

Swale Inclusion Service (Ufton House)

Ufton Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1JB

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The resolute and enterprising leadership provided by the headteacher, supported by her dedicated staff, has resulted in rapid improvements.
- Students make good progress from their starting points. Many arrive with attainment levels that are well below average for their age reflecting their negative attitudes to school. Their attendance records in mainstream school have often been poor.
- Staff know the students well. Skilled and confident teaching, often pitched at the right level for each individual, enables the students to gain confidence to make progress in their studies.
- Good behaviour is the norm. Clear structures and expectations have been established. Students respond well to the centre's praise and reward culture. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and most students have greatly improved their levels of attendance. Overall attendance now mirrors the national figure for secondary schools.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the centre's work and the progress made by their children.
- Monitoring procedures are rigorous and this has led to many improvements, including the quality of teaching and learning. The centre's performance is challenged by its knowledgeable management committee to ensure ever improving outcomes for the students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is consistently good rather than outstanding. A prime reason for this is that teachers do not consistently exploit every possible opportunity to drive the students' key skills, especially in terms of writing.
- Behaviour is good and has improved considerably. It is not yet outstanding because the centre's strong behaviour code is not always implemented with consistency.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four lessons, involving three different teachers, and various other learning activities.
- Meetings were held with the Chairman of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and staff. A number of parents and carers and senior secondary school staff were contacted by telephone to gain their views.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), but the inspector took account of the centre's own surveys of parents and carers. Returns from six questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- The inspector scrutinised examples of students' work and looked at various documents. These included the centre's self-evaluation and planning, information on students' academic progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bill Stoneham, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ufton Centre caters for up to 16 Key Stage 3 students who have been permanently excluded or are on time-out placements from mainstream schools.
- Its aim is to reintegrate the students into mainstream education as quickly as possible. On average, students will spend a maximum of two terms at the centre.
- All students are disabled and/or have special educational needs, invariably associated with behavioural, emotional and social needs.
- Most students are of White British heritage, with none speaking English as an additional language.
- More boys than girls attend the centre.
- The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is high and well above the national average.
- The centre does not make any use of external learning providers and during their time at the centre no students sit external examinations.
- Major changes in leadership and management and staffing have been made since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the quality of teaching to ensure that students make even more progress in all subjects by seizing every possible opportunity to develop their literacy skills and especially their writing skills.
- Raise the standard of behaviour by ensuring that the centre's well-founded disciplinary sanctions are applied with complete consistency.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students usually enter the centre with records of highly disrupted education. Their attendance records are frequently poor, and regular and repeated misbehaviour has severely impaired their progress. Attainment on entry is well below average for their age. During their short stays, the vast majority make good progress in their literacy and mathematical skills.
- Though attainment remains below average when the students are reintegrated into mainstream education, their standards of work, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, have moved closer to the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, significant improvements have been made in target setting. The progress and performance of each student are carefully recorded, tracked and monitored. Students are set challenging targets for their work, attendance, punctuality and behaviour. This collection of sensitively set targets is crucial in helping students to make progress and to improve. Students like this approach as they are able to evaluate for themselves just how well they are doing. Such clear information also helps them to prepare for their reintegration to mainstream schools.
- Various additional funds provided by the government, such as Year 7 Catch up, designed to boost literacy skills, and pupil premium funding, are used effectively to improve achievement. On average, all students make more than expected progress over two terms. This is above national expectations at Key Stage 3. The centre has been successful in ensuring any gaps in achievement are being narrowed.
- Achievement information on individual students clearly shows that there are no significant variations in the performance of particular groups. All students are disabled and/or have special educational needs. There are no discernible variations in the performances of boys and girls; or between students eligible for free school meals and those who are not.
- Good academic progress is supported by rapid gains in personal development. During their time at the centre, students develop more confidence in their own abilities; their self-esteem rises and concentration improves. Such traits prepare them well for reintegration. Available data indicate that for the overwhelming majority, reintegration is a successful process and that the students do well on their return to mainstream secondary school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Consistently good teaching is now ensuring that students achieve well and make good progress overtime.
- All teaching observed was of a good quality. Progress over time is helped by the care teachers take in marking and assessing work. In many of the books seen, students were provided with helpful comments about what they had done well and what could be improved and how.
- Teachers' high expectations are demonstrated in many ways. For example, students' books clearly showed how pride and responsibility are developed. When students first arrive at the centre, they often take little pride in their work. As time passes, the quality of work rises and the work is better presented. Teachers work hard to encourage the students to take pride in their work and the way it is presented.
- Teachers are skilled at planning work to meet individual needs. A good English lesson enabled students to work at their own level on a poem about creatures. Students showed knowledge of metaphors, similes and personification. These techniques were applied in the most successful poems. A mathematics class on shapes successfully developed the students' understanding of concepts such as area and perimeter. Students were set practical tasks relevant to their own abilities; some measured the perimeter of various classrooms, others calculated the areas. In both lessons the work was suitably challenging and all made good progress.
- Support staff work well in partnership with classroom teachers to ensure good progress. When

necessary, they provide intensive one-to-one support to ensure the pace of progress is maintained. Such support also helps to ensure that if a particular student is feeling anxious or is not behaving well, they can be withdrawn from the class, given an opportunity to compose themselves and catch up on any lost learning.

