

The Cheadle Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135641
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	341681
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graeme Shillinglaw
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Noble
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons and observed five teachers, including one at alternative provision off-site. The inspector held meetings with the chair of the management committee, a senior officer of the local authority, the School Improvement Partner, the leadership team, other staff and groups of students. The students' work was sampled and documentation scrutinised, including policies on safeguarding, the centre development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files, students' 'learning passport', individual learning plans and records of students' progress. Nine completed questionnaire responses from parents and carers were analysed along with completed questionnaires from staff and students.

The lead inspector reviewed many aspects of the centre's work and looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively students re-engage with their learning
- how well teaching, including that which takes place off-site, meets the needs and interests of all students
- the impact of the centre's leadership team on outcomes and destinations for students
- all aspects of safeguarding and provision to ensure the welfare and safety of students.

Information about the school

The Cheadle Centre opened in September 2008 after a re-organisation of provision by the local authority when staffing was also re-structured. The centre provides for three groups of Key Stage 4 students: Tier 1 are supported in their mainstream schools to help to prevent exclusion, Tier 2 attend the unit for 12 week placements because they are on the verge of permanent exclusion, and Tier 3 consists of students who have been permanently excluded from previous schools or who have reached a crisis point in their mainstream education. Just under one half of the students attend the centre full-time, the remainder are taught full-time by alternative providers off-site. All students are White British. Boys significantly outnumber girls. Many students have involvement with other agencies including mental health and social care. A small number of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most students have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties and occasionally moderate learning difficulties. Currently, all students progress to education, employment or training.

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 and rapidly improving education for its students. This is because of the headteacher's crystal clear vision, drive and determination which are helping to make certain that a legacy of underperformance and underachievement is successfully tackled. Students are re-engaging in their learning and make satisfactory progress to acquire a broad range of skills. Their behaviour is good and their attendance significantly improved, reflecting their increased confidence, achievement and enjoyment. The very good partnerships that exist with support agencies, schools and the local authority is indicative of the confidence and trust that exists. The centre is achieving success in helping prevent exclusion in mainstream, returning students to mainstream and providing positive outcomes for those who remain at the centre.

Overall, attainment is broadly average as a result of satisfactory although improving teaching. In Year 10, attainment is rising more quickly as students have had the benefit of longer, more positive and settled experiences at the centre. However, the rate of progress in extending their literacy skill varies and sometimes slows. The student's personal development, particularly their ability to reflect on the consequences of their actions and their grasp of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, is good. Students report that they feel safe and do not regard bullying as an issue. The good care, guidance and support provide students with a renewed sense of purpose and direction in their lives. Mostly students are challenged, tasks are tailored to their personal needs and the next steps in learning clearly identified. However, this is not always so in all lessons because of the adverse impact of staffing changes. The centre provides a satisfactory range of accredited subjects although the quality of literacy provision across the curriculum is insufficiently demanding. There is a good range of specialist activities provided off-site by alternative providers, such as at the nearby Hart Farm which provides courses on animal welfare, bricklaying and carpentry. This allows programmes to be matched to students' needs and interest. It provides relevance and raises confidence and self-esteem. However, experiences of the diverse cultures and beliefs in the world around them are limited.

Self-evaluation is reflective, concise and accurate. Concerted action addresses areas of weakness and improvements can be seen in many aspects of provision. Senior staff, with effective support from the perceptive management committee, are successfully meeting their ambition of keeping students in mainstream or returning them as quickly as possible if exclusion becomes inevitable. As a result the centre has a good capacity to sustain improvements and enhance its role in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- By 2011, raise the students' achievement and attainment in literacy by:
 - raising the expectations of what students can achieve
 - making certain all tasks are interesting and challenging
 - providing more opportunities for students to practice literacy in other subjects.
- By 2011, improve teaching and learning so it is good or better by:
 - using the 'passport' information to make certain all lessons have a constant focus on raising achievement
 - ensuring marking informs students of the next steps in their learning.
- By 2012, broaden the range of experiences to promote students' understanding of beliefs and cultures nationally and globally.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Students arrive with a variable range of skills, backgrounds and experiences, although some have gaps as a result of their disrupted pattern of education. In lessons, students respond positively to the activities that are provided and the support they receive. They are attentive: for example, in a food lesson they consistently followed safe practice in using cooking utensils. Each day students enjoy reading a newspaper at their desk, which broadens their understanding and knowledge and fosters pride in their work and behaviour. In literacy, students' attainment is lower than in other subjects because although students are engaged tasks are insufficiently matched to their needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students make satisfactory progress towards their targets which include literacy and numeracy. It is no better than satisfactory because tasks are insufficiently demanding and lesson pace not fast enough. In Year 10, progress is faster and achievements higher, especially for the able and talented, because challenging targets are established in the students' passports on arrival.

