has been used very well to develop staff expertise to ensure the many different needs of students are well met. The senior management team knows the school very well and has been proactive in addressing identified weaknesses. A good range of staff and student performance data is collected and the information is used well to analyse the effectiveness of the centre's work. This in turn leads to appropriate developments being put in place to bring about improvements. For example, last year's data indicated concerns about the curriculum and the quality of teaching. These have now been addressed and, as a result, the quality of education has improved and is now consistently good in all of the centres. The role of the management committee is currently being developed further. It is, though, already an effective body because it monitors the work of the centre well and offers a good challenge to its effectiveness. The quality of support and guidance given to pupils in each of the units is outstanding. This is leading to many students, who were previously not engaged in learning, now enjoying being in school, behaving very well and making good progress. 'We are very pleased with our son's progress' is a typical comment made by parents and carers. In addition, despite the mixed populations on each site, students report how they feel safe and know that their behaviour is improving. For example, a primary pupil on his last day in the centre before returning to a mainstream school proudly explained how his behaviour was now more controlled and he knew he would do well back in school. Students' understanding of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles is excellent. Fruit is available throughout each day and, although the accommodation limits physical activities on site, good use is made of off-site local facilities. This has led to the centre achieving a Sports Activemark.

Excellent systems exist for assessing, monitoring and supporting students both in their academic and personal development. A key element of this is the regular setting of individual improvement targets. These are completed with students and form the basis for much of the centre's work. Teachers are aware of the targets in planning their lessons and all staff are involved in regularly reviewing them. The targets are clear and challenging, and students' good progress is illustrated by them achieving a high percentage of these.

Encouraging good attendance is a priority throughout the centre and a very good range of strategies are used to do this. This has resulted in a high percentage of students improving their attendance considerably from their pre-PRU days. However, the attendance of a very small number reduces the overall figures for the centre. Excellent care is taken to ensure students are safe. This includes detailed risk assessments which ensure that students can take part in a wide range of curriculum activities safely. Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. Very good links with parents, carers and other agencies are used well to meet the needs of each individual student. 'Children's individual needs are always a priority' is how one parent summed up the approach of the centre.

Understandably, most students reach standards below the national average. However, students achieve well in a number of aspects. For example, older students take and achieve good grades in a wide range of accreditation, including GCSEs. Those at the hospital achieve well in engaging

in learning despite their medical difficulties. The fact that so many students are able to return successfully to a mainstream school also represents good achievement. Students with statements of special educational needs achieve as well as other students and are well prepared for moving to a special school setting. Despite the considerable amount of data collected on students' achievements, the centre acknowledges there is a need to improve how these achievements are tracked so as to be clear what they represent in terms of progress. This is also needed for the centre to ensure that all groups of students are making the same good rates of progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Typical lessons are well planned and activities are organised that encourage students to enjoy their learning. Support assistants are well informed and used well to address students' individual needs. In all the units there are excellent relationships between staff and students and humour is used very effectively. 'The teachers were great' wrote a student who left very recently. A strength of teaching is the focus on engaging students in learning. Because of this, a positive learning environment is created and there is less need to focus specifically on behaviour management. Appropriately, students' behaviour is monitored very carefully, and data, such as that showing how many times students have needed staff support to resolve an incident, are used effectively to show how well students are progressing. Another strong feature of teaching is the quality of marking. Throughout the centre, it is consistently good, both in recognising students' achievement and in helping them know what to do to improve further. Excellent displays of students' work and the absence of graffiti add to the sense of each site being a very purposeful learning environment.

The curriculum is effective because it addresses the needs of students. Those on short-term placements have work that matches that of their peers back in mainstream, while others in need of more long-term support benefit from excellent programmes for personal, social and health education and good opportunities to improve their reading, writing and social skills. A key strength is the work done to prepare students to return to mainstream. Throughout each centre there is a strong emphasis on supporting students' emotional well-being. Specific lessons focus on aspects that will help students cope better with the demands of a mainstream school. For example, in the primary unit, daily work on anger management is helping students have a much better grasp of how to control their behaviour in different situations. Similar work is done to develop older students' future economic well-being. This includes a good emphasis on developing their basic skills and some vocational training opportunities. These are being developed but the centre acknowledges that these need to be extended to help students further with their readiness for life after school. Students gain a good understanding of both the local and wider community through a good range of projects. For example, in the access unit students financially support a student's education in an underdeveloped part of the world. They also follow a global education programme that covers many issues related to other countries, religions and cultures.

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

- Develop the good systems used to record students' achievement so that the data collected can be used to demonstrate and compare students' rates of progress.
- Extend the vocational courses available for students in Years 10 and 11.

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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/or disabilities make progress	2

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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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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	2

## 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?	2
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>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

5 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cotswold Education Centre, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9EZ

Thank you for making Mr King and myself so welcome when we visited recently. We both very much enjoyed our visit. Between the two of us, we spent time in each of the five units. Although you are probably only aware of the unit you are in, our report covers all of the units. This could have been difficult if there had been differences in the quality of education in each unit but we judge there is very little difference between them. Our report judges them all to be good. The head of the centre has a very good overview of each unit and each manager leads and manages their unit very well.

The support, care and guidance you receive are excellent. It is because of this that so many of you who previously didn't like school are now fully engaged in learning. This is leading to your achievements being good. The excellent quality of support you receive ensures you are all safe and your behaviour is much improved. This we can see is making a big difference to your lives; for example, it means that most of the younger ones of you can return to a mainstream school and do well there. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are both good and ensure that you focus on improving your basic skills and personal, social and health education, as well as covering the subjects you would follow in a mainstream school.

For the centre to be even better, we have suggested two improvements:

- Develop the good systems in place to record your achievements, so that data can be used to track and compare the rates of progress you are all making.
- Extend the vocational courses available for those of you in Years 10 and 11.

We both hope you will all continue to enjoy your education.

Charles Hackett Lead inspector