

Hobs Moat Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133531
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	341394
Inspection dates	15–16 September
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs G Dilling
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 July 2007
School address	Brackleys Way Solihull
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 9 lessons, and held meetings with the local authority's head of inclusion and access, the centre's improvement partner, the centre manager, Youth Service staff, a parent and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies and the school improvement plan. Two parental questionnaires were received.

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

- the progress of pupils during their time at the centre, with particular reference to the outcomes for pupils and their future destinations when they leave
- how effectively the centre provides for pupils with specific learning difficulties and for improving all pupils' reading, writing, speech and language.
- how effectively the centre monitors and evaluates its work and performance.

Information about the school

The Hobs Moat Centre serves the educational needs of young people that have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. At the time of the last inspection it served the whole borough and was federated with another centre with a headteacher leading the federation. It currently serves the south of the borough, although it has retained a number of Year 11 pupils from the north of Solihull. It ceased to be part of the federation in October 2008 and is led by a centre manager. The centre is part of a reorganisation of the pupil referral provision within the local authority. Numbers have significantly reduced since it was last inspected. The large majority of pupils are in Year 11. Around 64% of pupils are on the register of special needs, and 19% have a statement detailing these specific needs. About 40% of pupils have been, or are currently, working with the Youth Offending Team.

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

2

Main findings

The centre provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Aspects of its work are good. There has been significant and rapid improvement to provision since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. All pupils now receive full-time education. The centre manager leads the unit well and there is a strong sense of teamwork across the centre. She has a very perceptive insight into the pupils' many needs, high expectations and a dynamic approach to ensuring that pupils achieve, which she has communicated well to other staff. Self-evaluation provides an accurate view of the overall strengths of the centre and underpins effective plans for future improvement. The local authority monitors the centre closely, has developed a united vision for the centre's current and future role and plans for a new management committee are underway. These factors, along with the overall effectiveness of the centre manager and the hard work of the team, ensure good capacity for improvement.

Pupils' learning and progress in lessons is currently satisfactory, but there is clear evidence from the work of the previous year that this improves significantly and pupils make good progress over time. This improvement results from the impact of the strong care and guidance and a good curriculum. Pupils benefit from a core of academic learning complemented by the Evolution programme, a range of alternative learning opportunities provided by the youth service. Over time, this curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to gain success and achieve, fosters pupils' confidence and self-esteem and, importantly, their belief in themselves as learners. Their growing confidence leads to improved academic progress as pupils respond to the teaching. The development of pupils' personal qualities, learning and workplace skills is reflected in their improved achievement.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and although satisfactory, teaching now has a number of good features, particularly in the positive relationships and an unconditional commitment that staff have for all pupils. Shortcomings in teaching include: the lack of new technology to allow staff to tap into the wealth of resources available; the fact that there is not always a clear enough view of what constitutes good progress, to help planning and evaluate the success of the learning; questioning is sometimes not extended further to encourage pupils to develop their thinking and express their ideas more fully.

Developing respect for other people is a consistent theme across the centre and within Citizenship, other subjects and the Evolution programme. Through this work

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the centre seeks to reinforce pupils' self-awareness and responsibility for themselves and towards others. It has also developed a number of initiatives to foster links within the community and broaden pupils' awareness of the diverse society in which they live, in order to build community cohesion. However, these initiatives have not as yet been drawn together into a cohesive plan.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement plans for the new management committee to support the work of the centre.
- Ensure that all staff
 - share a vision of what good progress looks like in a lesson to inform their planning and help them judge the lesson's effectiveness
 - develop questioning techniques to encourage pupils' speaking and language skills
 - are supported by laptops and interactive white boards and appropriate training in their use.
- Collate the various community initiatives undertaken across the centre into a coherent plan.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There is significant variation in the level of pupils' attainment. There are some very able young people but, generally, attainment is low before joining the centre. Progress over time is good. Overall progress in lessons is currently satisfactory; it is sometimes good. In art and science, for example, pupils demonstrated their ability to concentrate for a sustained period and recall previous knowledge. Where learning is satisfactory pupils demonstrate, often for brief periods, that they can engage effectively, but that they have very low confidence in themselves as learners.

The centre very effectively provides a ladder of accreditation opportunities. All work is externally accredited and all pupils are currently entered for GCSE or equivalent in all their subjects. Effective use is made of alternative accreditation to provide a fall back position, taken when appropriate. For example, a number of pupils entered and gained entry level in adult literacy and numeracy in Year 10, and one or two even earlier. In 2008, about a third of pupils left with some form of qualifications and just over a third of pupils went onto full time education when they left school. In 2009, this improved further, so that almost all pupils gained some form of accreditation, with two thirds going onto full time education. Last year almost all pupils who left the centre went into education, employment or training. Pupils often have limited

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language skills, which sometimes constrains the rate of their progress to a satisfactory level. Progress in numeracy is satisfactory. Whilst all pupils at the centre have a range of needs and vulnerabilities, the centre monitors the progress of girls particularly carefully, as they feel this minority group is most at risk. Pupils with specific learning needs make similar progress to their peers.

