

The Galsworthy Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134813
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	328987
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mel Blackband

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Noreen Fraser
Headteacher	Mr Peter Leivers
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
School address	Galsworthy Road South Shields Tyne & Wear NE34 9UG
Telephone number	0191 426 8180
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school provides for students with emotional, behavioural, and social difficulties (EBSD). Only 4 of the 55 students on roll are girls. Some students have additional learning difficulties. There are no students from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very high proportion of students are eligible for free school meals. There are currently 8 students in public care.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is now a good school. Its overall effectiveness has improved since the previous inspection when standards were satisfactory. This is because systems and procedures, introduced since the previous inspection to give teachers better information on how students are doing, have been effective in helping to raise standards throughout the school.

As a result of their social and behavioural problems, the standards attained by students when they join the school are well below average. Almost all of them, however, achieve well and a few make outstanding progress. For instance, there has been consistent improvement since the previous inspection in the levels of qualifications which students gain in Year 11, including a range of GCSE and Entry Level accreditation. The quality of teaching continues to improve and overall achievement is now good throughout the school. Teachers ensure that their lessons are interesting and well paced. As a result, the students enjoy their work and respond by trying their best.

Teachers know their students' abilities well because they mark and assess their work consistently and effectively and the students are involved in reviewing their own progress. However, the learning targets which teachers then set students are not always focused sharply enough on each individual's specific learning needs. This sometimes results in students failing to gain a clear understanding of their own progress or how to improve their work. This slows down the pace of learning.

The curriculum is effective, particularly in helping provide the students with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. There are very good activities to provide them with practical experiences of working life and which lead to a variety of challenging vocational qualifications. This provision is a strength of the school. There is good provision for students with additional learning difficulties or who are in public care. These students are well supported and follow specifically adapted programmes taught individually where appropriate. The curriculum is enriched by the imaginative use of educational visits to extend the students' social and cultural understanding.

The students make good progress in their personal development. This underpins their motivation to learn and their good achievement. They thrive within the caring and supportive ethos of the school. Those with continuing behaviour problems or personal difficulties are quickly identified and supported. At every stage of the day, students are well supervised and there are always trusted adults available to give support or advice. The quality of this support is one of the main reasons for the improvements in the students' behaviour and has a significant impact on their emotional and social development. A small minority of parents have concerns about overall standards of behaviour although the school's evidence shows that the conduct of the majority of students is good. As a result of good programmes in personal, health and social education (PHSE), the students learn to keep themselves safe and healthy. Their good progress in learning and using basic skills prepares them well for their future learning. Students value their school. This is evident through the good relationships they have with staff. Attendance is satisfactory. Many students attend regularly, which is a significant improvement from their rates of attendance at other schools. However, a minority of students have poor rates of attendance despite the school's best efforts.

Most parents are happy for their children to attend, knowing that they enjoy their lessons and that the school has high expectations of their progress. One parent commented, 'He now looks forward to going to school...since attending this school, his future is a lot brighter'.

The headteacher has led the school well in improving overall effectiveness, particularly in ensuring that staff work as a close-knit team and share a common vision for the school. An enthusiastic management team gives him good support. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school's day to day running and has developed a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection. The school evaluates its work accurately and, as a result, development planning has improved to focus more clearly on the school's priorities for improvement. There is therefore good capacity for the school to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by working with students to clarify learning targets for the improvement of their work.
- Further develop strategies to improve the attendance of students with high rates of absence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The students' attainment, when they join the school is generally far below that typical for their age. Many have large gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Most students, however, achieve well and a few have made outstanding progress. In 2008, nearly all students in Year 11 gained qualifications at Entry Level. More able students achieved GCSE results which were only slightly below those expected in mainstream schools. In addition, most students achieved success in a range of vocational qualifications. This represents consistent improvement since the previous inspection. Those with additional learning difficulties and those in public care make as much progress as others and there is no evidence of underachievement, except amongst those students with high rates of absence. Students make good progress in the basic skills of English and mathematics as well as in science and information and communication technology. Students also make good progress in meeting challenging behavioural targets and this has a strong impact on their academic success. Occasionally, a mismatch between planned activities and the specific learning needs of some individuals slows their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The students' good progress in personal development reflects the school's strong management of behaviour and emphasis on moral and social values. Students' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The students experience many opportunities for spiritual development through visits to places of worship and during residential visits to areas of outstanding beauty. Their cultural development is well supported through visits to local theatres and art galleries and through aspects of the citizenship curriculum. The students' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of society is, however, more limited. The students have a satisfactory understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of community cohesion. Students also contribute to the school community by relating well to adults and each other. The students and staff share open and friendly relationships and the staff provide excellent role models.

Students understand and value the points system and respond well to the rewards and praise they are given. As a result, they work harder, behave better, and therefore make good progress. Most students enjoy their time at the school. Many students attend very regularly. This is because they enjoy school and are proud of their achievements. Attendance is satisfactory overall, rather than good, because of high rates of absence by a minority of students.