- Much thought has been given to improving teaching and a suitable range of subjects is offered to help the students make progress. Work in some books, however, indicated missed opportunities to drive the students' literacy skills and especially their skills in formal writing. For example, in both food science and team-building classes, students are issued with logbooks, but it was rare to find any attempts by the students to write accounts or evaluations of the work they had done.
- Staff are effectively promoting reading skills. Though some students are reluctant readers, many were heard reading during the inspection. Some lacked confidence when asked to read aloud but all showed an ability to do so.
- Parents, carers and staff from mainstream schools, who help with reintegration procedures, praise the quality of teaching offered. The unanimous view is that the quality of teaching offered is helping to boost standards and confidence and is equipping the students well for the demands of a return to mainstream education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The centre offers a calm and stimulating working environment for the students. Considerable care has been taken since the arrival of the current headteacher to ensure that the building is well decorated and cared for and that displays of work celebrate the students' endeavours.
- Though the greater majority of students are keen to return to mainstream education, they like attending the centre. It is homely and welcoming and it provides a setting that they associate with success. For many, the only success they have ever had in an educational setting has been while attending Ufton Centre.
- Students feel safe. Marked improvements in behaviour are reflected in significant improvements in attendance. The current attendance rate is in line with the national rate.
- The centre works well in partnership with secondary schools throughout the Swale area of Kent. Key Stage 3 students in danger of being permanently excluded from mainstream schools can access the centre on a part-time basis, where specialist help can be offered. This initiative is improving behaviour generally as no Key Stage 3 students in the whole of the Swale borough have been permanently excluded this academic year.
- Behaviour in classes is generally very good and close to being outstanding. Where it occasionally slips, it is because some students feel aggrieved that their teachers are not applying the agreed sanctions consistently. Some students are keen to express their discontent with what they perceive to be unequal treatment. Unfortunately they do not always possess sufficient social skills to enable them to articulate their grievances properly. This causes frustration and can lead to some unhelpful behaviour.
- Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe in the centre. Incidents of bullying are rare and staff do much work to ensure that students know about the harmful effects of various types of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Staff take their own responsibilities very seriously. A problem with the internet identified during the inspection was immediately addressed. Within 15 minutes appropriate and effective action to close a potentially unsavoury website had been taken.
- The emphasis on behaving well and following the rules and regulations of the centre is continually reinforced and makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students. This is furthered by regular events such as a daily breakfast club and a 'rewards' assembly each Friday.
- Students are encouraged to think about others. An interesting recent development has been the establishment of a partnership between a local church and the centre. Ufton Centre students will now work with parishioners to raise money for the charities supported by the church.

The leadership and management are good

- Significant changes in leadership and management and staffing have taken place since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The calm, dignified and enterprising leadership of the present headteacher has done much to improve the effectiveness of the centre. She has been well supported by her staff and by the local education authority. Many changes have been made to ensure that the current overall effectiveness of the centre is good. It is not quite yet outstanding because some of the changes are still quite new and have not yet had sufficient time to make a measurable impact. The capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Staff morale is high. Staff enjoy the challenges presented and acknowledge the benefits they have derived from improved training and from the improvements made in the management of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher and her management committee have carefully planned the subjects offered, placing emphasis on driving key skills, especially literacy and numeracy. They have also sought to develop the students' experiences in other ways. Weekly lessons in team-building are most successful. This class is based on outdoor pursuits. During the inspection, even in driving rain, the students visited a local nature reserve to look at animal habitats. Such activities provide memorable spiritual experiences for the students.
- Partnership work with local secondary schools has improved considerably. Staff from local schools speak positively about relationships with the centre. Profitable partnerships have led to gains in behaviour, a drastic reduction in both fixed-term and permanent exclusions and to an increasing number of students being reintegrated successfully into mainstream education.
- Staff are determined that all students are given opportunities to develop and thrive. A strong commitment to equal opportunities underpins the work of the centre.
- All arrangements for safeguarding, including risk assessments for off-site educational visits, meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the experienced and knowledgeable management committee provide sterling support for the headteacher and her staff. They ensure that the performance and salary progression of staff are properly monitored. Self-evaluation is good and accurate. The committee is kept updated about the progress of every student through reports from the headteacher and the local authority's advisor. The management committee knows how well the centre is performing and its members have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved to move effectiveness to outstanding. They ensure that safe recruitment practices are consistently applied and they give safeguarding a high priority.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 134325 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 426407 |

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

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 11–14 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 14 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Chair | Alistair Hogarth |
| Headteacher | Linda Noble |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12–13 September 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01795 436936 |
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