Whilst the overall average attendance at the centre is low, individual attendance of about a third of pupils is close to the average for secondary school pupils and generally, pupils' attendance improves over time. This reflects their more positive attitudes to education, sense of achievement, the centre's close monitoring, and support from specialist agencies. What is very apparent is the significant improvement in the attendance of pupils who in their former schools were non-attenders. Behaviour is satisfactory given the context of the centre, and individual behaviour improves over time. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding and interest in what goes to make up a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe, although some pupils choose to reject aspects. Pupils share their views about what will improve the centre, enabling them to contribute to important improvements, such as changes in the type of physical education activities offered for the girls. Within the Evolution and centre programmes, pupils are encouraged to make positive contributions to the local community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are developing a sense of belief in themselves and their capacity to take responsibility for their actions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

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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How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships with pupils are founded on a calm approach from staff and the maintenance of an unconditional concern for and commitment to treating pupils with respect. Staff have the resilience and doggedness to foster and shape attitudes over time and, essentially, provide pupils with an essential bedrock of emotional support within a stable and secure ethos. Staff have good subject knowledge, which means that they are able to challenge all levels of ability, including higher attaining pupils. They use praise well to encourage and motivate pupils. Where teaching is good, lessons have momentum, which carries the pupils along. This is because in these lessons teachers are clear what they want pupils to gain from the lesson and, therefore, what good progress looks like. Learning objectives are defined, so that the steps towards achieving these are clear. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning lacks this precision and, consequently, the momentum drops and lessons end without reinforcement of the learning achieved. Catching pupils' initial interest and bringing examples of the real world into the classroom is made more difficult by the lack of resources such as laptops and data projectors. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' spoken and language skills. Brief answers are not extended by follow up questioning, pupils are seldom asked to rehearse an answer with a partner and some work sheets make limited demands on pupils' language.

Assessment is undergoing further refinement. Initial home visits, which secure partnership with parents, are used to gather academic information to provide a baseline of information. Teachers also use the induction period to find out what new pupils know or have been studying and all staff monitor pupils' progress in their subject. A weekly report is sent to parents and there is a half termly meeting with individual pupils, parents and carers and all staff, including key workers from the Evolution programme. These meetings are used to monitor pupils' progress and set targets. The quality of marking is mixed, with some good examples that are not only supportive but provide clear information on how the pupil can improve. However, pupils' progress is seldom checked at key points during a lesson, to reinforce what has been achieved or to inform future planning and approaches.

A strength of the centre is its development of personalised programmes of work to match the individual's needs, rather than requiring them to fit into an existing provision. The local authority and centre have responded to the last report particularly effectively regarding the curriculum. The Evolution programme is a creative response to the need to provide alternative learning opportunities to complement the centre's academic programme. It is underpinned by the rigour of accreditation and much work has been undertaken to ensure consistency in values and expectations with the youth service that created and are delivering it. Pupils are given choices from a range of courses offering a variety of sports and outdoor education, aspects of personal development, and community work. Above all, the curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to discover personal strengths and multiple opportunities for success. This work complements the academic work of the centre well.

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Staff support pupils particularly well and pupils receive effective guidance. Specific units of work target aspects such as drug and alcohol awareness, sexual health and other aspects of personal development. Pupils rise to the challenge of work placements, which are often creative in their tailored approach.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 centre's effective commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in the destinations of the Year 11 leavers. Staff commitment to these pupils stems from the stubborn tenacity not to give up on an individual and ensures that staff are creative and flexible in their approach to finding what works for individuals to maximise their life chances.

The centre has a wealth of management information about progress and achievement of individual pupils, which is used to create essential data about attendance, destinations and accreditation. Self-evaluation is further informed through the close and regular involvement of parents and carers, the local authority, the centre's subject evaluations and input from key agencies and partners.

Pupils have a greater awareness of keeping themselves safe through the Evolution programme and the citizenship course. There are effective links with other agencies, such as the education welfare service, and good training for child protection and safeguarding. There are a number of community initiatives, such as the community gardening service and work in local junior schools. However, the centre has not drawn these into a cohesive plan to allow it to evaluate its overall effectiveness in developing community cohesion.

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	3

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Limited information was received by inspectors about the views of parents and carers. Where given, views were supportive and positive, particularly about the commitment and hard work of staff and the quality of communication. There was some uncertainty about the impact of the centre's work on pupils' progress. As only two parental questionnaires were returned, data is too limited to be recorded on the grid below.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hobs Moat 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received one completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 47 pupils registered at the school.

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

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 all 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

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 pupils' 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.



17 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hobbs Moat Centre, Solihull B92 8QE

We enjoyed our time at the centre. Thank you for letting us look at your work in lessons. I particularly enjoyed looking at the videos of the Evolution work. We agree that the centre is providing you with a satisfactory education. However, there are a number of good features. The centre has improved significantly since it was last inspected and it continues to improve. Last year almost all the Year 11 pupils who left the centre went onto college or got a job. They clearly found out that they are able to succeed and regained their confidence. In some lessons, you too showed that you were able to concentrate and get on with the tasks, and some of you clearly want to do well.

One of the strengths of the centre is that it tailors the work to fit around you and gives you a very personalised programme. Because many of you have improved your attendance, and because teaching is satisfactory, you are currently making adequate progress. Evidence from last year shows that your progress improves rapidly because of the quality of care and support that you receive and the many opportunities provided for you to do well and to find out what you are good at. Many of you behave as you should for much of the time, although some of you still find this difficult. The centre helps you to understand what makes a healthy lifestyle, although some of you decide not to follow this advice. There is usually a management committee to support the work of staff. Currently your centre does not have one, although one is being created. Therefore, we have asked that this should be completed as soon as possible. I have also asked that all staff:

- are clear what good progress would look like in lessons and over a unit of work to help them in their planning
- take every opportunity to help you improve your language skills
- are supported by technology to make it easier for them to show video clips and the like.

The centre encourages you to do a variety of work in the community. These various initiatives have not yet been drawn together into one plan so that the centre can judge how effective it is in doing this. Staff care a great deal about you and want you to succeed. The centre is well led and staff are working hard to make it even better. You have a part to play in making it better too.

All good wishes for your future

Yours faithfully
Roderick Passant
Lead inspector

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