

14-19 King Street Alternative Provision

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135950
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	360783
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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	64
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Betty Ellis-Martin
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons and five teachers were observed. Meetings were held with students, staff, members of the management committee and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including evidence of safeguarding procedures, the curriculum and the school's records of monitoring teaching and learning. Inspectors took into consideration four questionnaires from parents and carers, 15 students' questionnaires and 10 questionnaires from staff.

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

- the quality of assessment, tracking and target setting and how well it leads to improvement in students' performance
- the quality of learning as shown by students' responses to teaching and marking and the students' awareness of their own progress
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting students' needs and in helping change their attitudes to learning
- the quality of monitoring and self-evaluation by leaders at all levels and the capacity to maintain improvement.

Information about the school

The pupil referral unit (PRU) was established following a major restructuring of the local authority's Pathways Education Support Service in 2008/9 and is the only PRU in the borough which provides for students in the 14-16 age range. The main site at King Street is located within New College, a college of further education. There is an additional site, the Endeavour Centre, about a mile away. Students attend on a variety of full- and part-time placements. The students have generally experienced significant disruption to their schooling and have often been out of school for lengthy periods. A third of students are known to be entitled to free school meals. The great majority are White British and there are very few students from other ethnic groups. There are slightly more boys than girls. Most students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A few have a statement of special educational needs.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement and progress of the students and their attendance.

The headteacher and senior staff, with strong support from the local authority, have taken sound action to raise attainment. As a result, teaching has improved and is satisfactory. Although attendance is low, it has improved significantly and doubled since the unit came into existence. However, the continuing low rates of attendance mean that almost half the students are not taking full advantage of the education on offer. This has a serious negative effect on their progress and achievement. The students who attend regularly make satisfactory academic progress but progress overall is inadequate because of the group with low attendance.

In the best lessons, students are challenged by the learning activities and their progress is well monitored and recorded. In some lessons, however, work is not sufficiently fine-tuned to students' prior attainment. As a result some activities are pitched at a level that is either too hard or too easy. Sometimes students do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing or how to improve their work.

The satisfactory curriculum emphasises the learning of basic skills and students who attend regularly and complete coursework gain at least one GCSE pass, at lower grades, in English, mathematics or information and communication technology (ICT). Because of inconsistencies in assessment and target setting for individual students the curriculum is not yet well matched to each student's learning needs and interests. This contributes to the students' high absence rates since they do not always feel engaged by the learning on offer. The developing range of off-site provision for vocational subjects is proving more popular and leads to a variety of BTEC and other qualifications.

Parents and students report positively on the good relationships within the PRU. Parents feel that communication is good and many attend parents' evenings. The students feel safe. They have a good awareness of safety and their behaviour is good.

The leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported by the local authority and the management committee, has established a clear vision for future development. Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have been appointed but their role in monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes is undefined and they do not yet make a significant contribution to raising attainment. The headteacher and local authority have rigorously investigated, audited and evaluated the centre's performance. The headteacher robustly monitors teaching and the students'

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learning. There are recent detailed action plans to maintain the improvements in teaching already made. Effective procedures to promote the students' progress are gradually becoming established. As a result, the centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase students' learning, progress and achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide work that is pitched at the right level
 - improving the consistency of assessment and target setting
 - ensuring that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work
 - matching the curriculum closely to the students' specific learning needs and interests.
- Improve attendance by supporting those students and their families with high absence rates.
- Increase the effectiveness of monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum by:
 - creating clear roles for subject leaders in monitoring and improving attainment
 - increasing the effectiveness of subject leaders through appropriate training and support.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Students enter the provision with often lower than expected attainment levels as a result of their prolonged absence from mainstream schools and negative experiences of learning. Those who attend largely enjoy their learning. They report that they feel secure and that they are becoming more positive about learning, but their progress in lessons is variable. In lessons where they are interested and challenged by the teachers' high expectations, they make good progress. This was observed for instance in a science lesson on immunisation where students became fascinated by the growth of microbes and asked many questions about the spread of germs and measures to counteract infections. In some lessons, however, the students are asked to complete mundane tasks that are not appropriate to their interests and ability levels and to which they pay limited attention. The students who are dual registered and also attend their mainstream school make better progress in a wider range of GCSE and other qualifications. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress, because the same problems of attendance demonstrated by other students have a negative impact. In lessons their progress is satisfactory, but occasionally they do not receive work at the right level and lose interest. There is no difference in progress between boys and girls.

Staff consistently and frequently encourage students to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the curriculum, for instance in BTEC science and in personal, health and social education (PHSE). Physical activity is on the curriculum and students have access to the college health promotion drop-in centre. Despite their best efforts, however, staff perceive that a small minority of students persist in making unhealthy choices. Students say that they are aware of the correct choices and are trying to live up to expectations.

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Since its opening in September 2009 the centre staff have concentrated on the immediate community of students and teachers to help the students to settle and become comfortable with each other. This has been successful and students contribute well to the centre. They are becoming an accepted part of the wider college. There have been programmes to encourage students to contribute to the local community, for instance in a project to develop a piece of land at the Endeavour site. However, the students' understanding and contribution to the wider community is largely limited to some charity collections for other countries.

