



Cotswold Education Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 131626
 LEA South Gloucestershire

Inspection number 282239
 Inspection dates 9–10 January 2006
 Reporting inspector Dr D Alan Dobbins

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School	Special	School address	Charborough Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		Filton
Age range of students	5–16		Bristol
			BS34 7RB
Gender of students	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 868600
Number on roll	118	Fax number	01454 868601
Appropriate authority	The Local Authority	Chair of management committee	Clare Steele
Date of previous inspection	January 2000	Headteacher	Gillian Beech

Age group	Published	Reference no.
5–16	January 2006	131626

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This pupil referral unit (PRU) caters for students excluded from mainstream schools and those at risk of exclusion, students with medical conditions and those with statements who are 'waiting' at the PRU for a suitable placement at a special school. The students attend two main learning centres and a hospital base, where long-stay patients are taught. The Severnside Centre is the administrative headquarters and is for students in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11. The Mangotsfield centre is for students in Years 1 to 6, those at home with medical conditions and the nine statemented students 'waiting' for placement. Because the PRU acts as a holding base for these students, the number with statements, at 32, is much higher than in other equivalent units. There are ten looked-after children and two traveller children. Almost all the students are White British. Since the last inspection, the PRU has moved to new locations, the number of students has substantially increased and a new headteacher has been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

The Cotswold Education Centre is a good PRU that provides good value for money. The good relationships between students and staff underpin all of its work. Teaching and learning are good, and the advice and guidance to students is outstanding. Students make good progress in their personal and social skills and in their learning. Most become balanced and sociable young people who are better able to cope with the rigours of mainstream schools and, for Year 11 students, the adult world. The curriculum is designed to be flexible and matches well with most students' needs and capabilities. Those at the hospital receive outstanding provision. However, some curriculum requirements and additional needs of a few of the students with statements of special educational need who are 'waiting' at the PRU are not fully met.

The headteacher leads a very strong team of senior managers who work very well with each other. The PRU knows its strengths and weaknesses well and recognises its effectiveness is good. However, self-evaluation does not yet draw on the full range of evidence that senior managers have available, especially those that judge students' learning outcomes against others. The management committee is effective and has overseen the meeting of all key issues identified at the last inspection. Recent improvement has been recognised by the gaining of a schools' achievement award for each of the last two years, and the PRU has the capacity to improve further.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- work with the LEA to fully meet the needs identified in statements for the students who are 'waiting' for placement at special schools.
- continue to refine the procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the Centre.

Achievement and standards

Overall, students achieve well. They make good progress in their personal and social development and in their learning. Most of those permanently excluded from mainstream schools make sufficient improvement in their personal and social skills and their basic skills to return successfully to the mainstream. Last year, impressively, all 29 students in Years 1 to 9 were returned. Only a very small number of students who do not attend regularly make limited progress.

Standards are low because most students enter the PRU with low attainment for their age. Nevertheless, all of last year's Year 11 gained nationally accredited awards that demonstrate the extent of their learning. Their good results are reflected in the high percentage of leavers who joined training courses or gained employment, which is very much higher than the national target set by Connexions for students in equivalent units.

Students taught at the hospital make outstanding progress in meeting the targets for learning set as part of their recovery process. Most students in the Mangotsfield centre make good progress towards the targets of their individual programmes, which for many include planning for their return to their mainstream schools. Those 'waiting' for placement at a special school make satisfactory progress overall, but over a smaller and less specialised curriculum than is the expectation of their statements.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Students develop their personal and social skills well, helped by the trust they have in staff and the positive relationships they develop with them. Students report that they 'feel comfortable' and say 'you do not have to pretend to be someone you are not'. Moral and social development are outstanding. Staff apply the rules for behaviour fairly and consistently and their expectations that everyone will work hard have resulted in a reduced number of exclusions and a new pride in learning. As a result, students feel better about themselves and behave well. Their attitudes to themselves and to their learning improve so much that most come to enjoy learning and look forward to the challenge of returning to mainstream settings. Students isolated at home through illness use the well-supervised chat room to contact one another. For many, this has been a first step to establishing new friends.

Spiritual and cultural development are good. Students celebrate festivals of major world faiths and make choices about the charities they wish to support. They become better prepared to contribute to the community and to their own economic well-being. They also become less likely to take risks and are more ready to consider healthier lifestyles. This is because of the very effective way

difficult issues, such as smoking and the use of drugs, are dealt with in tutorials and in lessons.

Attendance is satisfactory. Most students attend regularly and better than they did at their previous schools. Despite the best efforts of the centre and the education welfare service, a small minority do not.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are good, and they are outstanding at the hospital centre. There the learning needs of students are met in full, whether these are part of recovery from serious neurological trauma or the continued study of subjects for the GCSE examination.

