

The SMART Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133754
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	341410
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Jeffery Plumb

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stella Croissant
Headteacher	Sandy Waugh
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with the chair of the management committee, pupils, staff focus groups and members of the senior leadership team. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a wide range of evidence including data on pupils' progress, the systems for tracking pupils' behaviour, attendance data, exclusions data, reintegration figures, pupils' statements of special educational needs, a sample of individual learning programmes, curriculum documents, safeguarding policies, the centre's development plan, two case studies of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and two parent questionnaires. They visited the off-site assessment centre used for permanently excluded pupils when they first start at the centre and the off-site primary school class for pupils with statements for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

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

- the progress of the different groups catered for by the centre
- the use of assessment data to plan lessons
- the attendance data and the effectiveness of strategies to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent
- the centre's systems for tracking and analysing pupils' behaviour
- the centre's strategy and planning to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

The SMART Centre provides education for secondary-aged pupils permanently excluded from school, those who are at risk of exclusion and pupils with a wide range of medical needs who are unable to attend their mainstream schools. If appropriate, they are provided with home tuition. From September 2009, it has made provision for three primary-aged pupils with statements of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. They are based in a classroom at a nearby primary school. There are more boys than girls on roll. Mobility is high with pupils coming and going at different times during the school year. There are four looked after children. Approximately a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but very few come from families where English is not the home language. The provision for pupils is made across three different sites.

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 SMART Centre provides a good quality of education. Barriers to learning for the vast majority of pupils, which are related to their emotional and behavioural difficulties, are successfully removed and so they engage again with learning. The vast majority return to mainstream schools or move on to college courses. Secondary headteachers report that pupils are ready to learn again on their return to mainstream schooling. Excellent partnerships between the school and a wide range of external agencies benefit the pupils very significantly. For example, therapists supporting pupils in managing their anger and the outstanding work of the flexi-learning co-ordinator in partnership with external careers advisers enables almost every Year 11 pupil to access a relevant and stimulating further education college course.

There is an outstanding and personalised curriculum for each pupil, which enables them to plug vital gaps in their education resulting from their absenteeism from their mainstream schools. The vast majority of pupils achieve well and go on to attain a wide range of GCSE passes or relevant vocational qualifications. However, the persistent absence by a small number of pupils has an adverse impact on their progress and they underachieve. Strategies put in place to address these concerns have resulted in the rate of attendance rising year-on-year over the past three years. However, the poor and non-attendance by a few pupils remains an issue for concern.

Enthusiasm and rigour on the part of a dedicated staff team, including the site manager, and their commitment to helping every student reach their full academic and personal potential, lie at the heart of this successful centre. The quality of care is exceptional. Pupils respond very well to the high quality of the support they receive. The views of pupils are typified by one student who said, 'This centre has stopped us throwing our lives away and we learn well here.' The vast majority of pupils become responsible and rounded young citizens equipped with the skills to be successful in adult life and to be included with respect and dignity in society. Teaching is good because tasks are planned very well to meet the needs of each pupil in the class. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils make good progress in their learning. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and for almost every pupil it is significantly better than it was before attending the centre. Staff are very skilful at managing pupils' behaviour. However, the computer software that is used to track and analyse pupils' behaviour has limitations and some staff are not confident in using it. Consequently, the data that are used to plan targets for improving pupils' behaviour are sometimes confusing.

Analysis of the centre's performance in every area of its work is detailed, thorough and based on secure evidence. Decisive actions, such as the introduction of a test to check pupils' English and mathematical skills on entry to the centre, are used well to identify

