

# The Linden Education Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115836
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338664
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Farrell

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>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Glenn Parkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Beckwith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 November 2006
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and parts of lessons, and held meetings with a member of the management committee, staff, groups of pupils, partners to the centre, and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school improvement plan, data on pupils' progress, and policies.

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

- the progress of different groups of pupils, including those cared for by the local authority, to establish the extent to which the centre analyses progress data and ensures effective provision
- the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning and in the curriculum, and pupils' progress in ICT
- the effectiveness of the use of data as a management tool, including the monitoring of the number of fixed-term exclusions.

## Information about the school

The Linden Education Centre educates pupils who have been or are at risk of being excluded from school. There are also discrete groups for pupils who are emotionally vulnerable and unable to attend school because of psychological difficulties. Of the 90 pupils on role, 27 are of primary school age and 63 secondary. The great majority of pupils are of White British origin. A high proportion of pupils, 11%, have a statement of special educational need, most commonly for emotional and behavioural or moderate learning difficulties and 7%, also a high proportion, are in the care of the local authority. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils and their needs have become more complex. During the term in which the inspection took place, the headteacher was temporarily supporting another centre in the local authority for the equivalent of one and a half days per week.

**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

The Linden Centre is a good centre, providing well for pupils. It is well led by a strong senior management team and has developed outstanding partnership with other schools and services, so pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities and support. This has enabled the centre to respond successfully to increasing numbers and the changing needs of pupils. Parents are excellently engaged because the centre keeps them very well informed and supports them fully. Self-evaluation including the monitoring of teaching is accurate, so the centre knows its strengths and weaknesses well and tackles areas to improve successfully. ICT is used well as a management tool and data are carefully analysed to inform provision. Fixed-term exclusion data are analysed well and acted on to keep numbers low. Such effective self-evaluation procedures and staff commitment ensure good capacity to continue improving. Members of the management committee use their knowledge and skills to push the centre to do better, but are also supportive. Provision such as a regular 'gathering' assembly helps promote community cohesion but planning and evaluation of this aspect are not fully implemented, so this area is satisfactory and supports pupils' sound positive contribution to the community. Excellent care, guidance and support draw on outstanding partnership with others to ensure individual needs are recognised and responded to very successfully. Great care and flexibility help pupils settle into the centre. This helps transform pupils' previous non-attendance or very poor attendance so they attend well. Excellent care in the nurture group includes monitoring pupils' personal and social progress to ensure everything is being done to improve this. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with development of self-esteem being particularly strong. Pupils' behaviour is good because it is well managed. Pupils feel safe because there is always someone they can talk to and because systems are in place to keep them safe. The curriculum and ethos of the centre encourage healthy lifestyles vigorously and pupils therefore understand the importance of this but they do not always act accordingly, although this is improving. The curriculum is tailored to individual pupil needs well, and previous weaknesses in ICT have been successfully tackled so it makes a good contribution. Great flexibility is shown in the way the curriculum is adapted as needs change and full use is made of other schools in extending and enriching it. Strong emphasis is placed on personal and social development. A wide range of suitable examination subjects is offered. Provision for pupils aged 11 to 14, while good, is not as strong as in other phases, so the centre is rightly considering smaller groupings and curriculum changes.

Teaching, including the use of assessment, is good. Teachers use assessment information well to plan sequences of lessons and ensure work is well pitched. ICT is

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well used to enliven lessons and increase pupils' motivation. Great care is taken that activities capture pupils' interests, pupil questioning is skilful, and staff work together harmoniously. Teachers do not always remind pupils of their individual learning targets and lesson learning objectives are not always sufficiently explicit, reducing progress in some lessons. The good curriculum and good teaching ensure pupils make good progress and learn well. They enter the provision attaining below the national average but catch up, so they leave with a range of examination qualifications representing average attainment and are well prepared for the next stage of education or for work. They progress well in ICT. Pupils of different ages, those with a statement of special educational needs and those looked after by the local authority make good progress because their individual learning and personal needs are known and met, including by the very strong coordination with other provision.

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

- Improve teaching and learning and pupils' progress by ensuring individual learning targets are always known to pupils and that lesson learning outcomes are always explicit.
- Improve community cohesion and pupils' positive contribution to the community by embedding community cohesion strategies in practice and evaluating them fully.

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

Starting from lower than average levels, pupils enjoy their learning, learn well and make good progress. Older pupils who stay to take examinations reach levels that are within the average range, taking GCSE, Entry Level, adult literacy and numeracy and functional skills qualifications. The standards reached in GCSEs improved from 2008 to 2009. In all age groups pupils make good progress. Boys and girls make good progress owing to individual encouragement, including of their existing interests. Where pupils have particular talents and interests, the centre draws on support from other schools to ensure these are nurtured. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' progress ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; overall it was good. In a good nurture group lesson for younger pupils ranging from Year 1 to Year 5, pupils painted trees and made good progress in social development because staff clearly understood pupils' individual needs and encouraged their confidence and speaking and listening by skilful questioning. In a good science lesson for Year 11, pupils studied thermal energy and made good progress because teacher and teaching assistant worked closely together, the pace of the lesson and the level of work was good and pupils behaved well. Pupils reach challenging targets, which help support their good progress, but pupils easily forget them, constraining their progress from being even better.

