

The Braybrook Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134257
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	328867
Inspection date	18 June 2009
Reporting 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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	24
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Anthony Ray
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
School address	Bellamy Lane Wednesfield Wolverhampton WV11 1NN
Telephone number	01902 558144
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Age group	11–14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the centre and investigated the following issues.

- The effectiveness of the provision in meeting the needs of students and enabling them to successfully return to or remain in mainstream education.
- Pupils' achievement and personal development while at the centre.
- The effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in matching work to students' needs and in providing guidance to students to support their learning.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders in monitoring the centre's work and bringing about improvement.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons and discussions with students, staff, a local authority senior officer and the chair of the management committee, as well as centre documentation and assessment information. Other aspects of the centre's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the centre's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The Braybrook Centre is a pupil referral unit for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. The centre takes pupils with significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, who are failing in either a mainstream or special school. Almost all pupils admitted remain on the roll of their secondary school. Most attend full time, although this is often reduced to part time as they prepare to return to either a mainstream or special school. Pupils' average length of time at the centre over the last three years has been 22 weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Braybrook Centre is a good pupil referral unit. This is because it is effective in meeting its purpose of re-engaging pupils in learning and supporting them either to return to mainstream or special education. The headteacher oversees a strong staff team who all share a very genuine desire to provide pupils with high levels of care and support. Senior leaders have established a centre where there is a real thrust to raise the moral aspirations of its pupils. Pupils who fall foul of the law, though, are not deserted. Staff, without condoning what pupils may have done, continue to work hard with them to move them forward into better ways. This positive thrust from staff results in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being good. Pupils' personal development is also good. Individual records show the significant improvements they make in improving their response to educational opportunities. For example, the attendance of most shows very good improvement from when in previous schools, although the poor attendance of a few reduces the centre's overall attendance statistics. Pupils' behaviour is much improved and this now allows them to take part in a wide range of activities both on and off site. Pupils are fully involved in setting their behaviour targets and they work hard to achieve them. Pupils respond well to the approach of the centre to help them understand the benefits of healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the many sporting activities, particularly the excellent outdoor education programme they follow.

Understandably pupils' standards are below the national average but their achievements are good. This is strongly demonstrated by the high percentage of pupils who are able to return and successfully remain in a mainstream setting. Pupils make particularly good progress in reading and mathematics. The centre aims to increase pupils' reading ages on average by two months for every month they attend the centre. Records show that almost all pupils make above this rate of progress, with some making exceptional progress. As a result, during the short time they are at the centre many become independent readers. Equally, mathematics records show significant improvements in their basic skills. These assessments, though, are not always linked to National Curriculum assessments and this reduces their usefulness when pupils return to mainstream school. A scrutiny of pupils' work and their termly progress reports show good progress in other subjects, such as personal, social and health education, environmental science and art. Although the centre monitors individual's response to being in the centre very closely, systems to track pupils' progress are still in the process of being developed. As a result, the centre is not in a position to know if all groups of pupils, for example girls and boys or pupils in the care of the local authority, all achieve at similar rates.

Pupils stress how much they enjoy being at the centre but also acknowledge that they now feel ready to successfully return to a mainstream school. They feel safe in the centre and appreciate how much care and support staff offer them. 'They listen to you here' is how one pupil described the difference between being at the centre and his experiences in education previously. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their economic well-being is well supported by the improvements they make in literacy and numeracy and by the increased confidence they develop in themselves while at the centre.

Staff develop strong positive relationships with the pupils. They know them well through regular review meetings and are able to use this knowledge fruitfully to challenge them to work hard and achieve. This approach contributes to teaching and learning being good. Teachers try to make learning interesting through setting up projects that successfully motivate and engage pupils. For example, recent work in environmental science has led to pupils proudly discussing

their vegetable plots and how they are caring for their crops. 'Come and have a look at my tomatoes and how well they are doing' was an enthusiastic invitation given by a pupil to the inspector. The weaknesses in tracking pupils' progress do impact on the quality of lesson planning as work is not always sufficiently matched to pupils' different ability levels.

The curriculum is quite deliberately focused on engaging and interesting pupils, alongside a structured approach to develop their core skills in literacy and numeracy. In the words of the headteacher, 'It seeks to inspire pupils to succeed and achieve.' It is continually being reviewed and revised and appropriately more emphasis is being put on ensuring that the work covered in subjects such as information and communication technology, and geography, mirrors work that will be covered when pupils return to mainstream schooling.

The real strength of the good care, support and guidance provided for pupils is a process referred to as 'reintegration assessment programmes'. This involves regular ongoing assessments based on a set of criteria on how well pupils are improving their attitudes to school and how ready they are to move back to a mainstream or special school setting. These assessments help inform individual targets and these are monitored very carefully to show pupils' personal progress. Alongside these, staff also use individual action plans with targets. These are less effective because they are too focused on behaviour and not used to build up a picture of students' progress over time in lessons. Safeguarding arrangements are very effective. The structure of each day, alongside the clear expectations for pupils' behaviour, ensures that pupils are safe. Risk assessments are thorough and used well to judge pupils' suitability to join in with off-site activities.

Leadership and management are effective because of the clear focus put on ensuring the centre meets its purpose in supporting pupils to successfully re-engage in learning. 'Being at Braybrook is excellent for my son' is how one parent summed up the impact for her of her son being at the centre. The management committee knows the centre well and keeps a close eye on its progress, offering a good challenge to the work it undertakes. The school is very much part of both the local and wider community and pupils gain from this through a wide range of different experiences. There are, though, limited systems to monitor these experiences and develop them further.

The strengths of leadership and management include the establishment of a clear framework for each day, with clear expectations of pupils' behaviour consistently applied by all staff. The support for pupils' personal development is well supported by positive links with outside agencies, such as the youth offending team and officers responsible for pupils in the care of the local authority. Self-evaluation processes have recognised the centre's strengths and sought to build on these. Extensive recent developments, which demonstrate the good capacity the centre has to improve further, are testament to the effectiveness of this. However, school development planning is not always linked to what self-evaluation reveals. For example, the weaknesses in systems to track pupils' progress mean that priorities for development are not sufficiently focused on improving the achievements of pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the systems used to track pupils' progress to ensure that the centre is in a position to evaluate how well all groups of pupils are achieving.
- Make more effective use of information gained through self-evaluation to inform the priorities for school development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 June 2009

Dear Students Inspection of The Braybrook Centre, Wolverhampton, WV11 1NN

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited recently. I very much enjoyed my day in the centre and meeting you all. My report judges the centre to be good. The real strength of the centre is the care and support it provides to help you improve your behaviour and attitudes to learning. As well as this I can see that most of you successfully improve your reading and mathematics skills. This in turn helps many of you to be more confident and able to return to a mainstream or special school. From your comments and improved attendance I can see you like the many activities the centre offers. Because of your improved behaviour you all feel safe at the centre.

Teaching and the curriculum are good because the staff are effective at engaging you in learning. They work hard to make learning interesting. For example, I know you appreciate this from your enthusiasm for the environmental science project you are doing. I know the centre is working hard to extend the curriculum further by ensuring there are close links in many subjects to what you will study when you return to mainstream. The centre is well run by the headteacher who has built a strong sense of purpose amongst the staff team to help you all do well.

To be even better I think the centre should:

- extend the systems used to track how well you are doing to ensure that it knows all of you are doing as well as each other
- have better ways of evaluating its effectiveness, to help it set the priorities for developing the centre further.

I hope you will all continue to enjoy your education.

Best wishes Charles Hackett Lead inspector