

The Bexley Pupil Referral Service

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 135810 |
| Local Authority | Bexley |
| Inspection number | 343817 |
| Inspection dates | 30 June –1 July 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Stuart Charlton |

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

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 5–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 162 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | John Moore |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 July 2010 |
| School address | The Beeches Abbey Wood SE2 9TA |
| Telephone number | 020 83122746 |
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| Email address | admin@prs.bexley.sch.uk |

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed all full-time teachers and monitored performance in 20 lessons. They held meetings with the Chair of the management group, the Federation executive headteacher, the Chair of the Federation Governing Body, the school improvement partner, staff, parents and pupils. The work of the pupil referral service (PRS) was observed and the inspectors scrutinised the improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and governing body and management group meetings, a range of other documentation and 12 questionnaires from parents and carers. The majority of pupils completed questionnaires and these were examined by the inspection team.

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

- the management structures at all levels to determine their effectiveness in ensuring quality provision for pupils
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in communicating and promoting the Service vision and driving improvement
- the systems to judge attainment on entry, set challenging targets and track pupils' progress in their personal development and academic work
- the effectiveness of teaching and learning in ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can and how well the curriculum meets the very wide range of pupils' needs.

Information about the school

Bexley Pupil Referral Service provides education for pupils who have been permanently excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from their mainstream school, those with short- and long-term medical needs, as well as those identified by the local authority Fair Access Panel and the Children Missing Education Panel. The Service operates from three sites. The Beeches Primary Centre, a primary pupil referral unit, and the Howbury Centre for pupils aged 11 to 16 who have a range of learning difficulties as well as social, emotional and behavioural problems. The Medical Needs Service includes The Beeches Medical Needs Centre and Queen Mary Hospital School, providing for pupils who are unable to attend a mainstream school because of a medical condition. The present Service was established in March 2009 as a single body with a new management structure, under a head and deputy head of Service leading a senior leadership team supported by senior management teams at each site. In July 2009, the Pupil Referral Service entered into a Behaviour Federation with two local schools for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A new all-age provision will open on the Beeches site in January 2011. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with very small minorities from Black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. A small number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This is the first inspection of the Pupil Referral Service as described above.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Bexley Pupil Referral Service (PRS) provides satisfactory education for its pupils. In a safe and secure environment, the vast majority make good improvement in their behaviour and self-esteem from a very low base. They gain qualifications in a range of GCSE subjects and through these, most are able to move successfully into further education, training or the world of work. The PRS has good systems in place, such as its first-day absence procedures and its rewards system, which are effective in promoting good attendance and encouraging punctuality so that attendance overall is satisfactory. Behaviour is good and parents are pleased with the Bexley and the positive affect it has on their children.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is generally well balanced, although opportunities for older pupils to study a vocational or work-related curriculum are limited, due in part to a lack of specialist facilities on the present site. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers usually establish very good relationships with the pupils and these are the basis of the good guidance and support for their personal development. The staff know each pupil well and use this knowledge effectively to address pupils' personal needs. However, there is not enough teaching which is good or better to really drive forward pupils' academic learning. Staff have assessment information on each individual in all subjects, but this is not always used effectively in their planning, particularly in the secondary department, to clearly identify how the learning of each pupil will be developed. Oral feedback is generally good, particularly in the primary department, but written feedback does not always explain what is needed to gain the next level or grade. The newly appointed headteacher provides a clear vision about how the provision should develop. In this, he is well supported by his senior management team. Together they have established a stable staffing base and mapped out a clear path for improvement, based on accurate and honest self-evaluation. Good systems to monitor and evaluate separate aspects of the provision have been developed but are at an early stage of implementation. Consequently, the links between pupils' progress, their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning are not made with sufficient rigour to give a clear picture of each individual's performance as well as that of the Service as a whole. The management committee are supportive of the Centre and have been fully involved in the planning and development of the new campus. They are still coming to terms with their strategic relationship with the Federation governors. This limits their impact in ensuring that all leaders and managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities in moving the PRS forward.

The improvements which the Centre has effected on the attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning of the majority of pupils during a period of significant change show

