

The Central Devon Personalised Learning Service

Falcon Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7LB

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in all year groups, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2. They do not catch up quickly enough on learning they have missed.
- The centre leaders have not succeeded in improving teaching sufficiently since the last inspection. Middle leaders are not as effective as they should be.
- The work set for pupils is sometimes too easy or too difficult.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve and teachers do not give pupils enough time to rectify their mistakes.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their own words to write about what they know in different subjects.
- Good reading habits are not promoted strongly enough. The range of reading books available is too narrow.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are not consistently good, especially in the lower part of the centre. Teachers do not always expect enough work from pupils.
- Instability in the leadership and governance of the centre since the previous inspection has slowed the implementation of necessary improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Current leadership arrangements, which have been supported well by the local authority, are effective. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement are improving.
- Pupils say the centre is a safe place to learn. Pupils' pastoral needs are supported well by staff.
- Teachers and other adults manage pupils' behaviour, which can be challenging, respectfully and with patience.
- Pupils' attendance improves significantly while they are at the centre.
- The curriculum has been extended since the previous inspection with a wider range of vocational courses.
- Pupils are given good career guidance and support.
- Members of the management committee bring a broad range of experience and expertise to support the centre's leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons; of these, nine were observed jointly with the executive headteacher and members of the centre leadership team. An extended visit was made to observe the Education Other than at School (EOTAS) provision.
- Meetings and informal discussions were held with pupils, members of staff, the executive headteacher, a representative of the local authority and members of the management committee.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work and analysed the progress made by pupils. They reviewed policies and other centre documentation, including attendance figures, improvement plans and safeguarding information.
- Too few parents and carers responded to the online Parent View questionnaire for their views to be reported. Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers collected by the centre. They also met with some parents and carers to discuss their views.

