

The Harbour School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135308
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	329074
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Boarding provision	
Social care URN	
Social care inspector	David Coulter

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Mitchell
Headteacher	Ms Jill Roucroft
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 1970
School address	151 Locksway Road Milton Portsmouth PO4 8LD
Telephone number	0239281 8547
Fax number	02392818548

Age group	5–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors and a Social Care Inspector.

Description of the school

The Harbour School provides for learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). It opened in September 2007 as an amalgamation of a BESD school, three pupil referral units (PRUs) and multi-agency services to support BESD learners struggling in mainstream schools or learners educated other than at school. Since December 2007, the school has been allowed to undertake the traditional functions of special schools and PRUs. This is its first inspection. The school delivers its services over five sites across the city.

- The Cosham site provides 55 full-time places for learners in Years 7 to 11 who are unable to access school because of medical and emotional reasons.
- The Fratton site provides 80 full-time places for BESD learners in Years 10 and 11. The Targeted Mentoring Support Service (TMSS) is also based at this site but managed from the Milton site. This offers flexible packages for mainstream school learners who are at risk of dropping out of education and work-based learning at the end of Year 11.
- The Tipner site provides 72 full-time places for learners in Years 5 to 9. A residential hostel providing eight Monday-to-Thursday residential places for learners across the school is also attached to this site. Learners at the Tipner and Fratton sites either are at risk of exclusion from mainstream school or permanent exclusion, or have a statement of special educational need indicating placement at a special school.
- The Milton site is the base for the Individual Tuition Service (ITS) for learners in Years 1 to 11, the Young Parent Support Service (YPSS) and the Multi-Agency Behaviour Support Service (MABS), which offers outreach support to children and young people, families and schools.
- The Stamshaw site provides 12 full-time places offering individualised therapeutic programmes for BESD learners with severe and complex needs.

Many learners are dual-registered, being on the roll of their mainstream school as well as that of the Harbour. A reintegration programme is offered to enable learners to return to mainstream school education or other specialist provision.

The great majority of learners are of White British origin and there are three times as many boys as girls. Eighty-nine learners have a statement of special educational need, nearly all for BESD. Eighteen learners are looked after by the local authority. There is a high turnover of learners throughout the year. This is because of the high mobility of learners within the city itself and the impact of the school's reintegration programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for learners. It meets its objectives, particularly in ensuring learners have parity with their mainstream peers in the range of opportunities and choices available to them. As a result, at the end of the last school year, most learners continued to further education, employment or government training. In the short time the school has been operating, the director and her senior leadership team have worked successfully to develop a whole-school ethos. They have a clear vision and direction for the school, which is shared by all staff, based on wide consultation and involvement of all stakeholders in planning and decision making. A further strength of the school is the effective relationships with outside agencies and other professionals and its partnerships with mainstream schools to support the personal and academic development of learners. There are also effective links that support families and staff. Parents are supportive because of the difference the school makes to their children. One commented, 'I find the school very helpful and supportive at all times, including an excellent family support worker.' Another commented, 'My son is on individual tuition. I feel his tuition is excellent and well structured to his needs, which are very varied and complex.'

Standards on entry to the school are generally well below what is expected for learners' ages. Because of the school's focus on improving behaviour, learners make satisfactory progress in their social and emotional development. Year 11 learners gain a range of accreditation, including GCSEs, when they leave. A learner commented, 'When I first came to the Harbour School, it felt quite intimidating and intense. I really did not like it. Whilst it can still not feel good, everyone at the school helped to accommodate me. I cannot praise them enough and they helped me to the point of doing my GCSEs.'

