

Gateshead Behaviour Support Service

Millway Centre, Sherriff Hill, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 5PQ

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Attendance is too low and is not improving.
- Expectations of behaviour are inconsistent and pupils are not supported well enough to enable them to take responsibility to manage their behaviour.
- Pupils' progress is not fast or consistent enough to lead to good achievement. Pupils' confidence and skills, particularly in reading, are low and action to tackle this has been slow.
- Teaching is not good because teachers do not always ensure that what pupils are meant to learn is clear, or that tasks are challenging enough.
- Teachers do not always have an up-to-date knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teaching assistants are not always briefed well enough by teachers to enable them to consistently provide pupils with effective support.
- Leadership and governance have not been strong enough to deliver good outcomes. Actions since the last inspection to assure good teaching and achievement have been slow. Some elements of the unit's work have been allowed to slip due to staff absence.
- Strategies to improve attendance and behaviour have not been kept under close enough review to ensure that the school copes with increasing numbers of pupils who have joined the school during the last year.
- The recent improvements leaders and managers have introduced to teaching and pupils' progress are inhibited by poor attendance and behaviour.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed headteacher knows what needs to improve. He is providing clear direction and has raised staff morale.
- Pupils attending alternative provision are making rapid progress in their learning and attending regularly.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what needs to improve. They are demonstrating the capacity to bring about these improvements.
- Members of the recently restructured management committee are knowledgeable and experienced. They are challenging and supporting the school better than in the past.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances it can reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management and accelerate the rate of improvement by:
 - ensuring that teachers and support staff know what is expected of them, and apply training and the timescales for improvement
 - ensuring that policies and arrangements to promote good attendance, punctuality and behaviour are rigorously monitored and well led
 - making good use of the information gathered about the quality of teaching and pupils' work to plan for swift improvements.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that every teacher has a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach in order to nurture and maintain pupils' interest in learning and address misunderstandings
 - making sure that teachers use all the information they have about pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge to plan and teach well-structured lessons that consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and that stretch and challenge them
 - ensuring that all teachers deploy support staff effectively in order to promote good progress for pupils
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have a clear understanding of strategies to support pupils in acquiring and developing their reading skills.