Although significant numbers of students have not developed good habits of punctuality to lessons or to work providers, students in Year 10 have been provided with appropriate work experience opportunities. This is proving gradually more successful as the students' confidence and self esteem grows. For example, in the recent summer term, some students successfully gained ASDAN awards with an outdoor pursuits provider. This has been extended towards a BTEC qualification.

Students are encouraged to reflect on a range of spiritual and moral issues and they speak confidently about the dilemmas and difficult decisions they face in life. Students tolerate and collaborate well with others around the site. The centre endorses a range of cultural activities through the curriculum but this aspect of students' understanding is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	4
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?

In the best sessions, teaching is characterised by calm and focused staff who show good knowledge of their subjects, the needs of the students and the demands of examinations; this is communicated well, with good relationships and high expectations ensuring that students make progress. In these lessons, teachers know students’ abilities well. Good use is made of focused assessment, enabling teachers and teaching assistants to support and intervene where necessary in students’ learning. This is instrumental in ensuring the students’ participation and the inclusion of each student in the lesson. ICT is used appropriately to enhance and extend learning. When teaching is less successful, this is often accompanied by inconsistent assessment of students’ work. Marking, for example, does not always inform students systematically of their progress.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision is good and plays a positive role in promoting the students’ moral and social skills and helps them to improve their behaviour. The school has made a good start in personalising its curriculum for individuals through offering access to accredited courses taught both in the centre and in a mainstream school. The impact of these courses is clear in improved interest and progress for the students concerned. However, due to the very limited accommodation and facilities at both sites, the centre is somewhat restricted in the range of experiences it offers to enhance the students’ development and well-being and to motivate those students whose attendance is low.

The centre has developed strong multi-agency working, including teachers, support staff and therapists. For example, students experiencing domestic violence are monitored as part of an ongoing agreement with outside agencies. There are sessions for students to meet with Connexions staff and also offered is a ‘drop-in’ facility with a Youth Development Worker to deal on a one-to-one basis with issues that are more personal. Students with additional learning needs, because of their challenging behaviour, are identified early and staff set clear targets for them based securely on support and intervention. Students’ behaviour is well monitored. The centre has sound strategies to raise attendance and records show a significant improvement, but attendance remains a key feature depressing progress for students of all backgrounds. The centre acknowledges this, and identifies further work with students and their families, together with improvements to the curriculum as the next steps.

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	3

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has provided strong leadership since the centre opened. She has been well supported by the local authority and by a committed management committee that provides satisfactory governance. The headteacher, officers and committee members have a clear grasp of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement and are working steadily to remedy weaknesses. Arrangements for tracking the students' performance have improved, particularly in monitoring their behaviour and well-being. Staff share the centre's ambition to improve, although a few are not fully in favour of some policies, for example the PRU's ethos of negotiation and low-key intervention. Though some aspects of assessment are inconsistent, they maintain appropriate information about the students' overall progress and students have equal access to learning and support. This has helped to raise attendance rates and provide the foundations for improvements in their academic progress. The subject leaders provide enthusiastic and committed support but have a limited role in monitoring and improving attainment.

Safeguarding arrangements for students meet national guidelines. Staff are appropriately vetted and child protection procedures are secure. Leaders have audited the students' ethnic and religious backgrounds. The staff take opportunities to help students understand diversity in their locality and in the United Kingdom through PHSE and other curriculum work, but acknowledge that evaluation of this work is patchy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

There was a very small response but those parents and carers who completed questionnaires are pleased with the provision and the progress their children are making. They are particularly pleased with the communication between home and school about

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their children's progress. There were no negative issues. One parent commented, 'She has achieved due to consistent support and good communication between the teachers/headteacher and home. This has impacted on her positive attitude, behaviour and commitment to achievement'. One parent/carer had concerns about behaviour but these concerns were not borne out by the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at 14-19 King Street Alternative Provision 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 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	4	100	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)	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	75	0	0	1	25	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	75	1	25	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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 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.

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.



24 November 2010

Dear Students,

Inspection of 14-19 King Street Alternative Provision, Telford, TF1 1NY

We recently came to the centre and enjoyed talking to you in the classrooms and in a meeting. We enjoyed listening to your conversations and discussing your progress with you. Here are some of the good things about the provision.

You get on well with each other and maintain a supportive and friendly atmosphere. This means you feel safe and comfortable at the centre.

The staff keep you safe and you have all developed a good knowledge of how to look out for yourselves and others.

Your behaviour is good and has greatly improved since you entered the provision.

The centre is however not doing well enough, mainly because those of you who don't attend often enough are not making sufficient progress. We have therefore given the centre a 'notice to improve', which means that an inspector will visit again to check on the progress that has been made. Here are some of the issues that inspectors have asked the unit to make priorities for improvement.

The centre must improve teaching and make your work more interesting. The work you are given is not always pitched at the right level - it can be too easy or too hard. Teachers do not always collect enough information from your lessons and books about how well you are doing in your work and use this to help you learn faster. For example, marking does not always tell you how to improve.

Though the headteacher is checking carefully on how the unit is working, subject leaders need to be more involved in this.

The centre has to raise the attendance for those of you who are absent too often. This will involve working closely with you and your families.

Thank you for being so helpful to us on the inspection. You can also all help the centre to improve by always attending lessons and learning as much as you can while you are there.

Yours sincerely,

Melvyn Blackband

Lead inspector

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