Learners' personal development, including aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Although they develop a good understanding of their own cultures and have special events such as World Week, learners' knowledge and understanding of world religions is limited. For many, their difficulties and negative attitudes diminish as their confidence and self-esteem improve. However, there is still the occasional outburst, sometimes resulting in fixed-term exclusion, but learners' behaviour and attitudes are generally positive. The number of fixed-term exclusions is falling. Many learn to understand their feelings, to control their behaviour and to say sorry when it is appropriate. One learner said, 'I used to need to keep a daily record but I know how to control my anger and feelings now.' Learners' attendance improves considerably when they start at the school, sometimes by as much as 50%. Most attend regularly. However, attendance overall is satisfactory because of the irregular attendance of a small minority.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and result in satisfactory progress for students. Although good lessons were seen, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. In the better lessons, good working relationships between learners, teachers and pastoral support staff result in good progress. Teachers' marking is inconsistent in quality and learners are not always made aware of what they need to do to take the next step in their learning. However, oral feedback is always positive and encouraging. The curriculum supports learners satisfactorily in their academic and personal development, eases their reintegration into mainstream school and enables older learners to move to the next stage of their careers. Flexibility and personalised learning within the curriculum further support their individual needs and enjoyment, as well as enabling access to a wide range of accreditation. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Because of good pastoral support, care and advice, the personal

qualities of learners are developing well. Although the school's procedures for reducing absence work well with most learners, it has yet to tackle the unauthorized absence of a small minority successfully. Academic support and guidance for learning are improving. There is effective use of testing to establish what levels learners are working at when they arrive. However, the quality of target setting on individual learning plans (ILPs) is inconsistent; targets are not always clear, concise or challenging. Though there is good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to track all aspects of learners' progress individually, there is insufficient analysis and use of it to inform whole-school planning for future strategies.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Senior leaders provide a strong focus on improving outcomes for learners. Self-evaluation is firmly embedded in practice through clear structures, including timescales, monitoring and reporting back to leaders and governors. Priorities stemming from this feed into the school's development plan and clear distribution of roles and responsibilities make good use of staff strengths. The senior leadership team is aware, however, that there is still some inconsistency across the school in applying whole-school systems and procedures. The governing body is improving its effectiveness in becoming a supportive and critical friend of the school.

Because of the relatively short period the school has been open, the impact of some of the changes put in place as a result of the amalgamation of BESD provision across the local authority has yet to be fully established. Nevertheless, these developments and the clear direction for further improvement are enabling learners to make satisfactory academic and personal progress. However, there is, as yet, no picture of continuing improvement. The school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The quality of the residential provision at the Harbour Hostel is good. The hostel provides accommodation and support for young people during the week, while they access their educational placements. It occupies a unique position as a resource for young people attending the Harbour School as well as other schools throughout Portsmouth. The majority of the hostel's residents are drawn from the Harbour School's Tipner site; the hostel is situated within this site and can accommodate up to 10 young people. The duration of each placement is determined on an individual basis and can extend from a few months to years. It provides a stimulating and nurturing environment that both supports each young person's educational placements as well as providing many opportunities for personal development.

A well-established admissions process provides opportunities for young people and their families to visit on a number of occasions prior to making any commitment. The composition of the existing group and the likely impact of a new admission are always considered before a place is offered. The school has developed a statement of purpose and a young person's guide detailing the boarding provision. The physical, social and emotional needs of each young person are clearly identified prior to admission. A well-established care planning process gives clear guidance for staff to meet the needs of each young person effectively. All care plans are subject to regular review.

Staff encourage individuals to eat wisely. Meals are produced on the premises and incorporate fresh produce. The likes and dislikes of young people are incorporated into the menu-planning process. Young people are introduced to cuisines from different cultures during themed meals. Young people are positive about both the quantity and quality of food.

Staff encourage young people to adopt healthy lifestyles by developing good personal care habits and accessing regular physical exercise. There is an expectation that each young person will participate in at least one physical activity each day. Football, swimming, circuit training, cycling and walks are all popular. The health and well-being of each individual are closely monitored and staff regularly seek out professional advice to address any concerns. If a young person becomes ill during the school week, they will normally return home. Guidance, advice and support are provided on health and social issues, including alcohol and substance misuse, sexual health, smoking, sex and relationship education, protecting oneself, bullying and abuse. There is a non-smoking policy and any young person found smoking is encouraged to give it up. All staff have current first aid certification. Arrangements for the administration and storage of medication are good.

There is a safe and secure environment for a vulnerable group of young people, many of whom experience disruption and uncertainty in their lives. Staff treat each young person as an individual with their own specific needs. Staff and young people address each other by their first names and relationships are based on mutual respect. Interaction between staff and young people is both spontaneous and warm. Staff promote the concept of equality and diversity and young people have many opportunities to experience activities associated with different cultures and to discuss equality issues such as sexism and racism.