Inspection team

Peter Clifton, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Janet Simms

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection there has been a major reorganisation of the learning service. Three centres in Exeter and one in Tiverton have been brought together on one site at the Stansfield Centre. As a result of this reorganisation, there has also been a significant staff restructuring. Many staff have only recently been appointed.
- There are currently 44 pupils based at the centre and 40 pupils in the EOTAS provision.
- The service caters for learners who are unable to attend school for medical reasons, including mental health issues, those who have been permanently excluded (or who are likely to be permanently excluded) from mainstream schools and those who are awaiting placements in a mainstream school. All pupils are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The Stansfield Centre has three classes in Key Stages 1 and 2, one class in Key Stage 3 and five classes in Key Stage 4.
- There are currently no Early Years Foundation Stage children or Year 7 pupils attending the centre. The centre has not received any Year 7 catch-up funding.
- About one third of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding for those who are eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority. This is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The service is temporarily led on behalf of the Local Authority by a headteacher [an executive headteacher] who is also the Executive Principal of Isca Academy and a national leader of education. She took up her post in January 2014.
- A very small number of secondary-age pupils attend alternative placements at the Isca Academy, On Track and Running Deer. At the time of the inspection, some had only just joined this alternative provision.
- There are plans for the service to become a sponsored academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that it is all good or better, by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work that is neither too easy nor too difficult so that all pupils are suitably challenged
 - give pupils feedback which shows them how to improve their work and allow them time to rectify their mistakes
 - raise their expectations of what pupils can produce in lessons
 - make sure pupils catch up on learning they have missed.
- Improve pupils' literacy by:
 - increasing the range of reading books available and promoting regular reading in all subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their own words to write about what they know in different subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they can support improvements in teaching and learning
 - ensuring that teachers' planning adequately meets the needs of different pupils and that weaknesses in teaching are tackled more robustly.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning by raising everyone's expectations about how much work they should do, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because centre leaders have not succeeded in improving the quality of teaching sufficiently since the last inspection. As a result, many pupils do not do as well as they should, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2, and thus do not have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The executive headteacher's new measures to improve teachers' performance have been partially successful in that teachers now get support and clear advice about how to improve their practice. However, efforts have been hampered by temporary staffing arrangements and reorganisation, and too many weaknesses remain.
- Currently, improvements are being implemented by the executive headteacher with the support of centre leaders. The work of middle leaders in supporting improvement, for example by raising the standard of pupils' literacy, is not sufficiently well developed.
- There are appropriate procedures in place to record pupils' levels of knowledge, skill and understanding when they enrol. Staff go to considerable lengths to gather further information from previous schools and check on its accuracy.
- The centre's improvement plan provides an accurate analysis of the strengths of the centre and the key areas for improvement. The priorities for 2014/15 indicate, rightly, that there is more to do to improve the quality of teaching and develop the role of middle leaders.
- The additional funding the centre receives for sport has been used very effectively to widen opportunities for pupils. The centre now offers swimming, climbing, 'trail' cycling and outdoor adventure activities. This has effectively supported pupils' social and physical development.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support for eligible pupils. The centre can demonstrate that some pupils have made faster progress with reading and spelling following additional help.
- Since the previous inspection, the range of courses available to pupils has been widened considerably to include several vocational programmes such as construction, mechanics, and sport and leisure. Pupils in Year 11 said that they receive clear advice about career or further education choices.
- The centre provides many opportunities for pupils' moral and social development in lessons and through the centre's pastoral programme. Displays of fine examples of pupils' artwork reflect their good cultural development. Staff successfully get pupils to think about the consequences of their actions and to treat each other with respect, regardless of their background. They prepare them suitably for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers expressed a good level of satisfaction with the work of the centre and remarked on how their children's attitudes had improved. They confirmed that staff regularly call them to identify any concerns and to promote regular attendance. The centre's website has recently been updated with all of the required information for parents and carers.
- Centre leaders regularly check on the pupils in the alternative provision to find out how well they have settled in, what they are gaining from the experience and to ensure that the pupils behave well and are kept safe. Alternative providers report appropriately on pupils' daily attendance.
- The local authority has provided increased levels of support to help the service come through major restructuring and reorganisation. Monitoring reports provide an accurate evaluation of the centre's strengths and weaknesses.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Several management committee members have an educational background or experience of working in schools. While they have only been in post for a short time, they have quickly gained an understanding of the centre's strengths and weaknesses, including an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They are also skilled at interpreting progress data and other information from the executive headteacher's detailed reports. They ask challenging questions when necessary, not least about the impact of the pupil premium and sport funding.
 - Management committee members know about managing the performance of staff and understand their responsibility for rewarding good performance and tackling weaknesses in teaching. This is reflected in the new performance management system implemented in September 2014. Members are confident that tolerance and respect are well promoted because they make regular visits to see the centre in operation and to discuss matters with pupils. They are aware that they need to improve links with parents and carers in order to gather their views. Members have undertaken training in safeguarding, child protection and safer recruitment of staff. Statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding,

are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement; there is not enough teaching which helps the pupils to develop good learning habits, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils sometimes display very challenging behaviour. Several pupils face exceptional difficulties in their personal lives. However, the concentration span of some pupils is very short and expectations about the amount of work that should be completed in the time available have not been established well enough.
- The behaviour of older pupils is better, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Improved attitudes are helping them to learn effectively even though many arrive in the centre with a history of failure in their previous schools. Several said they are now enjoying being at the centre and that they get plenty of individual support.
- It is not possible to make an overall judgement on behaviour in the alternative provision as there are very few pupils and some have only just joined.
- Clear procedures to report on absence are followed. Most pupils' attendance has improved. This includes some pupils who were persistently absent in their previous schools and who now attend much more regularly. They can see that regular attendance and punctuality are helping them to gain valuable skills and experience.
- Pupils gave inspectors a number of reasons why they like coming to the centre. Several felt that they are treated as individuals and that they are able to cope much better in lessons. This included the most able pupils.
- High levels of supervision mean that playtimes and lunchtimes are calm and orderly. Healthy eating and being active are encouraged.

