

Impact KS4 PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104849
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336376
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie

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	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Colin Oxley
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Bridson
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, including offsite vocational sessions and saw ten teachers at work in the main Unit. Discussions were held with members of the management committee, partners, parents, senior staff and teachers and students. Inspectors observed the work of the Unit, looked at policies, improvement plans and nine responses from the parents' and carers' questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment on students' attainment and progress
- the impact of curriculum on promoting future economic well-being and developing students' basic skills
- the arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding and well-being of students
- the levels of attendance and absence of students.

Information about the school

This is the Key Stage 4 pupil referral unit for Sefton Borough Council. The unit provides education for students who are either excluded or at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. Very few are able to sustain a place in a mainstream school because of anxieties and phobias. Currently 214 students are on roll and 53 are girls. Twenty eight students have a statement of special educational needs, a higher number than at the time of the last inspection. Most experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and many have had severe interruptions to their previous education. Around 20% of students have additional barriers to learning including moderate learning difficulties and communication difficulties. All but a very few are of White British heritage and 20 are looked after by the local authority.

The Unit has the Healthy Schools award and is seeking to enhance this. IMPACT is working towards Dyslexia Friendly status and is included in a Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme to be opened in 2014. It is planned that by then the Unit will cater for students to the age of 19.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

IMPACT provides good quality education and care. It is highly valued by the local authority, students and their families. Almost all students arrive with low attainment because they have experienced disruptions to their education and many have previously persistently failed to attend school. The large majority do well both in their personal and academic development. Many begin to catch up with their peers. By the time they leave most gain recognised external accreditations. While attainment is low it is improving strongly and securely for those who attend regularly. These students enjoy their learning and make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Students' behaviour is exemplary. They form positive relationships with each other and with the adults. They report that they feel safe. The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They undertake high levels of exercise and most enjoy the healthy meals provided. There are many valuable shared experiences that encourage working alongside others and students develop a good understanding about right and wrong. Students gain satisfactory skills for moving on to the next stages of their lives. Teaching is good and improving rapidly. Most teachers and tutors match tasks to students' levels of ability and set good learning targets. The good curriculum is under continuous review and is well designed to meet the individual needs of students but there is some inconsistency in quality between different subject areas. Students receive good advice from staff at times of transition and appreciate the support that they receive. The headteacher has great vision for IMPACT and has already taken it through many successful changes and adaptations. For example, many vocational providers now work with students and good quality control systems are in place to ensure consistency. However, information about the progress of students is not always quickly and easily available to senior managers and others. The school's self-evaluation procedures are effective, enabling leaders to have an accurate view of performance. Improvement planning is detailed and designed to ensure that the quality of the service is maintained and enhanced through, for example, the BSF initiative. Planning indicates the development of an even wider range of choices becoming available to students to motivate and engage their interests further. These improvements and plans indicate good capacity to improve further. The management committee is largely aware of the unit's strengths and weaknesses and its effectiveness is satisfactory overall. It mainly supports the senior team well and undertakes most responsibilities with care. The management committee is not yet as successful in ensuring the unit reduces the amount of persistent absence although there are clear signs that attendance is improving. For example, recently the unit has securely and rapidly improved the attendance of some individual students. IMPACT uses its outstanding partnerships with others to great effect

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to improve its provision and learning outcomes for students. Consequently, many students receive very high levels of support and this helps to keep them in full-time education and achieve well. Safeguarding procedures are undertaken well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2011, the management committee must implement strategies to improve attendance to at least 80% and reduce persistent absence significantly.
- By July 2011, improve the curriculum further so that all areas of study provide a wide range of opportunities for all groups of students to obtain appropriate externally accredited qualifications.
- By July 2011, implement a close analysis of performance data in order to better understand the progress made by individual students and groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Although levels of attainment remain low they are improving strongly and most students are keen to learn. They settle quickly into lessons and waste little time. Students demonstrate that they can work very well independently or in groups. From very low starting points, most make good gains in literacy and numeracy and in some lessons, attainment becomes close to national averages. Students who attend regularly gain accreditations including Entry Level and GCSE and students are demonstrating rapid improvement in their progress through the new Functional Skills courses. Many students acquire vocational qualifications that enable them to undertake further training. Thus, the achievement of all groups of students is good. The discipline of these experiences also contributes to their good social and moral development. Attendance has improved rapidly for some students. Many develop useful workplace skills that enhance their prospects of moving on to education, training or employment. The promotion of their future economic well-being is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour is exceptional. Students are polite and welcoming to visitors. They are keen to enjoy each other's company during recreational periods. Parents and carers are very positive about the changes that the unit brings about and one wrote, 'I have seen a huge improvement in my son's confidence. His behaviour towards others is lovely to see.' Students are keen to say that the unit is safe. Bullying and harassment are almost non-existent. Students make good contributions to the community. For example, through the BSF initiative some made presentations to large groups of people in London. Other groups of students contribute to the local community through using their skills in sport to encourage younger students in primary schools to adopt the healthy life styles that they themselves appreciate.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding but almost all is at least good.