Hostel staff operate a risk management strategy to keep young people safe. The hostel has good safeguarding policies and working practices that aim to minimise risks. Hostel staff are well aware of their responsibilities to report any safeguarding issues or concerns. There are security features to protect young people on the premises and risk assessments for off-site activities. There is a zero tolerance policy in relation to bullying. Bullying is not a concern within the hostel. While there are established procedures in the event of a young person going missing, individuals' personal profiles could be improved by the inclusion of a recent photograph.

The behaviour management strategy reinforces positive behaviour. Young people are rewarded for behaving well both in school and in the hostel. There are clear boundaries that are consistently applied and constant reminders of what is and is not acceptable behaviour. Young people respond extremely well to this approach and their performance in school improves. Hostel staff work on the principle that success breeds success and initiatives, such as the Homework Club, have provided new opportunities for individuals to undertake additional educational activities out of school.

Young people have many opportunities to acquire new social and life skills. They are expected to contribute to the operation of the home and undertake routine tasks associated with communal living. During their placements most young people will learn how to cook, clean and manage a budget. However, the hostel staff have no way of recording such achievements.

The staff team is well motivated and experienced. Though all have not yet obtained their NVQ 3 qualification, they regularly access training opportunities. There are clear lines of accountability and staff are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities. Support from members of the school's senior management team is good and there are adequate resources to ensure the hostel operates effectively. Communication with staff on different sites remains a difficulty but is, according to staff, 'much better than it was'.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the hostel is good.

Young people describe life within the home as 'cool', 'fun' and 'great'. Special mention was made of the support received from staff, the recreational activities on offer and the educational

progress they had made during their placements. All key national minimum standards are being met and the hostel effectively supports young people with their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure whole-school systems and procedures are applied rigorously across all sites.
- Sharpen the analysis and use of whole-school data to help inform planning for future strategies.
- Raise the attendance levels of all learners, particularly by tackling the persistent absence of a minority.
- Ensure greater consistency in setting clear, concise and challenging targets for learners' ILPs.

National minimum standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

- Develop a recording system to reflect the progress each young person is making in relation to the acquisition of social and life skills. (NMS12)
- Establish a more effective system for obtaining daily progress reports from different school sites. (NMS19)
- Ensure the personal details of each young person contain a recent photograph. (NMS8)
- Ensure that all staff achieve NVQ 3 in child care. (NMS31)

A small proportion of the 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

Because of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and their negative experience of mainstream schools, most learners arrive with standards well below those expected for their ages. Though standards overall remain below average by the time they leave, learners make satisfactory progress. As a result of the school's work in its first year of opening, single registered learners were reduced by a third, 17 learners were partially reintegrated, and 52 were fully reintegrated into mainstream school or other specialist provision. Of the 53 Year 11 learners who were part of the TMSS, 35 were entered for GCSE examinations and all achieved one A* to G grade pass. Teenage parents supported by the YPSS also achieved GCSE accreditation; of the 14 entered, four achieved five A* to G grade passes and a further four achieved one A* to G grade pass. Approximately 80% of learners supported by the ITS improved their National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics. There are no appreciable differences in the rates of progress made by different groups of learners.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Learners know how to be healthy and to enjoy the many sporting activities on offer but are sometimes disinclined to put healthy living into practice. They say there is some bullying but that the school deals with it well. As they progress through the school, learners show increasing awareness of and respect for one another and the staff who work with them. They have a real say in the school through school councils and the whole-school council. They often take the initiative to raise funds for charities, most recently the Tom Prince Trust Charity for cancer support. At Tipner they have played an important part in developing the adventure area. Progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) and in