Within the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils the development of self-esteem is particularly strong. Pupils feel safe because good procedures are in place to help ensure their safety and because relationships with staff are good, so that pupils have adults they feel they can talk to. They enjoy school and

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behave well because as they are drawn into the centre's ethos they recognise they can benefit from the opportunities it provides. Pupils know about keeping emotionally healthy and where they can go for help and act on this. Pupils' attendance is good. They make good progress in economic well-being because of the very strong contribution of careers support and work-related experiences, and the good contribution of their progress in English, mathematics and ICT.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching, including the use of assessment, is good. Among common strengths of lessons are the good relationships between staff and pupils, close team working between teachers and teaching assistants, clear lesson structure and innovative use of ICT. Assessment informs teaching well and work is well pitched according to the level at which the pupil is learning. Good assessment is also evident for groups where the main priority is developing social and personal skills and these are assessed and monitored. However, in lessons, learning outcomes sometimes relate to activities rather than to evidence of what pupils have learned, and pupils do not always remember their

<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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individual learning targets. In lessons where this is evident it constrains progress from being even better.

The curriculum is carefully designed and meets the very varied learning and emotional needs of pupils effectively, contributing well to the development of the whole pupil. The centre constantly monitors the curriculum and its impact, and adjusts it where necessary. ICT now makes a valuable contribution to the whole curriculum. Strong collaboration with other schools enables the centre to offer subjects such as performing arts and physical education, taught in mainstream schools. The curriculum for younger pupils appropriately focuses on social and personal development drawing on very appropriate materials and activities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are engaged well because staff make successful efforts to find activities that are interesting and motivating. Good enrichment opportunities are offered on specially designated days. The centre is rightly reassessing group sizes and curriculum implications for pupils aged 11 to 14 to ensure it engages pupils as fully as possible.

Excellent care, guidance and support have a powerful impact on raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The great patience and very high level of skill shown by staff in listening to pupils and finding time for them stems from the very challenging aspirations staff have for pupils' welfare. The centre is unremitting in its efforts to coordinate the work of other schools and services, such as the health service and social services to benefit pupils. Great care is taken to ensure pupils have the opportunity to make a fresh start at the centre and, as the time approaches for them to leave, no stone is left unturned to try to ensure they have a job or further opportunities for education. The centre works strenuously to support families, for example by providing a base for a family liaison worker to the benefit of the families of its pupils. This, in the context of the complex needs of pupils and their previous very negative experiences of education, leads to good outcomes in personal development.

*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>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The combination of the different skills and knowledge of the headteacher and the two deputies make a formidable force for change and improvement. Even though the headteacher is temporarily supporting another provision and is away from the centre for part of each week during the current term, the centre continues to develop well. Teaching and learning are well led because they are regularly and accurately assessed

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and monitored, leading to sustained good standards of teaching. The management committee offers a wide range of skills and knowledge leading to effective support and challenge. Partnership is a particular strength. The centre engages parents excellently despite the wide area from which pupils are drawn, keeps parents very well informed of their child's progress and is greatly valued by them.

Partnership with other schools and services is excellent, the roles of the partners are very clear and partners value the centre as much as it values them. Equal opportunities are well promoted through the curriculum and in the development of clear policies and good practice, so that any discrimination is tackled effectively and all feel valued. Safeguarding procedures are strong because of the listening ethos, well-considered policies and related good practice. The centre deploys resources well including the effective deployment of teachers and teaching assistants to achieve good outcomes. However, community cohesion is only satisfactorily promoted because the centre has not fully implemented its plans for this area and the efforts that are being made to develop community cohesion are not as fully evaluated as they should be.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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

Around the time of the inspection there was industrial action by the postal service. Only a few parent questionnaires were received by the time data were collated and the results are shown in the table below. This level of response was very low. Almost every parent agreed or strongly agreed with all statements. Among positive comments was being 'very impressed' with the communication and information the centre provides.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Linden Education 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 inspection team received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 94 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	2	50	1	25	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	2	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	50	1	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	50	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	50	1	25	1	25	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	25	2	50	0	0	1	25
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	50	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	75	0	0	0	0	1	25
The school is led and managed effectively	3	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	75	0	0	1	25	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.**



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Linden Education Centre, Farnborough GU14 6JU

It was good to meet you when my colleague and I inspected The Linden Centre recently. Thank you for letting us know your views on the provision.

The centre offers good provision. It is well led and staff are committed to doing their best for you. Teaching is good so you make good progress and older pupils take a good range of suitable examinations. By the time you leave, you are working at levels that are the same as those of other pupils of the same age. The curriculum is good and the centre is always looking for new ways to adapt the curriculum to meet your needs and engage your interests. The centre cares for you exceptionally well and you behave well. There are two things the centre could do even better so I have asked the headteacher to:

- improve teaching and learning and your progress by making sure you always know your individual learning targets and that what you are supposed to learn in lessons is always made explicit
- improve community cohesion and your contribution to the community by turning plans into practice and evaluating them fully.

I know you will want to do your part in making these improvements by doing more for the centre as a community and contributing to the wider community where you can. Also I am sure you will try to remember your individual targets when teachers remind you of these.

With every good wish for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell

Lead Inspector

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