Teachers and tutors know the students very well and work is usually properly matched to ability. The best lessons ensure that students have a quick succession of tasks to help them to remain engaged. Classroom assistants generally guide students well, encourage them to complete work and ensure that it is of an appropriate standard. The few weaker lessons are less well informed by previous evidence of attainment and in these lessons the levels of challenge are variable and sometimes inappropriate. Students trust the adults that they work with and good working relationships in classrooms often help to ensure outstanding conduct and good engagement in lessons. Staff make good use of new technology in teaching and students are confident in the use of computers to aid learning.

The curriculum has greatly improved since the last inspection and now places great emphasis on effective vocational off-site partnerships that provide good opportunities for students. Exciting changes are taking place such as the use of Functional Skills courses that ensure students gain appropriate qualifications whilst improving their skills in literacy and numeracy. There is a good balance of core subjects taught in the main unit, but they do not all offer the same degree of flexibility over choice of courses. Therefore, in a few areas of the curriculum there are insufficient choices to meet the needs of all students.

The well-organised arrangements for the care of students begin each day with the breakfast club and opportunities for any that require it to talk to staff. A number of school partners were keen to stress the intensive levels of support that senior staff

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provide to very vulnerable students or to those who have encountered particular difficulties. This exemplary practice is supported by the partnerships with agencies and others that help many students to attend throughout times of difficulty. The school's success in improving attendance for individual pupils is captured in this parental comment: 'Impact has made a really good change. My son is now even keen to sit exams. His attendance is much better.' Every effort is made by school staff to ascertain the whereabouts of those students who are persistently absent and the nature of their circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other senior leaders have greatly improved learning through raising the quality of teaching both in the unit and with the vocational providers. There is, however, no centralised system to monitor the overall progress of students. The available performance data is therefore of limited value to senior leaders in their evaluations of students' progress and of the effectiveness of different curriculum areas. However, through knowing students so well, individuals senior leaders are able to appraise the work of the unit accurately to ensure that the students have equal opportunity to succeed through its provision. Since the last inspection senior leaders have provided a much wider range of learning opportunities for students. These have been successfully implemented to meet the vocational and skills needs of the student groups. With the very wide range of learning opportunities now available leaders are able to design individual timetables for all.

The management committee is largely effective in supporting the work of the headteacher and leaders. Its experienced members share the vision of the unit with the leadership team and mainly discharge their duties very well. They have supported the productive changes that have taken place and are proud that the unit has been recognised in the past as a model of good practice. The appropriate allocation of resources by the leaders and managers and good outcomes ensures that IMPACT provides good value for money.

Safeguarding procedures scrutinised during the inspection were found to be good with all requirements for recruitment and training met. Furthermore, the unit ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff of the vocational providers. IMPACT places great importance on its contribution to the community and the satisfactory work

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undertaken to promote community cohesion is under review and included in development planning. Currently, students come to understand through their many vocational and other experiences about maintaining good relation with others, including people from different backgrounds and religions. Contacts are maintained with other organisations to help students know more about the work of public services.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Nine parents and carers returned questionnaires. This is a low rate of return. Two parents visited the unit in order to speak with inspectors. The great majority of parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the Unit. Some relayed that it had changed the lives of their children and therefore had a huge positive impact on the family. A few wrote supportive statements. For example, one representative comment was, 'This is a good provision because they put the needs of my son first, including social needs'. The inspectors felt that this view represented much about the success of the unit. One of the parents' and carers' questionnaires suggested that the unit did not keep their child safe. This view was not supported by the findings of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Impact KS4 PRU to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 9 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 214 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	22	5	56	2	22	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	56	3	33	0	0	1	11
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	44	5	56	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	44	4	44	0	0	1	11
The teaching is good at this school	5	56	2	22	1	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	44	3	33	1	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	44	3	33	0	0	1	11
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	56	2	22	0	0	1	11
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	67	2	22	0	0	1	11
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	44	4	44	0	0	1	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	56	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	56	3	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	89	0	0	1	11	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of IMPACT Alternative Provision, Liverpool, L30 2QQ

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your unit recently. We enjoyed meeting you at your vocational placements, in lessons and at break times. I was particularly impressed with the representative group that met formally with me.

IMPACT is a good pupil referral unit and the staff work very hard to look after you, including through outstanding partnerships with support agencies and others. You respond with outstanding behaviour and by making good progress in your lessons. We particularly noted the good relationships between students and staff. The inspectors feel that you are very serious about adopting healthy lifestyles and you particularly enjoy high levels of exercise. Your teachers and tutors produce good lessons with interesting activities. Many of you begin to enjoy learning and you appreciate the opportunities that IMPACT has given you to gain qualifications and vocational training. The headteacher and senior leaders are working hard to make IMPACT even more successful. However, the inspectors found that a small, but significant, minority of you do not attend regularly.

The inspectors feel that the unit could be improved further, for example, by the management committee ensuring the rate of persistent absence falls significantly. We would like some subjects to offer a wider range of courses so that you have more opportunities to succeed. We would like the unit to use assessment data more effectively so that your strengths and weaknesses can be quickly identified and even better support offered to you.

We wish you all the best for the future and once again thank you for your help and interest in the inspection

Yours sincerely,

Terry McKenzie

Lead Inspector

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