developing personal skills prepares learners satisfactorily for their future education. There is further effective preparation for this aspect of boarders' development as a result of the hostel's budgeting task where they have to survive for a week. Boarders' cookery skills are also improved as part of this exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are generally appropriately planned in relation to learners' capabilities and with clear learning intentions and objectives. Learners therefore know what they are setting out to achieve. In most lessons, effective teamwork between teachers and pastoral support staff helps learners stay on task and improve their confidence. In a few cases, where relationships are less positive, or where teachers are less confident in class management, learners can be disruptive and disrespectful. In a Year 10 history lesson, for example, learners themselves decided that the lesson had ended when one of their peers from another class arrived to tell them; all of them simply left the room without having reviewed what they had accomplished. At Cosham, where teaching is good, lessons are enlivened by the use of effective strategies for gaining and retaining learners' attention, such as learning key words for a topic through a bingo game. In some lessons, teachers are involving learners more in assessing their own and others' learning, which leads to a growing awareness and confidence in expressing their views.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of learners, enables them to improve their key skills and contributes well to their personal development. A young parent commented, 'The young parents' programme is a great opportunity to meet other young mums and feel you can talk to them.' Following a school-wide focus, literacy provision is improving and is now a strength at Tipner. Although extended schools provision is limited, due partly to the school's very large catchment area and transport difficulties, the boarding provision offers good curriculum support through a homework club and enrichment through a range of activities in the local community. There is a wide range of opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities at Fratton, which adds effective breadth to learning. Provision for ICT is inconsistent and resources are inadequate at some sites.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides an effective caring and supportive environment for learners, and is particularly effective in how it supports each individual, including the most vulnerable, in very specific ways. Stamshaw, for example, provides a caring and nurturing environment in which learners flourish and the boarding provision supports learners' educational and personal development effectively. Good working relationships with a range of other specialist agencies and professionals also contribute extensively to the progress learners make. This has enabled older learners who are part of the TMSS provision to continue in mainstream education and to progress to further education or training. Although the school's procedures for reducing absence work well with most learners, it has yet to tackle the absence of a small minority successfully. Very effective procedures enable the school to track learners' academic and personal progress,

including the progress made towards achieving targets set out as part of their individual learning plans. However, some of the targets set as part of the individual learning plans lack clarity and conciseness in terms of what exactly learners are meant to achieve. The school has much data on individual learners in terms of their academic and personal progress. The analysis and use of this to inform whole-school planning for future strategies is, however, not yet effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a strong focus by all members of the senior leadership and management teams on improving outcomes and ensuring that every learner does matter. Leadership and management of the support provision at Milton are particularly effective. However, there is some inconsistency in the application of whole-school systems and procedures across all the sites. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are being used to identify and share good practice. The school contributes satisfactorily to promoting community cohesion. The impact of the outcomes of its planning in this respect are not yet fully evident. Financial management is carefully monitored by the bursar, administrative staff, and senior leadership and management teams, which ensures that the complex budget provision is well allocated to raise standards and provide value for money.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
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	3
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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Harbour School, Portsmouth, PO4 8LD

I was one of three inspectors who visited your school to see how well you are doing. We saw many of you in lessons and one of us visited you at a local gym for your fitness and kick-boxing session. We chatted to a number of you individually as well as in small groups. We were also joined by another inspector who spent time looking at the boarding hostel at Tipner. We would all like to thank you for the friendly way in which you welcomed us. It was good to hear that you like what the school has to offer and that you are making progress. The quality of education you receive is satisfactory and the quality of the boarding hostel is good. This is because:

- the director and others with posts of responsibility run the school well and have plans to make things even better for you
- all the staff have your best interests at heart and make every effort to ensure that you will do well in the future
- all the staff make sure you are well cared for and safe in both the school and the boarding hostel
- the school works well with other people from outside to broaden your experience of education, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- teachers make their lessons interesting and give you all the help and support they can.

To make things better, we have asked the school to:

- make sure the school's systems are applied consistently at all the sites
- use assessment data about you in a better way
- make sure that the targets set in your individual learning plans are clearer in telling you exactly what you need to do to improve
- make sure the boarding hostel puts in place actions to meet all the national minimum standards for your care fully.

Some of you could help by:

- improving your attendance and taking advantage of the opportunities the school provides for you.

Once again, thanks for your friendly welcome. We would like to wish all of you the very best for your future.

Yours faithfully

James Bowden

Lead Inspector