

Lansdown Park Secondary Specialist Provision

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134536
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	381692
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Charles Hackett

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Amanda Cranxton
Headteacher	Alison Salway
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
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Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	25–26 April 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Charles Hackett

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited seven lessons, observing four of the service's five teachers. Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Management Committee and two officers of the local authority. Discussions were held with students about their work and their views of the school.

The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at students' work and information on their progress; safeguarding policies and other documents were evaluated. Questionnaires completed by four parents and carers, nine staff and twelve students were scrutinised.

Information about the school

Lansdown Park Secondary Specialist Provision is an average-sized pupil referral unit. It caters for students who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from mainstream schools because of behavioural issues. The local authority's policy is to refer only those students with significant complex issues to the provision. Most students are admitted for a period of 20 weeks with the aim of returning to mainstream education. A few students are dual registered at the provision and a mainstream school and attend for a shorter period of time. The student population of the provision is, therefore, subject to constant change. At the time of the inspection, one student had a statement of special educational needs for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and an above-average proportion of students were eligible for free school meals. Nearly all students admitted are of White British heritage and a few are in the care of the local authority. The provision makes use of a range of alternative providers to support students.

Since the previous inspection, the service has changed its name and in September 2011 moved into its present purpose-built accommodation. The headteacher, after a period as acting headteacher, took up her post on a permanent basis in January of this year and two of the service's five teachers started with the provision in February of this year.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Lansdowne Park is a satisfactory pupil referral unit. The move to a new building and strong and determined leadership by the headteacher – both currently and as acting headteacher – have transformed its effectiveness. Students are making significant improvement in their behaviour and attendance. The provision is not yet good because the quality of teaching and students’ progress are not consistently good or better and there are delays in the appointment of new staff. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Students’ achievement is improving. Far more are successfully returning to mainstream education and during this academic year most have made good progress. Occasionally, students are not sufficiently challenged in lessons because work is not always well matched to their different abilities and progress slows.
- Teachers use their excellent relationships with students and well-tuned, non-confrontational skills to successfully engage them in learning activities. Assessment systems effectively track students’ progress, but evaluation of their prior achievement is not always used to full effect in the planning of lessons. Support for students’ general literacy development is satisfactory, but some individuals with significant reading difficulties are not currently provided with sufficient support.
- The behaviour of all students has improved significantly. They respond very positively to the high expectations of the provision. The absence of graffiti and students’ involvement in the development of the grounds are major indications of their positive response to their new environment.
- The headteacher has created an effective core staff team committed to a shared vision of excellence for students’ achievement and personal development. Some significant weaknesses in teaching have been remedied and the management of staff performance has enhanced their effectiveness through appropriate training. The planned appointment of some permanent posts to support learning further has been delayed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During the current academic year raise the quality and impact of teaching further so that all students make better progress through:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan lessons that take account of students' prior achievements and focus precisely on the individual needs of each student
 - provide increased levels of support for those students with significant reading difficulties.
- Within the current financial year, implement plans to appoint more permanent staff with the aim of ensuring consistency in the approach to students and increasing the support they receive in lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In previous education settings students have shown great reluctance to engage in learning. As a result, their attainment on entry is often well-below average. It is to the credit of the headteacher and her core group of permanent staff that placement at the provision changes this for almost all and the gap to nationally expected standards is closing. Students react positively to the learning opportunities presented to them to such an extent that almost all are now on track to pass examinations, including GCSEs. The increased confidence of students enables them to take part in many of the specialised courses offered on the curriculum, such as a course looking after horses, and work-related and life-skills courses externally provided. All of these learning experiences help to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

During the inspection students displayed high levels of skills in an information and communication technology lesson. All showed they knew how to create borders and insert text using a software package to create brochures associated with the forthcoming Olympics. The hard work in this lesson was typical of several other lessons where students were equally determined to achieve the tasks set for them. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students quickly followed the examples used by the teacher to identify characteristics of angles, remembering the names of different types. Progress in a few lessons is less evident, especially when temporary support staff are seeking to develop relationships with students and find out their ability levels. In some lessons, students are all asked to complete the same work even though there are known, assessed differences in their levels of ability, and consequently progress slows.

Students make satisfactory progress in their literacy and numeracy skills, especially in developing their knowledge of key vocabulary for different subjects. Some students make very good progress in reading, but achievement is not consistent across the provision because of variability in the quality of additional support for learning. There is no evidence now of any group of students, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who are in the care of the local authority, achieving less well than their peers. Inspection findings endorse parents' and carers' views that achievement is at least satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and, on occasions, good. Inspection findings could not fully endorse parents, carers and students more positive views on teaching. Typically, teachers seek to engage students in learning through the positive relationships they have developed with them. Three girls in a science lesson were comfortable with the teacher successfully encouraging all of them to engage in an in-depth conversation about what constitutes being healthy. Most lessons have clear learning objectives and anticipated outcomes, such as an English lesson where the objective to improve the two students' skills in writing sentences was explained very clearly to them. The students followed examples given and were able to form their own simple sentences. There are occasions where students of different abilities in the same class are set the same tasks and they are not all challenged sufficiently by the work.