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gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy so they can be quickly addressed. Modifications to the Key Stage 4 curriculum have paid dividends in accelerating pupils' learning as they see a purpose in what they are doing. Given the significant improvements since the last inspection and the positive impact of recent decisive actions put in place to raise pupils' achievement, the capacity for sustained improvement and the value for money are good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance, particularly of those pupils who are persistently absent, so as to raise pupils' academic achievement.
- Ensure that the computer programme used to track and analyse pupils' behaviour is more effectively used by the centre's staff to inform planning to bring about improvements in pupils' behaviour, confidence and self-esteem by:
 - ensuring that the programme is modified to cover a more extensive range of pupils' behaviour
 - ensuring that all staff are trained and are confident in entering and analysing the data so that they can better plan to improve pupils' behaviour and more effectively measure their success in doing so.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The vast majority of pupils make good progress with their learning in lessons. All students engage fully in their learning and maintain their interest well in all lessons. They often ask perceptive questions to develop their understanding, such as 'how was Hitler presented in the media?' and are able to work independently to solve problems, for example in practical activities such as in design technology.

Attainment on entry to the centre is variable. Most pupils enter with attainment below those expected nationally for pupils of their age because of the gaps they have experienced in their education previously and the associated behavioural difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning. Once settled, the vast majority make good progress in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Entry Level qualifications and GCSE passes in a wide range of subjects, measured against pupils' starting points, are very good and better than those typically found in similar settings. Pupils also successfully achieve nationally recognised accreditation in a good range of vocational subjects. By the time they are reintegrated into mainstream school or go on to further education colleges, they are well equipped for their next steps in learning. The few primary-aged pupils with statements for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties make good progress. There is no significant difference in achievement between any groups of pupils, except for the fact that a few looked after pupils are amongst those who are too frequently absent from the centre and, consequently, they do not achieve as highly as others.

Relevant work experience placements and the well-structured work-related curriculum

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enable most students to acquire successfully the important skills they require to take their place in the adult world. Most pupils enjoy coming to the centre and say that the vast majority of their lessons are challenging and fun. They would, however, like their science to be more practical. They exercise their voice through the centre council and are involved in decision making about the way in which the centre is run. The allotment project has given pupils an opportunity to make a valuable contribution within the local community. The attitudes of adults they meet when they work on the allotment have changed towards them. They are increasingly respected within the local community and are seen as hard-working young people.

Pupils have a much better understanding of the need to take regular exercise and the importance of eating healthily than at the time of the last inspection. However, not all pupils enthusiastically buy into the centre's programme to promote their good health. The 'cessation smoking programme' has been of enormous benefit in supporting many pupils in quitting smoking, but there are still a few who continue to smoke. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at the centre and know who to go to with any problems they may have. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and good race relations are a significant strength.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

The vast majority of lessons are well planned to meet pupils' needs and so accelerate their learning. Most teachers use what they know about pupils well to plan tasks that are specifically tailored to meet each individual's needs. They then involve them in measuring their success in learning. For example, in an outstanding Year 9 English lesson, the teacher used assessment information exceptionally well to improve the pupils' writing. As soon as the pupils met their planned outcomes, they were moved onto their next steps in learning. As a consequence, progress in writing was outstanding. In a Year 10 history lesson, the teacher made very good use of information and communication technology to show powerful visual cues about Hitler's rise to power. This grabbed the pupils' interest and they soon began to ask questions which resulted in a deepening of their understanding of Fascism. Skilfully crafted and targeted questions enabled pupils to make rapid gains in their knowledge. Occasionally, teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment data to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, these lessons lack challenge and the pace of learning drops. Teaching assistants are very effective and are used well to support pupils' learning.

The flexibly planned, innovative and relevant curriculum meets the needs of pupils exceptionally well. Each pupil has a tailor-made and highly personalised learning programme. This makes a valuable contribution to the good progress they make. Therapy is an integral part of the curriculum and pupils' academic and emotional needs are exceptionally well met. A specific programme to support those who have experienced bereavement helps pupils come to terms with their feelings of loss. This builds their confidence and self-esteem and they soon become eager learners. Different curriculum pathways are open to pupils in Key Stage 4 and these successfully prepare them for the next step in their education. Accreditation opportunities at the end of Year 11 are very good and it is extremely rare for a pupil not to transfer to a further education college course. The primary curriculum for pupils with statements for their special educational behavioural, emotional and social difficulties is new but is already raising pupils' levels of achievement.

