

# Gillford Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112095
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	337839
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terence McKenzie

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>	7–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms J Ditchburn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robert Hewson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Upperby Road Carlisle Cumbria CA2 4JE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons and held meetings with staff, a member of the management committee and groups of pupils. They observed the Unit's work and looked at six questionnaires from parents and carers, 16 from pupils and 24 from staff.

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

- the quality of teaching and assessment
- pupils' attainment and progress
- the effectiveness of the school leadership team and management committee in improving the Centre
- the safeguarding of pupils
- pupils' attendance.

## Information about the school

The Gillford Centre is a pupil referral unit situated in a residential district of Carlisle. It can provide for up to 49 full time equivalent pupils aged 7 to 16 who are either excluded or at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. Currently 24 pupils from Year 3 to Year 11 attend The Gillford Centre and many are part-time being also registered with other educational providers. The Gillford Centre uses an additional site for pupils' assessments and vocational education some miles away.

All pupils are White British and most are boys. Almost all have social, emotional and behavioural concerns and eight have a statement of special educational need. Pupils join the Centre at all ages and stages of their schooling and whilst some stay for much of their secondary education, most return full time to schools. A high percentage of pupils are eligible for a free school meal and almost all eat the midday meal provided. Many attend the breakfast club. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The Gillford Centre has recently achieved Healthy School's status and it offers an extended school facility for one evening each week and during the summer holidays. In April 2009 the headteacher was appointed permanently into post and the structure of the management committee completely revised shortly afterwards.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The Gillford Centre is satisfactory in meeting the educational needs of pupils and addressing their behavioural difficulties. Most pupils appreciate the facility and one boy commented, 'The adults here deal with us confidently.'

Since being confirmed in post, the headteacher has led significant improvements in curriculum, assessment and attendance. The local authority trusts him to continue to make improvements and it appreciates his efforts. In the recent past The Gillford Centre has received too little support from the Centre management committee. However, despite this previous lack of support the senior leaders clearly have a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The senior leadership team is committed to continuing to improve the quality of education and to ensuring that all staff have appropriate resources. However, self-evaluation processes are not yet completely developed. For example, the effective use of assessment to enable appropriate targets to be set for individual pupils in lessons and the way in which pupils' attainment and progress is tracked and recorded is not yet consistent. Parents and carers are also supportive and they appreciate the hard work that ensures pupils are looked after and guided.

Most pupils achieve well. Their positive attitudes are linked to good behaviour. Most lessons are of good quality and pupils often make rapid progress. Most pupils start at The Gillford Centre with significant gaps in their learning, which are caused by disrupted education, and with many demonstrating low levels of ability. Attainment remains very low for some pupils, but many quickly make up a lot of ground. Some teachers help by setting meaningful targets for improvement. Pupils benefit from a personalised curriculum and gain confidence in their ability to handle the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Those remaining throughout Key Stage 4 develop workplace skills through vocational and other courses and they usually leave the Centre much better equipped than when they started.

Whilst pupils are encouraged to recognise special events such as feast days associated with religions and cultures from around the world, The Gillford Centre recognises that it could do even more to help pupils learn about different people in this and other countries. Through the support of the Centre, many pupils improve greatly on their previous poor attendance. However, despite the best efforts of staff, attendance remains too low for a number of pupils. This group of young people are, therefore, not able to take advantage of the education available.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work closely with the local authority to devise strategies that will

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improve attendance.

- Develop further the use of assessment procedures so that more appropriate individual targets can be set for pupils in lessons.
- Improve the recording of attainment to demonstrate how pupils progress over time.
- Ensure that the management committee is fully aware of the Centre's strengths and weaknesses so that it can challenge performance more effectively and hold the Centre to account.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to learn about religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups locally, nationally and internationally.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils make good progress from low starting points and for a few this progress is remarkable. Staff build positive relationships with pupils and encourage them to engage with learning. Pupils therefore enjoy lessons and become confident in responding to targets and challenges. For the majority of pupils their attainment is below that expected nationally for their age. All Key Stage 4 pupils attending the Centre gain external accreditation according to their ability. Many achieve passes in the Entry Level Certificate and then move on to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). These qualifications and the acquisition of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in lessons greatly enhance their preparation for the workplace. In the recent past a few pupils have gained passes at GCSE. Parents and pupils are mainly positive about the changes that the Centre brings about and one parent wrote, 'We wish to thank all concerned for the progress he has made'. Pupils' work is usually very well presented and they trust the staff to help them improve it. Pupils gain confidence through success in lessons and are then willing to attempt new tasks.

The Gillford Centre recently gained the Healthy School's status. It continues to work hard to ensure that pupils understand about and pursue a healthy lifestyle. Lunchtime menus are constantly reviewed and appropriate suggestions from pupils are taken into account through the school council. All pupils have opportunities for exercise through physical education and are encouraged to undertake outdoor pursuits. Most enjoy attending the Centre and are keen to praise the efforts of staff. The positive relationships between staff and pupils encourage improvements in behaviour. A few pupils reported through their questionnaires that they did not always feel safe in school but this was not borne out in the discussions that the inspector had with them. Indeed, they say that overall there is very little to worry them. Pupils' social skills are good and throughout the inspection they were always polite and helpful. Staff presence at breaktimes and during mealtimes encourages pupils to maintain impressive self-control so that they obey rules and follow the code of conduct. Overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory and improvements have occurred since the last inspection, particularly in the ways that pupils get on well together and participate in a

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variety of settings, such as lunchtime activities and the school council.