Good support is provided to students on the quality of their work and effective systems track their progress. Teachers have received specific training and support to improve literacy across the curriculum and, for example, there is a sharp focus on key words in most lessons. The few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs admitted receive the same positive support as all other students, although some of the small number of students with significant reading difficulties receive insufficient targeted support. Teachers are generally competent in assisting younger students to improve their reading standards.

The positive approach taken by staff to challenge students to try a range of different learning activities helps promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teaching assistants on full-time contracts are fully involved in supporting students to learn. Some support staff are on short-term temporary placements. The quality of the support they provide is not consistently good because of their lack of in-depth knowledge of the students.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection evidence fully supports the views of students, parents and carers that most students improve over time both their behaviour and attendance. The school day runs smoothly because students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Staff and students take breakfast together and this creates a positive starting point for each day. Students are welcoming to visitors, as demonstrated by their willingness to discuss their work and interests with the inspector.

Students often cooperate and support each other well, showing much improved attitudes to learning. In a horticultural lesson, the two students worked very well together preparing planting troughs, filling them with compost and planting seeds. They showed a real interest in the project and worked very hard. Only when teaching does not challenge them at the right level do students not achieve well. When students are unsettled, permanent staff are very skilled at de-escalating situations and getting students back on task. This occurred in a personal, social and health education lesson when students arrived unsettled after a break session. The

teacher used her excellent relationships with the students and turned the situation around to one where, by the end of the lesson, students had achieved well.

Records show that inappropriate behavioural incidents largely occur when students first access the provision, but that these reduce significantly as students respond positively to the guidance of the provision. Bullying is taken very seriously and good support is provided to enable students to understand different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and the impact it can have. Students say how effectively staff deal with any inappropriate incidents, include bullying, and that they feel safe in the provision. Students' positive response to the provision and feeling safe is clearly shown by their much improved attendance. Most now attend regularly and records show that out of the 44 students who have accessed the provision during this academic year, 38 have made significant improvement to their attendance.

Leadership and management

High expectations and a determination to ensure that students achieve well are ensuring that Lansdown Park is improving quickly. The move to the new site has been extremely well managed. The headteacher, although only in an acting capacity at the time, played a key role in the design of a building conducive to the role she envisaged the provision could play in supporting students who had experienced failure in other settings. The performance of staff has been carefully considered and has led to a number of staff changes and vacancies. The speed of improvement has slowed a little, especially in the planned measures to support reading, because some staff vacancies have yet to be filled.

The core staff team and its management committee share the headteacher's drive and ambition and have ensured that many new initiatives, such as a revised system to track students' progress, have been successful. Excellent training opportunities have enhanced the performance of staff in behaviour management and led to consistency in teachers always setting learning objectives for their lessons. Well-focused monitoring has raised the quality of teaching and learning. These factors have brought about improved achievement for students, clearly demonstrated by the significant increase in students returning successfully to a mainstream school and taking external examinations. The Chair of the Management Committee provides very positive support and has helped ensure that the key issues from the previous inspection have all been addressed well. The positive impact of leaders on improving teaching and students' learning and behaviour shows that the provision has the capacity to continue to improve.

Equality of opportunity is given very careful consideration and any form of discrimination is not tolerated. Improvements in their attitudes and behaviour reflect the positive promotion of students' moral and social development. The celebration of success was highlighted in an assembly when the headteacher outlined how a student had arrived at the provision reluctant to engage, yet was leaving that day to take up a contract as a professional footballer.

The curriculum is satisfactory rather than good because additional support for reading is not fully effective and the plans to extend work-related opportunities are

not yet fully developed. It does, however, provide students with a range of experiences that they clearly enjoy and which support their learning and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The new accommodation is having a very positive impact on students' personal development through providing opportunities for them to carry out tasks such as caring for chickens and planting a range of trees in the grounds. Safeguarding arrangements are very robust and contribute well to students' feeling of safety. Rigorous risk assessments enhance this further. Statutory requirements for safeguarding are fully met.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 April 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Lansdown Park Secondary Specialist Provision, Bristol
BS14 8SJ**

Thank you for being so helpful when I came to visit your service. The success so many of you have in being able to either return to a mainstream school or move on to college is good to see.

I have judged the provision to be satisfactory. I can see that many of you work hard in lessons and that for most of you there are good improvements in both your behaviour and attendance. I consider both your achievements and the quality of teaching to be satisfactory. The new accommodation has made a big difference to your response to education and you look after it well. The provision has undoubtedly improved since its last inspection but the leaders have not yet been able to fill all of the vacancies for permanent support staff. This means that a few of you are not receiving as much help as others, particularly with improving your reading. Much of the success of the provision is due to the hard work of the headteacher and her senior colleagues.

To be even better, I have suggested these areas of improvement to the school.

- Ensure that all teachers consistently make full use of assessment information on each of you to challenge your learning in lessons.
- Give more support to those of you with reading difficulties.
- Make every effort to fill the current vacancies with permanent staff as soon as possible.

You can contribute by continuing to work hard in your studies so that you are all successful when it comes to taking examinations.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett
Lead inspector

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