- Urgently improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and well-being across all sites by:
 - strengthening the attendance policy and procedures and taking further action to tackle persistent absence
 - setting clear expectations of attendance, punctuality and behaviour and ensuring that pupils and parents are clear about their responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting them, as well as the support available if problems arise
 - ensuring that all staff have high expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and the skills they need to deal effectively with pupils who have challenging behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have been slow to ensure that behaviour and attendance policies are implemented consistently. The number of fixed-term exclusions is rising and pupils' attendance has declined. Actions to provide for the recent and rapid increase in pupils who have very challenging behaviour has slowed the drive for improvement in these key aspects of the school's work.
- The leadership and management of teaching require improvement because checks on teaching and use of the information gathered have not been good enough to ensure that pupils learn and achieve well.
- Recently there have been key improvements. The new headteacher has an accurate and realistic view of what needs to be done and work has begun to re-establish school systems and processes.
- The school's improvement plan is sharply focused on what needs to be done to move the school forward. The actions being taken to secure improvement by leaders and the management committee are the right ones, but they have not had time to take effect.
- Strengths and weaknesses in teaching have been identified and coaching and support have begun to focus on weaker teaching. However, the information gathered about the quality of teaching has yet to lead to wholesale improvements in pupils' work.
- Performance management processes and staff appraisals have been reintroduced as staffing has stabilised. Staff morale is improved.
- New subject leader appointments and a restructure are driving improvements in science, English and mathematics. These leaders are clear about their responsibilities and have begun to develop the curriculum. Leaders' checks on pupils' work have led to revisions in the teaching of mathematics and English at both key stages. Plans to develop staff knowledge and confidence to teach to the level and depth that are now required are in place.
- The accuracy, analysis and use of assessment have been strengthened. Scrutiny of pupils' work is beginning to be used to verify pupils' progress and ensure consistency in teachers' assessments.
- The curriculum broadly meets pupils' needs. However, activities are not always engaging or relevant. Changes introduced in the last term ensure that pupils have more opportunities to gain qualifications in English and mathematics. Revisions to the alternative curriculum mean that it is now more suited to pupils' needs and interests.
- Despite the recent improvements leaders and managers have introduced, pupils' social and moral development is inhibited by poor attendance and behaviour. Plans to teach British values are being incorporated into personal, social and health education; however, this is at an early stage. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through art and visits, but there is very limited evidence of spiritual development.
- Senior leaders have worked with the local authority to develop a network of partnerships. This is starting to have some impact on planning pupil admissions and in supporting pupils to make transitions to new placements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Recent changes to the management committee have increased the expertise and revitalised the support and challenge its members apply to governance.
 - The revised committee is fully aware of its responsibilities and has been proactive in tackling staff absence, making key appointments, getting finances on an even keel and providing wise counsel and support to the new headteacher.
 - Governors are using additional funding, including pupil premium, to ensure that provision is available to meet the high numbers of pupils who need extra support. Detailed reports from the headteacher and local authority representative keep governors updated on the impact that action plans are having on improving the quality of provision and the effect this has on achievement. Governors are realistic and while they know there is improvement, they are ambitious for more.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Recruitment procedures are followed thoroughly and policies and practices for keeping pupils safe are routinely checked. Daily checks on the whereabouts of pupils are made and much work is taking place to maintain communication. Parents and carers who responded to the unit's own survey in July were confident that the school kept their children safe and that staff would contact them if anything was wrong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching on the school's Millway and Heworth sites and at all key stages requires improvement to be good.
- Subject specialists are spread thinly across the three sites and many teachers do not have sufficient skills, confidence and knowledge of the subjects they teach to question and reshape activities to deepen pupils' understanding and sustain pupils' interest when concentration starts to decline.
- Expectations of what pupils will learn in lessons are not always clear or precise enough. Teachers do not always identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that they expect pupils to acquire or consolidate. Consequently, teachers are sometimes unable to check whether pupils have made enough progress and accurately to plan the next steps in learning.
- Expectations of pupils' conduct in lessons vary and are too low, especially on the Millway site. On occasions, learning is superficial and secondary to the main focus of keeping pupils engaged and in classrooms. In these instances, lessons proceed at a relaxed pace, typically with very simple drawing and colouring, cutting and sticking tasks that are well within pupils' capabilities.
- Practice is stronger in English and mathematics and is beginning to meet pupils' needs more securely in Key Stage 4. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information from regular marking of pupils' work to inform their planning. Pupils' work in books and folders shows that pupils are making small steps in their learning. Pupils say that they are learning more in these subjects than they previously did and are developing increasing confidence in mathematics.
- Support staff are used effectively at the Dryden Centre. They work closely with teachers and know what individuals and small groups are expected to learn and how to support them. In general, support staff are not always used to good effect in lessons. A lack of clarity about what pupils are expected to learn is one of the principal reasons why better use is not made of this valuable resource.
- Pupils with special educational needs are not always supported well enough in lessons, for example with access to learning resources or through additional support to quicken their progress.
- Some pupils are avid readers when they arrive at the school and continue to read for pleasure and to support their learning. Typically, many pupils' confidence and skills in reading are low. Opportunities to develop reading skills and understanding of subject-specific language in subjects across the curriculum are generally underdeveloped, but are beginning to be used well in science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders are aware of the need to improve the facilities and recognise that they are far from ideal at each site. The outside space at the Heworth Hall site is inadequate and pupils told inspectors, 'It feels like a prison'.
- Insufficient action is taken to address smoking. Programmes to help a small number of pupils ground to a halt following staff absence. Currently, the unit's rules around smoking are inconsistently applied.
- Bullying, particularly comments on social media, name-calling and pushing and shoving are dealt with, although not always swiftly, and mediation approaches do not always work. A small number of pupils remain dissatisfied and expressed their views to inspectors.
- Actions to tackle the worries of intimidation at lunchtime by older pupils at the Millway Centre have led to separate lunch arrangements whereby Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils dine separately with their teachers in tutor groups. Pupils like this recent development and their self-confidence is blossoming. However, the school does not do enough to tackle the root cause of the problem.
- Staff genuinely care for pupils and work hard to nurture their confidence as learners. Some pupils say staff are kind and caring, and speak to them respectfully. In turn, pupils respond to specific questions they are asked.
- The small number of pupils who receive education off site from alternative providers are learning, attending and generally responding well to the opportunity. Their progress is monitored personally by the headteacher.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.

