

# Beacon Centre

The Beacon Centre, Temple Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 0QA

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils of all ages and backgrounds make good progress. The vast majority make a successful return to learning.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in their social and emotional development. This prepares them well for the next step in their lives.
- All pupils accelerate their progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Pupils benefit from personalised lessons that challenge them. In outstanding lessons activities are highly enjoyable and thought-provoking.
- Systems to track pupils' progress are very effective and applied well to inform teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and this is seen in their learning in lessons and activities around the school. They value and care about their excellent relationships with staff. They say that they are safe and happy in a friendly school.
- The inspiring leadership of the headteacher capably supported by her leadership team has improved many aspects of the school's performance since its last inspection. Together with the experienced and effective contributions of the management committee, there is good capacity for continued improvement.
- The management of teaching is extremely effective. This has led to improved teaching and, as a result, pupils are making better progress than at the time of the last inspection.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in numeracy skills is not yet outstanding. The curriculum, although good, is not providing enough opportunities to develop numeracy skills in lessons other than those in mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons which included all teaching staff. One of the observations was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector also met three pupils individually to talk about their work and experience of the school. The school's programme of re-integration for those pupils with medical needs was observed at the end of the school day.
- The inspector had discussions with the pupils, senior leaders, teachers, members of the management committee, and three representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection looked at the work of the school, including pupils' behaviour, and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, pupils' work, self-evaluation and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- There were not sufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to help plan the inspection. The inspector met two parents during the school day and reviewed the school's parental survey.

## Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Beacon Centre is the Alternative Education Centre and Behaviour Support Service for South Tyneside. It was formerly St Mary's Centre for Alternative Education and the Behaviour Support Service. It opened in January 2013 in a new building purposely designed for pupil referral provision as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme. The Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils are based on a primary school site at Hebburn Lakes School and Key Stages 3 and 4 students are based at the Beacon Centre. It is a short-stay school that provides individualised programmes of learning and support to young people who have a range of vulnerabilities and specific needs.
- Pupils are referred either because they are permanently excluded from mainstream school or because they are at risk of this happening. Referral pupils are dual-registered, remaining on the roll of their mainstream school. All have complex social and emotional needs or have behavioural difficulties. Most pupils have a history of persistent absence and non-attendance.
- The centre provides for pupils with medical needs that require home education. The provision is in partnership with the pupils' mainstream school and the amount and length of teaching support depends on the individual pupils' needs.
- Boys significantly outnumber girls and there are very few children looked after by the local authority.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils are in receipt of free school meals. The centre does not directly receive any of the pupil premium additional funding for eligible pupils. This is retained by the mainstream schools.
- The school receives no primary school sport funding. This is retained by mainstream schools.
- A well-below average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities to develop numeracy skills, so that pupils can apply them exceptionally well in many subjects by:
  - ensuring that all teachers plan lessons that include activities to develop numeracy skills
  - leaders monitor lessons and pupils' work to ensure that the taught curriculum provides regular activities to develop numeracy skills in a range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils enter school with skills and experience below that expected for their age. Good teaching, a personalised induction and the highly effective arrangements for engaging and supporting pupils in lessons ensures that they achieve well across the curriculum. For almost all pupils, there is substantial improvement in their attitudes, aspirations, motivation to learn and attendance.
- Even though many have below average levels of attainment when they join the school, many of those that stay for a significant period of time successfully catch up and leave with levels of attainment close to national expectations. Pupils, including boys and girls, the few pupils that speak English as an additional language, those home-educated with medical needs and those looked after by the local authority, make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils who are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school who arrive in Years 1 to 6 receive nurturing, high quality care and are skilfully managed and most settle well, despite their often complex needs and circumstances. In Years 7 to 11 the supporting and caring approach from staff ensures that all pupils with anxiety and attendance problems settle happily and gain confidence.
- A significant minority of pupils make excellent progress in English. For the vast majority of pupils, gaps in their knowledge and skills are narrowed quickly. This includes those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Teachers set these pupils highly challenging targets and monitor their achievement well.
- The most able pupils, through accurate assessment of their abilities, rapidly progress and catch up, leaving with levels of attainment close to national expectations.
- Although consistently good, fewer pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics. Pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills across a range of subjects is underdeveloped.
- The staff provide enjoyable activities to develop reading skills in the classroom. This supports pupils re-engaging with reading and leads to good progress in improving their reading skills, often in a short period of time.
- One parent commented that her child had made good progress and was keen to share her view with the inspection team, 'Ideally I would like him to stay here. He is improving a lot and he has gained confidence. He's not bored and he likes the challenge. I got a school report with A's and B's with such positive comments.'