Students report that lessons are friendlier and they gain more support than was the case in their other schools. Most lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge or training in the subject and they know the students very well. Consequently, planning usually meets learning needs, even when in the same lesson students work at many different levels of the National Curriculum. As a result, students enjoy their learning and work hard as they become more confident and comfortable as learners.

Unusually for a PRU, homework is regularly provided to those students who wish to have it and this makes a useful contribution to their progress. Although computers are well used in many lessons, opportunities are sometimes missed to allow individuals to use them to take their learning further.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is good because it is very flexible and very relevant to most students' learning and additional needs. It is especially successful in promoting personal and social development, as required preparation for students' return to mainstream schools. It prepares students well for life in the adult world. It is innovative, including Forest School experiences, life skills education and, for students in Years 1 to 11, individual programmes, for example, for containing anger and becoming calm.

Students who are 'waiting' at the centre for a place at a special school gain significant benefits from the good quality teaching and very strong relationships established since the appointment of their new unit manager. However, their

national curriculum entitlement is not met in full, and nor are a small number of their additional needs. LEA officers and staff at the PRU all realise that these students are inappropriately placed at the centre and are working hard to establish a special school within the authority to fully meet their curricular requirements and additional needs.

The curriculum for students in the learning centres successfully helps them maintain contact with learning while preparing them to join again with others in lessons outside of their homes. At the hospital, the curriculum is individually tailored to match with medical needs while continuing to challenge students as learners.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Guidance and support are outstanding. Staff are excellent role models who genuinely enjoy celebrating students' successes with them. They work closely with students in identifying and reviewing targets for learning. This means that lesson tasks are seen by students to be relevant and build on prior attainment. The Risk Profile is especially effective in helping recognise when students are ready to return to mainstream schools. The very effective work of the behavioural support team, who provide on-going support for as long as is required to students who return to mainstream schools, makes a major contribution to the programme's very high success rate.

The close links with many agencies, such as the adolescent mental health service and the youth offending team, ensure that all students' care needs are met. At each centre, child protection procedures operate very well and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. The procedures for ensuring that students are safe and secure are firmly established and those for assessing risk are rigorously followed.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the work of the centre that includes establishing strong relationships with all the mainstream primary and secondary schools in the Authority. She is fully supported by the deputy headteacher and all senior managers. They work very closely and harmoniously with each other. Collectively, their wisdom and experience help them be very effective in all their work. As a consequence, all parts of the centre work well. Students routinely work hard at their learning and parents report that the second chance their children have been given by joining

the PRU is radically improving their attitudes to school. The hospital, in particular, is established as an outstanding mix of expectation and empathy. There is a commitment to and a capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation is recognised as an important tool in helping develop the centre and many detailed records are kept on the performance of students. Nevertheless, this data and information from other areas of work, such as the quality of teaching, is not used well enough in fine tuning how effective the centre is in its work and what may require further development.

The management committee fully meets its remit. It is led by the professional officer who is also the centre's line manager, a mix of roles that can be challenging. Membership of the committee includes headteachers of client schools who have a vested interest in ensuring that the centre is successful. The headteacher has had the full support of the management committee in leading the PRU through its effective expansion and relocation into more specialist premises.

Grade: 2

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	N/A
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

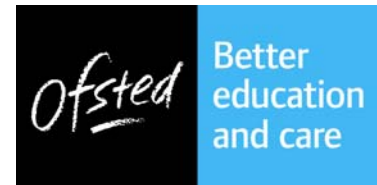
¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community.	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	Yes

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Cotswold Education Centre
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10 January 2006

Dear Students

We very much enjoyed spending time with you and would like to thank you for talking with us about your work and the centre. We think that the centre provides you with a good quality of education.

- you are looked after exceptionally well
- you make good progress in becoming more mature and responsible and in your learning – ready to return to mainstream schools, or if you are in Year 11, for life after the centre
- the teachers and support workers are good at their jobs and the good relationships you have with them help you in everything you do at the centre.
- what you learn in the subjects, and about yourself, is right for you
- you enjoy being at the centre and this shows in the good way you behave in lessons, the polite way in which you talk to visitors, and in your improved attendance
- the centre is led and managed well and all staff contribute to making it a well-organised and happy place
- students at the hospital are very well provided for and make excellent progress.

I am suggesting just two things to be done better.

- the procedures for evaluating how good the centre is need to be more precise
- the Local Education Authority needs to move quickly with those of you who are 'waiting' for placement in other schools with specialist provision.

With best wishes

Dr Alan Dobbins
Lead inspector