Outstanding collaborative working between the centre and an extensive range of external agencies ensures that pupils' care needs are exceptionally well met. Pupils have personalised plans to support them in improving their behaviour and they have freedom to seek the advice of a counsellor at any time. A very effective partnership between educational staff and health professionals ensures that pupils with medical needs are extremely well cared for. Induction procedures are excellent and contribute to the very detailed picture that staff have of the circumstances leading to the pupils attending the centre. This data is used sensitively and creatively to make plans to meet pupils' needs. Pupils are tested rigorously to identify gaps in their literacy and numeracy so that staff can help them catch up. Transition arrangements for reintegrating to mainstream school or transferring to colleges of further education are excellent. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the practical and helpful advice they are given to support their children's learning and to help them improve their behaviour.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her dedicated staff team share a clear vision which focuses on removing barriers to learning for pupils permanently excluded from school and/or with complex medical or emotional and behavioural needs. It is a team effort and includes the site manager, who shows pupils how to keep their bicycles well maintained and safe. The headteacher constantly has to 'think outside of the box' to meet the needs of yet another very challenging pupil as they move in and out through the rotating doors of the centre and back into mainstream school. There is a ceaseless drive to improve the provision so that pupils can speedily return to mainstream and fully inclusive settings. Equality of opportunity for all is a core value which lies at the heart of this successful centre. As a result, the centre successfully empowers pupils to believe in themselves and grasp a thirst for lifelong learning. The vast majority of pupils have clear and realistic ambitions of what they want to make of their lives, ranging from becoming a plumber to taking A levels.

Very effective management systems and procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. At the time of the inspection, child protection procedures met government regulations. A robust policy ensures that all staff are vetted for their suitability to work with children. Risk assessments, including pupils' medical and behavioural needs, are detailed and thorough. There is an agreed restraints policy and staff keep a meticulous log of the actions they take on the rare occasion when restraint is used. In the assessment centre, located on a separate site, pupils learn through engaging with a teacher online. There are filters to prevent pupils from logging on to social network sites and from downloading any inappropriate material. Partnerships with local businesses significantly enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Links with parents are effective and a parent link worker gives considerable support to families.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The centre has worked effectively to promote community cohesion within the local area, but it has yet to develop fully its provision to promote the national and global dimensions. The management committee has not been sufficiently involved in shaping the centre's strategy for community cohesion. However, they are very effective in supporting and challenging the headteacher in making improvements. Good systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and there are effective systems to record how well pupils are doing. The local authority in its governance role fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and provides good

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support to the headteacher.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the parent questionnaires are highly satisfied with what the centre achieves for their children. They have regular drop in times and there are excellent two-way communication channels between the centre and parents and carers. Inspectors found that parents and carers are right to be very pleased with what the centre achieves for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Smart 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 2 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 49 pupils registered at the centre.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	50	1	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)	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	100	0	0	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.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The SMART Centre, Morden SM4 6PT

We really enjoyed our recent visit to your centre. We think it is a good and caring place in which to learn and we are delighted that the vast majority of you enjoy attending. We would like to thank particularly those pupils who so generously gave up their lunchtime to talk with us. You were polite, courteous and clear about your aspirations for the future.

Here are the positive things we found:

- the quality of care and support you receive is excellent. You quickly grow in confidence and engage with and enjoy learning
- your curriculum is exceptionally well planned to meet your needs
- those of you in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to receive accreditation in a wide range of subjects
- you are taught well and your lessons are challenging and fun
- the vast majority of you achieve well in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT)
- you are well prepared to go back to mainstream school or to go to college.

Here are the things we have asked your teachers to do to make your centre even better:

- to help those of you who do not attend regularly to come into the centre daily and on time; this will help you achieve better in all of your subjects
- to make better use of the information about how you behave so that the staff can make more effective plans to help you manage your own behaviour better.

Please help by always trying your hardest. Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jeffery Plumb

Lead Inspector

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