### The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching across the school is good. The school's monitoring of the quality teaching shows that it has improved rapidly since the last inspection.
- The majority of lessons are individually planned and offer a varied range of activities that engage pupils well. Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons because they are enjoying their learning. Staff ensure that there is a personalised approach to learning. This gives pupils good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and work independently. Younger pupils become more confident in working with others.
- A broad range of interesting subjects captures pupils' interests well and stimulates thought-provoking comments, for example, using photography to explore images of 9/11 and pupils commenting, 'that picture looks like he is at peace'. In a science lesson taking a blood pressure reading became a highly interesting and fun experience evoking an insightful discussion on causes of high blood pressure. These activities underpin pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Reading and writing tasks are planned and resourced well and lead to at least good progress for the majority of pupils. This includes those pupils educated at home who have access to virtual learning environments and computers to support their literacy away from school. However, there

are not enough tasks planned in some subjects to develop numeracy skills.

- The majority of teaching is illustrated by high academic expectations for all pupils and of their good behaviour. In some lessons teaching is inspiring and very enjoyable. This is because teachers and support staff are skilled at meeting the very diverse needs of their pupils. Pupils say their teachers challenge them to work hard. One pupil told the inspector, 'I'm a kinaesthetic learner. Staff care about me and what my day will be. I was a level E, they told me I can get a C. I am very happy and confident I will get to college or the army.'
- A key strength of the teaching is the staff skill in generating a friendly and happy classroom atmosphere. Teaching assistants are often highly skilled in encouraging and guiding pupils and parents have experience of this. One parent explained, 'They talk to him like a mini-adult and there is respect on both sides. No matter which adult, they acknowledge him.'

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- School leaders' beliefs on emphasising positive behaviour are clearly reflected in the daily practice of the school. All staff use the same consistent strategies and, as a result, pupils respond to the high expectations of them managing their own behaviour.
- Pupils generally work hard although attitudes are not yet of a consistently high standard in some classes. On arrival many pupils have had difficult experiences at school and a reluctance to work. The caring, supportive induction to school, together with the respect and caring attitudes of staff, means they quickly engage in their lessons. In discussions, parents, staff and pupils speak positively about the good standard of behaviour in school.
- In their time here, most pupils make good gains in their personal development. They learn to get on with others. Excellent relationships are forged with the adults. Through their behaviour plans, pupils quickly begin to understand about right and wrong. The improvements in their attitudes and behaviour allow them to undertake visits away from the school, so that they can find out more about the world and how others live and work. Eventually, almost all are returned to mainstream classes or specialist provision.
- Conversations with pupils reveal that they feel safe and well looked after. Like their parents, they do not see bullying as an issue. Pupils speak confidently about how staff are always on hand to help them if they have a worry or upset. They demonstrate a good grasp of how to avoid risk and danger.
- The school has worked extremely diligently to improve attendance which is now in line with that of similar provisions. Highly effective work with schools, agencies and families, in addition to the benefits of meaningful rewards for pupils, has improved attendance well.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher leads the school with passion, drive and energy and with her leadership team has improved the school significantly since the last inspection. Together with the committed management committee they provide a clear vision for the school's continuous improvement.
- The school has good systems for checking the quality of its work, which are clear, concise and accurate. As a result, leaders are clear about the school's strengths and how to improve further.
- The relentless and comprehensive focus by the leadership team on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of lessons and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Performance management arrangements are fully in place and outcomes are linked to the school improvement plan and relevant staff training. Teachers are fully aware that they must meet their performance targets based on pupils' progress if they are to progress on the salary scale.
- School leaders' clear and explicit belief that every child should make as much academic progress as possible is reflected in the bespoke and personalised approaches taken to planning the curriculum, which in the main is very well matched to the needs of all pupils. However,

monitoring by leaders has not ensured that the taught curriculum provides pupils with regular opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in a range of subjects. As a result, pupils do not always have the experiences that will help them to develop an understanding of how to apply these skills in their future working lives.

- Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The relevant, exciting and highly engaging curriculum supports this well. Support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development and their health education is exceptional. Staff work extremely well with parents and hospital staff to ensure that pupils have an exceptional understanding of their own and others' needs and, as one pupil indicated, 'Staff are sound, teachers give me support, I'm better at English, love it, I'm listened to and moving forward.'
- The school benefits from being part of the Alternative Education and Behaviour Support Service, which promotes the sharing of good practice. This has provided high quality professional development for staff in and beyond the school. The clear picture of consistency in improvements within the school is recognised by the local authority, which now provides light-touch support.
- Pupils, parents, staff and partner schools feel they are highly valued by the school community. The school's ethos is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity very well and tackles discrimination promptly.
- Safeguarding meets requirements with much effective practice strengthening the good care and support for pupils and their families.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee is effective. It makes a good contribution to leadership through both support and challenge. The committee has been instrumental and purposeful in working with the leadership team and the local authority in securing a new purpose-built building of high quality. They check the quality of teaching and understand the essential links between the quality of learning and attendance for all groups of pupils. They manage finance efficiently, although with no funding for pupil premium the committee was not able to comment on this for the inspection. They make sure that all safeguarding procedures are strong and make effective use of performance management to continuously improve teaching and outcomes for pupils, including those in receipt of free school meals.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108666
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	425705

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	21
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Kerr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Allyson Poole
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 454 6254
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