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that the capacity for further sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Clarify the strategic relationship between the management committee and the Federation governors so that all leaders and managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities in moving the PRS forward.
- Increase the amount of teaching which is good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning clearly identifies how the learning of each pupil will be developed
 - making sure that written feedback clearly identifies to pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Establish more effective links between the systems for monitoring and evaluating separate aspects of the provision so that a clear picture of the performance of each individual pupil, as well as that of the PRS as a whole, can be evaluated.
- Implement the planned curriculum changes so that all pupils, particularly the older ones, have full access to a curriculum with a balance of academic, vocational and work-related courses.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Given their low starting points on entry, the number of GCSE passes pupils obtained in 2009 represents satisfactory progress and achievement. The inspection findings show that the present pupils, particularly those in Year 11, are on course to attain at a similar level. Most pupils have gaps in their knowledge resulting from their erratic attendance patterns at their previous schools. In a good mathematics lesson with Year 10, the staff used their knowledge about the pupils' needs well to address this. Such practice is not consistent in all lessons. There are no differences between the progress made by different gender or ethnic groups.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is based on the high expectations established by all staff and the role models they present to pupils. Pupils develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and this is recognised through the Healthy Schools Award. They learn to keep fit through timetabled physical education lessons and by participating in out-of-school activities, which involve a high proportion of pupils. Primary pupils have responded very well to the healthy food options available at lunchtime and break. A good number of older pupils have taken advantage of information about tobacco and drug abuse to change their lifestyle.

Pupils say they feel safe at the PRS. They make a positive contribution to their immediate community through fundraising activities and peer mentoring. The literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology qualifications they gain, as well as other skills, are a sound preparation for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers are still coming to terms with the demands of working across a wider age and ability range and, as yet, their practice is not sufficiently refined to drive forward the learning of all pupils. The very good relationships between staff and pupils are strengthened through individual mentoring and tutorial sessions. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they plan lessons conscientiously. However, in the secondary department, this usually focuses on delivering the subject content rather than on the needs of each individual pupil and how these will be met.

The curriculum for primary pupils is good with an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, so that all pupils are able to reintegrate into appropriate mainstream provision. The subjects offered to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are appropriately matched to those in mainstream schools and offer good opportunities for reintegration. The Howbury Centre building does not offer appropriate opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 4 to gain vocational or work-related qualifications. Some opportunities are available through links with local colleges, but it is intended to considerably enhance these with the move to the new building.

Care, guidance and support are good and ensure that pupils' personal development is good. The cornerstone is the commitment and time that all staff devote to the personal mentoring system which is an important feature of the provision. Pupils are given good

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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guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the Centre.

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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Safeguarding procedures fully meet national requirements. The headteacher has worked very effectively to merge the three Centres into a single unit. Effective systems have been developed to monitor separate aspects of the provision. However, these are not sufficiently well linked to give quality information about for example, the impact of attendance on attainment or behaviour. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity about each individual's performance or that of the Centre as a whole.

At this stage in its development, the impact of the Centre's work on community cohesion is satisfactory. It has done good work with its immediate community, but further developments, particularly in relation to the regional and national aspects of its work, have not been an immediate priority. Equality of opportunity is promoted through all aspects of the Centre's work, and difficulties in pupils' personal circumstances are addressed effectively. A single management group for the PRS has been developed but is at a very early stage of development. The strategic relationships between the management committee and the Federation governing body are still being worked through.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |

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| | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Only a small proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The views expressed have been supplemented by using information derived from the school's own surveys. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views about Bexley PRS. As one said, 'The staff have worked hard to get the best out of my daughter.' The inspection shows that such comments are well founded, particularly in terms of pupils' personal development.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bexley Pupil Referral Service 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 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 162 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 3 | 25 | 9 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 7 | 58 | 5 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 6 | 50 | 6 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 6 | 50 | 6 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 5 | 42 | 7 | 58 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 8 | 67 | 4 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 3 | 25 | 9 | 75 | 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) | 5 | 42 | 7 | 58 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 8 | 67 | 3 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 9 | 75 | 3 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 7 | 58 | 5 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 8 | 67 | 4 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 8 | 67 | 4 | 33 | 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 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 | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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 pupil's 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.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bexley Pupil Referral Service, London SE2 9TA

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited the Pupil Referral Service. We very much enjoyed talking to you, sitting in on your lessons and listening to your interesting views on each Centre and some of the developments you would like to see.

You all told us that the Pupil Referral Service makes a great difference to your behaviour and attitude to education and learning and that this sets you up for a more positive future. We consider that the Centre provides you with satisfactory education linked to good care, support and guidance. The staff set high expectations for you to live up to and lay down clear guidelines for you to follow. The atmosphere in the school is relaxed and productive. However, the older ones at the Howbury Centre said that they did not enjoy the rundown nature of the building. The staff work very hard to keep you safe and healthy, and you were quick to point out the difference the Service has made to your lives. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving as staff become more used to working with a wider age range since the two sites were joined together.

You told us how much you are looking forward to moving to the new site so that things will improve. To ensure that they do, we want the Service to:

- make the teaching better through making sure that teachers show in their planning how the learning of each one of you in the class will be developed and by giving you written feedback that shows what you need to do to improve
- make sure the curriculum changes are put in place quickly so that the older ones, in particular, have a wider range of options
- make links between the systems it uses to track things like your attendance, behaviour and progress to check that you are doing as well as you can
- give the management committee training and support to help them to do their job more effectively.

You can help in this by attending regularly and making sure you do your best in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead Inspector

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