

Tracks

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130980
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	341077
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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	12–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Vaughan
Headteacher	Mr John Nixon
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
School address	Wycliffe CofE Primary Saltairee Road Shipley BD18 3HZ
Telephone number	01274 385833
Fax number	01274 385983
Email address	john.nixon@educationbradford.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited four lessons, and held meetings with members of the management committee, staff and students. They observed the unit's work, and looked at students' work books, assessment information about their progress, records of the unit's review of its work, the current development plan, minutes of management committee meetings and documentation to ensure that students are safe. The responses to eight questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- how well the unit enables students who are not academically inclined to achieve
- the effectiveness of the unit in preparing students for the world of work
- the provision of physical activities to enable students to be healthy
- the promotion of students' understanding of cultural diversity.

The second day of the inspection was deferred from the 14 January to the 18 January because of bad weather.

Information about the school

The Trust, Respect, Achievement, Confidence, Knowledge and Success (TRACKS) Unit is jointly funded by Education Bradford and the Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). It caters for young people unable to attend mainstream school because of severe levels of anxiety and mental health issues. Students' attainment on entry to the unit is well below that expected for their age because of a negative attitude to education and prolonged absence, in some cases, of three years. Students come from across the city and the majority are of white British background. All students remain on the register of their local secondary school. The unit was recently highly recommended in the National Health Service Journal for its work in the field of mental health.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding unit which enables students of all capabilities to make remarkable progress and achieve qualifications they would never have dreamt possible. In addition, it very successfully enables them to come to terms with chronic mental health conditions that have limited their education and activities for a number of years. Comments such as: 'My life has been on hold. TRACKS has given me a future,' are representative of the influence the unit has on the lives of the young people.

As a result of first rate teaching and outstanding care, support and guidance, students make excellent gains in their personal development and academically, attaining awards that prepare them exceptionally well for life after school. Excellent links with parents and carers, health agencies, careers workers and the community contribute significantly to students' achievement and well-being. Initiatives such as the weekly therapy session 'Skills4Life' are instrumental in students' recovery. Students report that, while they find the content of these lessons uncomfortable, the experiences give them an in-depth understanding of the factors affecting their mental health and the skills to deal with them. Equally, students have acquired an excellent understanding of their physical health. However, while the unit encourages healthy eating, students do not have sufficient opportunities to participate in physical activity.

Students make a tremendous contribution to the school community and to that of the host primary school where they rent rooms. Through visits to Paris and Rome they have a surprisingly good understanding of differing European cultures. However, while they have some awareness of other cultures through work in literature and assemblies, their knowledge of and appreciation of cultural diversity is limited.

Determined not to stand still and to provide the best for students at all times, staff have worked with tenacity to tackle improvement since the last inspection. For example, the improved provision and resulting achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) have added significantly to students' chances of employment. Through accurate self-review, the unit knows itself in fine detail and has excellent capacity to maintain its high-quality provision. The cost of educating each student in this very effective unit is much lower than that for similar settings and for home tuition, resulting in outstanding value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' physical health and fitness levels by ensuring that they participate in planned physical activities each week.
- Increase students' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students from all groups within the unit make exceptional progress in their learning. They show grit and determination and enjoy learning. In an ICT lesson students enjoyed an animated discussion. They contributed very maturely and often with humour. They listened to each very carefully and showed respect for different points of view. Students apply themselves to tasks diligently and are extremely conscientious. They are developing independent learning skills very well. As a result of students' very positive approach to learning, almost half the students attain five or more A* to C grade subjects at GCSE including English and mathematics, some in as little as six months. The results in English are above the national picture for all schools. All students leave with at least one graded pass. Those who learn more slowly gain awards in adult numeracy and literacy, and in ICT. Since the last inspection all students have moved on to further education or training at the age of 16. Other than as a result of recurrent illnesses, students have completed their placements prior to progressing, for example to undergraduate studies or permanent employment. The considerably improved provision for ICT has not only given students further qualifications contributing to employability, but increased their self-esteem and confidence, for example in using multi-media presentations.

Students make excellent gains in their spiritual, moral and social development. Times for reflection are palpable and often poignant as students reflect on their previous experiences and the great strides they have made. Attendance, overall, is above average with some students who have not attended a school for two or more years achieving full attendance. Students are increasingly independent. For example, those who in the recent past would not have left the security of their bedrooms have gained the confidence to use public transport, or leave the premises and walk into town at lunchtime. Behaviour is exemplary giving a calm working environment allowing students to maximise learning opportunities. Students have a clear understanding of the importance of keeping safe, referring to previous school experiences when they have been the victims of assault and bullying.