The school is generally calm because students feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them. One boy stated that the school was 'loads better' than his previous schools. When students' behaviour becomes unacceptable and disrupts learning, it is dealt with calmly and with understanding and support for the pupil involved. Students were emphatic that bullying is rare and quickly dealt with. Parents generally have a high regard for the way the school manages behaviour. A parent commented, 'The staff are very skilled and supportive in handling his different moods.' Students have a good appreciation of how to conduct themselves with regard to their own safety and the safety of other people.

Students further develop their understanding of their behaviour and responsibilities to others through good PHSE programmes. They gain a good knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. The school has consistently gained national awards such as 'Sportsmark' and some students in Years 10 and 11 are studying for GCSE in physical education. Many students take advantage of the good opportunities to take part in physical activity during the day and after school. The progress that students make in their personal qualities prepares them well for ongoing education and training and for the work place.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their students well and this enables them to plan interesting, well-paced lessons. Most subjects are taught by specialists who bring enthusiasm and high expectations to their lessons. Many students enter the school believing they will be unable to learn. They gradually gain the confidence to attempt new and challenging activities because they receive a high level of individual tuition and support from their teacher and the well trained teaching assistants. Teachers are skilled in managing behaviour and in establishing clear routines. Students feel secure and respond well to these routines. As a result, they generally enjoy their lessons and try their best. Teachers make good use of a variety of assessment strategies, most of which fully involve students in reviewing their own learning. The assessments, however, are not always used effectively to sharpen students' learning targets and to ensure they understand exactly what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has good provision for teaching the basic skills. Because of the quality of target setting, however, teachers are not always able to match activities closely enough to the specific learning needs of each student and this sometimes slows down the pace of their learning. Good programmes in PHSE ensure that students understand the value of living healthily and about how to keep themselves and others safe. Adults consistently support students as they develop their self-confidence as learners and valuable members of the school community. This underpins the school's curriculum. There are many and varied trips and visits so that students learn new things in different situations. There are very well constructed programmes to teach the oldest students about the world of work and which encourage them to gain a range of vocationally based experience and qualifications. For instance, all the students in Years 10 and 11, spend one day each week with local training providers, where they follow practically based courses which all lead to nationally recognised qualifications. A minority of students in Years 10 and 11, who have experienced significant difficulty in adjusting to school life, follow individual

alternative timetables with a higher concentration of practical work experience. The activities successfully motivate most students to continue their education in college or on training places.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a high standard of care and safeguarding for all of its students. They are well supported and the school staff work very hard to develop productive links with parents. For example, teachers visited the parents of almost every student during the past year. Parents feel involved in their children's education, not least because of regular termly meetings to discuss students' progress. Students receive good advice and support as they are about to leave school. However, the lack of precision in their learning targets makes it more difficult for them to understand how to improve their work. The school makes determined steps to improve the students' attendance although the attendance of a minority remains poor. The number of temporary exclusions remains high but these are limited to well documented and brief cooling off periods of half a day.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by an effective leadership team, has driven through substantial improvements since the previous inspection. Teaching standards have risen and the tracking and analysis of students' progress is much improved. This provides the senior team with a good overview of provision and enables them to intervene decisively where underachievement is detected. The school monitors its work well and the consequent self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. For instance, the senior team are aware that target setting needs further development and this area of work features as a priority in the school's development planning.

Students of all backgrounds and abilities get a fair deal and students are encouraged to welcome the rich diversity that individuals bring to the wider community. Leaders have continued to be rigorous and successful in helping the students to develop a good understanding of, and commitment to, the cohesiveness of their immediate communities. The school is aware that there is more to do in promoting the wider implications of community cohesion.

The excellent communication and a strong team spirit within the school enable staff to feel fully consulted, involved and valued. The quality of professional training is good and clearly linked to the high quality of monitoring and performance management of teachers. This has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and to the students' good achievement. Staff are well deployed and resourced and are used prudently. The effectiveness of the governing body has significantly improved since the previous inspection. Governors now monitor the school's work rigorously and provide a good standard of strategic management.

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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 ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2
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 learners' needs?	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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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?	3
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**

4 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Galsworthy Centre, South Tyneside, NE34 9UG

Not long ago I inspected your school to see how you were getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. I enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom, during the school council meeting and in the dining room.

I was only with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that you go to a good school. I could see that you enjoy being there and that for most of you, your behaviour and attendance has improved since joining The Galsworthy Centre. These are the main strengths of the school.

- You work hard and make good progress in your work and in your behaviour and personal development.
- You have a good range of activities, including good programmes to prepare you for when you go on to further education or training after you leave school.
- All the adults at the school have a real interest in your welfare and look after you very well.
- Lessons are interesting. This means you enjoy learning and do your best.
- Your school is well run.

I think the school could improve further in two ways.

- Teachers should use the useful information they gain about your work to give you a clearer idea of what you need to do to improve.
- Staff should devise even better ways to help those of you with poor levels of attendance to want to come to school more often.

You can help yourselves too by making sure your behaviour is always good and, for some of you, by coming to school more regularly. Then you should learn even faster. Please thank your parents for the comments they made on the questionnaires.

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband

Lead inspector