Many pupils attend very well indeed but overall attendance is low compared to national averages. There is persistent absenteeism despite the best efforts of the Centre and other agencies. The headteacher has employed imaginative strategies to try to improve the attendance of a target group of pupils, but the local authority recognises that this is a problem largely beyond the direct control of the Centre. An action plan has now been devised by the local authority to address and reduce persistent absence through providing significant additional funding, resources and personnel.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good overall and a few teachers demonstrate outstanding aspects in their practice. For example, these teachers are very aware of pupils' abilities based on the evidence of previous assessments and they plan very small steps so that pupils' progress can be quickly and effectively evidenced. In these lessons, pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they understand how to meet their targets and succeed. Teaching assistants are well directed in all lessons and are effective in supporting pupils.

<sup>1</sup> 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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The Gillford Centre provides individualised timetables for all pupils based on work undertaken at the assessment centre before formal entry. These are constantly reviewed to meet the needs of individuals. Use is made of teachers' assessments and commercial schemes to track pupils' attainment and progress and this information helps with setting targets. Although there is good use of assessment overall, throughout the Centre, it is inconsistently applied and sometimes teachers miss opportunities to extend individual pupils' progress during lessons.

The curriculum is good at meeting most pupils' needs well overall. Pupils study a wide range of subjects, including most of those in the National Curriculum, such as, practical science and technology in Key Stage 3. All subjects in Key Stage 2 support the development of literacy and numeracy and pupils have access to computers and other resources that aid their learning. In Key Stage 4, much consideration is given to matching courses to pupils' needs and interests, for example, within the Entry Level Certificate where pupils can choose to study certain units. Higher attaining pupils usually attend part-time and many return to mainstream education when the Centre has successfully re-engaged them with education. GCSE courses are always available to pupils and arrangements are common whereby they work towards these in schools whilst undertaking other accredited courses at The Gillford Centre. The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network courses are followed by many pupils to widen their experiences. Pupils have access to an extremely well resourced vocational centre. This has been very successful in enabling pupils to gain NVQs in engineering and land-based studies, whilst NVQ food courses are also popular. Many pupils move on to further education or into paid employment when they leave the Centre and this suggests that The Gillford Centre has had a significant impact upon their future life-chances.

The assessment centre is efficient in ensuring that referred pupils are placed into the correct provision. As a result of its work most pupils return to their mainstream schools with support or move on to more specialist provision.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Until recently The Gillford Centre lacked permanent leadership and management. The headteacher was confirmed in post earlier this year and good improvements have since been evident in many areas, particularly in the management of teaching and in the deployment of resources. The headteacher has ensured that progress has been made on

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the issues identified at the last inspection. For example, The Gillford Centre now produces a newsletter that informs local residents of the nature of the Centre and it invites other young people living close by to join the activities of the extended school. These reflect the Centre's satisfactory promotion of community cohesion.

Until recently the management committee has been ineffective in supporting the Centre and challenging it as a critical friend. Consequently, the local authority took the decision to completely revise and restructure the committee in May 2009. It has since improved its undertaking of statutory duties to a satisfactory standard.

The Centre works effectively with a wide range of partners and the schools that pupils are associated with to promote their learning and well-being. It is successful in ensuring that none are discriminated against and that equal opportunities are available to all. Most parents and carers are supportive and appreciative of the Centre's work, but it has yet to find ways of engaging successfully with a minority of these. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory and reflect the importance placed upon caring for pupils, guiding them and providing a safe environment for those that attend regularly.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Few parental questionnaires were received, but within the limited sample parents and carers were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and all agreed that behaviour is well managed. Most indicated that their children enjoyed attending The Gillford Centre. A few wrote additional comments to the effect that they were very pleased with the changes made since their children had started at the Centre. Two questionnaires



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suggested that children did not enjoy their education and one maintained that the Centre did not meet the pupil's needs very well. However, all parents and carers indicated that The Gillford Centre is a safe place for their children to attend.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gillford Centre 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 inspector received 6 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 24 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	33	2	33	0	0	2	33
The school keeps my child safe	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
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)	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	67	1	17	1	17	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Gillford Centre, Carlisle CA2 4JE

Thank you for welcoming me to The Gillford Centre when I visited you recently. I was impressed with your manners and good behaviour and very much enjoyed talking with you during lunchtime, lessons and in some meetings that we had together. You were a credit to yourselves and to the Centre. The Gillford Centre gives you a satisfactory education.

Most of you experienced difficulties in mainstream schools and came to The Gillford Centre feeling unsure about the future. However, you told me that The Gillford Centre is a good place to be. You explained that the staff support you and understand the problems that you have with learning. Almost all of you are now making much better progress in your education and older pupils are on the way to gaining qualifications that will help them to move on to the next stages of their lives. You all deserve credit for that as do the staff at The Gillford Centre who have helped you to catch up and succeed. Previously, some of you did not attend school regularly and The Gillford Centre has helped most of you to change that. However, I think that some of you could do much better by coming in to the Centre when you are supposed to. You are very lucky to have such a dedicated team of staff and if you are not present you cannot make the most of your chances.

I have asked that all of your teachers, not just some, make sure that they explain the targets set for you in lessons so that you know what is expected of you and how to succeed. I would also like the management committee to be more helpful to the Centre in the future.

I will not forget meeting you. I wish you all the very best in whatever you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Terence McKenzie

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