Students make good improvements to their behaviour and personal development. This helps them to deal better with mainstream education. Students' behaviour is generally good in lessons. They learn to respect other students and adults, develop good manners and learn a great deal about how to live a safe, healthy and active lifestyle, for example, by regularly playing for the centre soccer team. The students' emotional well-being also develops well because staff are always on hand to listen, share a worry or concern and resolve any problems. Purposeful daily discussion ensures spiritual, moral and social development is good. Although opportunities are mostly restricted for students to take on responsibilities they have been fully involved in the planning and refurbishment of the centre's facilities. Cultural development is satisfactory because there are insufficient opportunities to experience diversity in the world around them. The regular pattern of average attendance, in the centre and off-site, is a vital element ensuring students

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achieve success.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Most of the teaching is active and ensures students are engaged and respond to the good relationships they have with staff. Significant improvements in the way students are assessed on entry, targets set and their progress checked are underpinning the improvements in the quality of learning. Improved lesson planning is helping to present appropriate demands and increase thought provoking challenges. Expectations of what can be achieved, including for those with special gifts and talents, is rising but they are not yet high enough to fully extend literacy and ensure good achievement across the curriculum. Teachers mark students' work regularly but clear and helpful pointers for improvement are not always given. There is some good and consistent practice across alternative providers. Activities for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are competently structured to suit students' individual needs. Students' passports map out a personalised accredited route with clear targets, although their use is uneven.

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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The curriculum makes a positive contribution to students' personal development and well-being. It addresses mathematics and information and communication technology satisfactorily but the emphasis on the acquisition of literacy skills is uneven. In addition there are well planned courses such as food preparation, child development, wider key skills and career planning. All courses, including those off-site, are accredited, with clear pathways for students to ensure the 'distance to the workplace' is narrowed. This plays a key part in holding student interest and helping them maintain focus on their future. All staff know the students extremely well and provide good support and guidance for the many vulnerable and challenging students. All have opportunities to use the 'chill out' room to share worries, concerns or problems with staff, including specialist support staff. During social times students can relax, for example, read or play pool or table tennis with staff. Well organised visits from careers staff help students plan and manage their future. There is a clear early warning system across the authority to identify students at risk of exclusion and in need of targeted support. As a result the centre's admissions practice is increasingly assured, which helps students settle quickly. Transition arrangements with local schools and alternative providers are good and continuing to strengthen.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher capably supported by a talented centre manager has a significant impact on the quality of provision despite considerable barriers. Staff share a common purpose, work collaboratively and willingly share good practice. The management committee and local authority provide strong encouragement. There are some very good links with external agencies, local schools and off-site providers. All matters of safeguarding have been given the highest priority. Requirements are met with student protection procedures especially robust and apparent in the very effective work with agencies, such as those for mental health care. This is highly effective in reducing the dangers to students and ensuring that they are better placed to manage risk. The evidence of improved attitudes and attendance, calm friendly atmosphere and rising achievement for all students confirms the commitment of the centre to the promotion of equal opportunities for all students, including those most vulnerable. Positive engagement with parents and carers ensures that they are well informed of their youngster's progress and well-being. Promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory

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although the students' understanding of ethnic diversity in Britain and around the world is underdeveloped.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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

About one fifth of parents and carers returned a completed questionnaire. A large majority of responses were positive, indicating a very good level of agreement with the work of the centre. One wrote, 'I'm so grateful to all the staff for recognising my son could achieve well and not giving up on him. They go beyond their jobs, each and everyone.' The inspector agreed with this positive view and considers that the centre makes a significant contribution to meeting the needs and interests of these young people and assisting them to re-engage with their education. In relation to the small minority of individual concerns received, the lead inspector found that these issues are being effectively addressed and managed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Cheadle Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 9 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 48 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	11	5	56	0	0	3	33
The school keeps my child safe	4	44	4	44	1	11	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	33	3	33	1	11	2	22
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	33	4	44	0	0	2	22
The teaching is good at this school	3	33	5	56	1	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	44	2	22	3	33	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	22	5	56	1	11	1	11
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	33	6	67	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	22	5	56	2	22	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	44	2	22	2	22	1	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	33	4	44	1	11	1	11
The school is led and managed effectively	4	44	2	22	1	11	2	22
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	33	4	44	1	11	1	11

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



30 April 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Cheadle Centre, Hylton Castle, SR5 3NN

I want to thank all of you for the friendly welcome that you gave me when I inspected the centre. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you including my visit to Hart Farm.

I was impressed by your sensible and responsible behaviour in lessons, in the games room and on placement at the farm. The Cheadle Centre provides a satisfactory and rapidly improving quality of education where the staff take good care of you. As a result you obviously feel relaxed and safe at the centre. You are clearly aware of the importance of managing your own behaviour effectively and the benefits that a healthy lifestyle can bring. You take pride in your achievements. Many of you told me how the staff work hard to make your learning relevant and interesting. You make at least satisfactory progress in your work and obviously enjoy lessons that are practical and appealing. Some very good use is made of the many links the centre has with specialist help and support staff, local schools and the off-site providers such as Hart Farm.

I have asked the headteacher, other staff and the management committee to look at ways of improving the quality of your learning by making certain that your literacy skills improve more rapidly so that you achieve more success in all your subjects and make a return to a mainstream school easier. I have also asked that your lessons are even more demanding and that you are given firm guidance as to how you can improve the quality of your work. I also think that it is important you are given more first-hand experiences of the range of cultures and beliefs in the world around you.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope the Cheadle Centre will continue to improve.

I wish you a bright future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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