Safety

- The centre's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Many pupils like coming to the centre because they know they will be safe and secure and treated with kindness and consideration. Behaviour managers are quick to intervene should any incident arise.
- Pupils said that there are no bullying or racist incidents and that they have full confidence in the adults who look after them. Some members of staff were singled out by pupils because of the exceptional support they had provided to help the pupils resolve a personal issue.
- Leaders follow appropriate procedures to ensure that the pupils are kept safe in the alternative provision.
- Pupils understand about keeping themselves safe, for example, when using electronic devices and the internet. They know about the potential danger from social networking and have learned about the potential dangers of taking some drugs.
- Centre leaders have logged any incident which could affect pupils' health and safety and carried out an analysis of risk. Safety procedures are well understood and followed. With the support of the local authority, for example, centre leaders have recently improved fencing and security at the front of the centre.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The executive headteacher and centre leaders, including the management committee, recognise that there is more to do to secure consistently good teaching, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement. Pupils do not read regularly enough or use their reading to help them in different subjects.
- Similarly, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use and develop their writing. For example, they are not asked often enough to explain what they think in writing, to present their point of view using their own words or to edit their work.
- On some occasions, pupils are given work that is not challenging enough, or too little is expected of them in lessons. As a result, some pupils do not do as well as they should, make only limited progress and do not catch up quickly enough on learning they have missed.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Sometimes, teachers' feedback fails to show pupils

how to improve and pupils are not given time to make corrections. As a result, some errors are not rectified. There are pockets of effective marking, for example in mathematics in Key Stage 4.

- There are examples of effective teaching where the work set is tailored to the individual needs of the pupils, enabling pupils to achieve well. This includes the support given to pupils who speak English as an additional language and have limited English speaking skills, and the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 4. The support provided by teaching assistants for individual pupils often helps pupils to improve their level of concentration and complete mathematics tasks such as addition and subtraction.
- Across the centre, adults treat pupils with respect and are very patient at dealing with any misbehaviour. Typically, learning takes place in a calm and supportive environment, especially in Key Stage 4. Pupils appreciate the level of support they receive from individual staff.
- Tutors supporting EOTAS have a very clear understanding of pupils' individual needs and work well with other adults to ensure these are met as well as possible.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Many pupils enrol at the centre with levels of attainment that are well below those typical for their age because they have had a disjointed experience of education.
- The most able pupils in Key Stage 4 gain GCSE qualifications. The centre's information indicates that an increasing proportion of pupils are on track to achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE in 2015. The progress made by the most able pupils is better than that of other pupils, and this is reflected in their written work. This is because they are mostly older pupils in Key Stage 4 who have responded more quickly to the smaller classes and better teaching.
- The centre's records of pupils' progress show that pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 generally make better progress than those in Key Stages 1 and 2. This was confirmed by inspectors in the lessons they observed.
- In lessons, there are too few opportunities for the pupil to read aloud or on their own, and several pupils said they were reluctant readers and did not enjoy reading. Pupils' progress in reading is also hindered by the limited range of books available for them to read, for example when they have completed other tasks.
- In the samples of written work scrutinised there were too few examples of pupils using complete sentences or producing more lengthy pieces of work. Print-outs of pupils' writing using computers revealed some longer pieces of work and a more adventurous vocabulary.
- Pupils eligible to receive additional funding make progress which is broadly similar to their classmates', although some make better progress with reading and spelling because of the additional individual support they receive.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors thought that they were doing much better at the centre than at their previous schools because of the lack of distraction and the quality of the personal support they receive. Those attending the alternative provision achieve well, relative to their starting points.
- Parents and carers of EOTAS pupils commented positively about the help their children receive. This support enables pupils to continue with some courses.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113053
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	449082

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	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laurie Burbridge
Headteacher	Beverley Martin (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 October 2012
Telephone number	01392 445446
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