- Despite the very clear behaviour policy, expectations of pupils have not been established in practice. Persistently disruptive behaviour and open flouting of school rules goes unchallenged by some staff on the Millway site and occasionally on the Heworth Hall site.
- Pupils' attitudes and confidence in learning are fragile. Staff on all sites spend much time and are extremely patient in encouraging pupils to work. Pupils say behaviour typically is, 'up and down'. Persistent, low-level disruption is a feature in many lessons and punctuality to lessons is poor.
- A system of reward points that can be awarded for good behaviour and sanctions such as detentions work in many cases. However, some of the most disorderly and unruly pupils simply ignore them. Staff are not always sure how to deal with the most challenging behaviour.
- Support to enable pupils to manage their anger and anxiety is lacking and pupils regularly choose to walk out of lessons.
- Good habits of regular attendance and punctuality have not been established and are inhibiting the recent gains made in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Overall attendance has declined successively over the last two years. Current rates of persistent absence are alarmingly high.
- Staffing turbulence brought significant disruption to the routines of attending school and to providing support. A lack of rigour in monitoring the situation and few strategies to tackle the wide range of individual issues and concerns have had little impact in arresting the decline.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Weaknesses in teaching and inconsistent attendance on both the Millway and Heworth Hall sites have hampered pupils' progress so that it requires improvement rather than being good.
- From their different starting points on entry to the school, the proportion of Year 11 pupils making expected progress has increased over the last two years in English and mathematics, although this remains below the national average.
- The number of pupils who gain qualifications in both English and mathematics is low, and a very small number leave without them. In response, the headteacher has ensured that the amount of curriculum time allocated to teaching English and mathematics each day has increased markedly over the last two terms.
- School information shows that over the last two terms, pupils' progress in mathematics and science is improving from a low level, especially at Key Stage 3, in response to a revised curriculum and settled, focused teaching. This is starting to develop pupils' confidence and knowledge more securely. It is too early to see the full impact of these developments on attainment. The persistent absence of some pupils continues to restrict their progress over time and few pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils' progress in English is similarly showing steady, recent improvement, with increasing numbers of pupils making expected or better progress at Key Stages 3 and 4. Some pupils enjoy reading and do so regularly; however, they are the exception and many pupils do not. Opportunities to read aloud to staff and schemes to advance and encourage reading are underdeveloped.
- Steps have been taken to assure the accuracy and validity of teachers' assessments, although the data they are based on are limited to English, mathematics and science. Leaders cannot confidently say whether individuals or groups of pupils are making fast enough progress in all subjects.
- The progress of the most-able pupils requires improvement. Too few make good progress because teaching is not challenging enough.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability requires improvement. These pupils make less progress in English and mathematics than their classmates. Teaching is not always adapted sufficiently to take account of their needs.
- School assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers in the school. However, their progress and attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 are significantly low compared with that of pupils nationally.
- Typically, around six pupils a year, who make rapid progress in their learning, personal development and behaviour, are reintegrated into mainstream or special schools. Currently, five pupils are already undertaking placements in schools to make a fresh start and more are being identified to do so.
- The number of pupils who continue into education, employment and training is increasing, although the proportion who do so is well below the national average.
- The small number of pupils in alternative provision are making swifter progress in response to courses that better meet their interests.

School details

Unique reference number	131515
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10002127

This inspection 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	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Coates
Headteacher	Steve Williamson
Telephone number	0191 420 0607
Website	www.gatesheadbehavioursupport.org
Email address	stevewilliamson@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2013

Information about this school

- Gateshead Behaviour Support Service provides education for pupils who have been, or are at risk of, permanent exclusion and those pupils who cannot attend mainstream school for medical reasons or because they are young mothers.
- Schooling is based in three main centres, Millway Centre, Heworth Hall Centre and at the Dryden Centre. The latter is being used as extra teaching space to accommodate pupils who have been permanently excluded.
- Home tuition is also provided to pupils who are taught at the Heworth Hall site, or individually at home, as part of a transitional phase to returning to their mainstream schools. These pupils remain dual registered with their mainstream schools. At the time of this inspection, no young mothers were being educated.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school identifies most pupils as having special educational needs or disability due to health or behavioural difficulties. The proportion who are supported is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority).
- The school provides opportunities for a small number of pupils to undertake courses or work-related learning with alternative providers. Currently, 11 registered alternative providers are used, including Newcastle College, Wheels Project, Co-Musica and Stepney Bank Stables.
- In the last 10 months, pupil numbers have increased substantially in response to a surge in exclusions from Gateshead schools. The school has also experienced significant turbulence in staffing at teaching and leadership levels in the last year.
- The headteacher joined the school at the start of the summer term 2015. New leaders of English, mathematics and science took up their posts in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning on all sites through observations in classes and walks around the school to see learning taking place. Some observations were undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and analysed a sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in the pupil referral unit.
- Inspectors held meetings with two members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. They also held meetings with the headteacher, and with senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the safeguarding policy and procedures; self-evaluation and improvement planning; records of pupils' performance, behaviour and attendance; and other information provided by senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 29 responses from staff to the inspection survey.
- One response was received on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and inspectors also considered the school's own recent survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Gina White, Lead Inspector

Judith James

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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