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

How effective is the provision?

Students' learning and progress is outstanding because of high-quality teaching. All teachers are specialists in their subjects. Their enthusiasm and passion for their work is instrumental in motivating students. They plan activities that challenge students and engender a feeling of self-worth. Activities are carefully matched to teachers' understanding of how each student learns, of the student's previous achievement and state of mind. Lessons are purposeful and conducted with a sense of urgency which accelerates learning. Most adults are talented musicians which, in addition to extending students' skills, adds to their enjoyment through, for example, '[our] awesome Irish ceili. Much of the assessment of students' achievements is outstanding. Continuous helpful marking, dialogue and reviews increase students' confidence and success. Students look forward to their termly reviews where they set new targets. Staff recognise, however, that some individual targets could be more precise and measurable.

The curriculum exceeds the requirements for pupil referral units. Opportunities for enrichment are outstanding and contribute appreciably to students' enjoyment and personal development. Residential experiences in Rome and Paris present considerable challenges for all students but result in a tremendous sense of achievement prompting comments such as, 'Can you believe, I daren't walk out of my house and now I've been on a plane and stayed in a hotel in one of the biggest cities in the world!' Students report they thoroughly enjoy occasional activities such as theatre visits, walking in the Yorkshire dales and ten pin bowling, but are disappointed they do not have weekly physical education sessions.

Staff are very successful in creating an environment where students say they feel safe

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and where their confidence grows. As a result of outstanding care and support, their anxieties decrease and they flourish academically and socially. Support for each student is precisely targeted to enable individuals to gain maximum benefit from their placement. They form positive relationships and function as members of a team. Health professionals and the educational psychologist make a considerable contribution in helping students take responsibility for their recovery, their present learning and future plans.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have very successfully inspired students to be active members of their school and home communities, to share a strong sense of purpose and to aspire to ambitious targets. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the unit. The skills, values and aims of adults allow students to fulfil their potential through providing an atmosphere which offers challenge, yet sensitive support when situations are testing. Students desperately want 'to be normal' and through the work of the unit are building a better life and raising their aspirations, 'today the hills, tomorrow the mountains'.

The unit is a cohesive community. The full-time teachers and education social worker ensure that the day-to-day running of the unit is smooth and efficient. However, leaders have recognised that some aspects of the unit's work need refining. Consequently, while students have a good understanding of European ways of life and pockets of awareness of other cultures through their studies, for example in English literature, there has been no check on which elements of the unit's work promote students' appreciation of cultural diversity and understanding of the wider community cohesion.

Since the last inspection the membership of the management committee has been extended and now includes valuable representation by parents and carers. The committee comprises skilled, senior managers influential in their field, enabling the unit to 'get things done'. The committee provides good support and advice, but recognises that members need to strengthen links with teaching staff. At the time of the inspection arrangements to safeguard students were good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Almost all questionnaire responses and telephone conversations with parents and carers were positive. Remarks such as 'really impressed', 'cannot commend it highly enough' and, 'It's been a life-saver,' are representative of the views of most parents and carers. Parents and carers explained that their response to the statement, 'My child enjoys school' is affected by their children's mental health issues.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tracks 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 8 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 15 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	2	25	3	38	2	25
The school keeps my child safe	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	63	2	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	25	5	63	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	25	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	25	4	50	1	13	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)	3	38	5	63	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	38	3	38	2	25	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	25	6	75	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	25	6	75	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	38	5	63	0	0	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">■ 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.



18 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of TRACKS, Shipley, BD18 3HZ

As you are aware, a little while ago I spent some time looking at TRACKS. I had a delightful time and really enjoyed your company. Thank you for taking time to talk to me about your work, your photographs and displays, and for giving me your views of the unit. It was very clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies we received from your parents and carers that, despite your health problems, you are gaining confidence and beginning to enjoy learning. You say that you feel safe and that you are very well cared for.

The unit is providing you with an outstanding education. As well as your hard work in lessons, visits to the theatre and Yorkshire Dales make learning meaningful. You make remarkable progress in your confidence, attitude, attendance and in the amount of work you produce. This has increased your chances of going to college and gaining employment significantly. All this happens because you have first-rate teachers and a well-thought-out programme to meet your individual needs.

There are a couple of areas that would make TRACKS even more successful.

- You have an excellent understanding of keeping safe and healthy eating, but you need to do more planned physical activity each week.
- You have increased your understanding of European culture through your visits to Rome and Paris. Now you need to broaden your knowledge of the beliefs and traditions of a wider range of cultures.

I know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Katharine Halifax

Lead inspector

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