

Greys Education Centre

Manor Drive, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 7AB

Inspection dates

12–13 November 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other leaders and managers provide good leadership. They are working well to raise pupils' achievement further and are ambitious to make the centre as effective as possible.
- The academy trust and the governing body work successfully with leaders in raising pupils' achievement and driving well-planned improvements.
- The curriculum is matched carefully to each pupil and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Pupils' learning and personal development benefit from the excellent links that the centre has established with mainstream schools and other agencies.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and improve significantly during their time at the centre.
- The centre's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils say that they feel safe. They have very positive relationships with the staff.
- Pupils achieve well and the centre meets with an outstanding level of success in quickly reintegrating them into mainstream school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the centre collects a lot of information about pupils' performance, it does not organise it in a way that makes it easily used.
- In their checks on teaching, leaders have not focused precisely on what needs to be done to move teaching from good to outstanding.
- On occasion, teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most-able pupils.
- A very small minority of secondary-aged pupils do not attend regularly and this reduces the progress that they make.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed lessons on the primary and secondary sites, in the medical provision and at the hospital school. This enabled the team to gather evidence about different aspects of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the head of the medical provision and the teacher at the hospital school, the assistant headteachers, and the English and mathematics leaders. Informal discussions took place with a number of other staff and with pupils on the primary and secondary sites. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Trustees and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspection team considered views of parents expressed in the centre’s own parental survey and parental evaluations of the service at the hospital school. There were too few responses to the online survey, Parent View, for an analysis to be made. Inspectors also considered the 23 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the unit’s self-evaluation and development plan; records of pupils’ attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance; and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Kate Robertson | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The Greys Education Centre converted to become an academy on 1 February 2013. When its predecessor school, The Greys Education Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- On its primary and secondary sites, the centre provides for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school or who have been out of school for reasons related to their behaviour. The centre also provides short-term preventative packages for pupils from local mainstream schools who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Pupils in Years 1 to 10 are normally dual registered with their mainstream school and placed at the centre for a short time, whereas those in Year 11 are registered solely with the centre.
- The centre also provides education at Bedford South Wing Hospital, home tuition and on-site tuition for pupils who have mental health or physical illnesses that prevent them from attending mainstream school.
- Pupils attend the hospital school for long, short and recurring periods of time and numbers fluctuate on a daily basis. In the last academic year, the centre as a whole supported around 200 pupils in its bases, on outreach and at the hospital school.
- The pupil premium provides support for half of the pupils in the centre. This is well above the national average.
- The centre does not receive Year 7 catch-up funding.
- An average proportion of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.
- All the pupils at the primary and secondary sites have special educational needs because of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils in the medical provision have special educational needs related to their mental health or physical difficulties.
- A small number of pupils in Year 11 attend Bedford College of Further Education for one day a week. The centre also makes use of another alternative provider, YES – Sports Support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and build on existing strengths by:
 - making sure that teachers always provide enough challenge for the most-able pupils
 - stepping up existing efforts to ensure that all pupils attend regularly, especially on the secondary site.
- Strengthen leadership and the drive towards becoming outstanding by:
 - improving the way information about pupils' performance is analysed and presented so that it is easily available to staff and governors
 - sharpening the focus on moving good teaching to outstanding and making sure that all teachers are clear about what needs to be done to achieve this.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the centre. In his ambition to develop a 'world class' education for the pupils, he is supported well by other senior leaders and managers. Teamwork across the centre is good and leaders have been successful in establishing a culture where teaching can flourish and pupils are expected to behave well.
- The headteacher has done a great deal to build the reputation of the centre since it became an academy and he has established excellent relationships with mainstream schools. The positive effect of this is evident in the high proportion of pupils who reintegrate into mainstream, reflecting schools' readiness to trust the centre's judgement and give pupils another chance.
- Leadership of the primary and secondary sites by the deputy headteachers is good. The recent development of the roles of assistant headteachers has increased the centre's capacity to improve and is bringing a greater focus to aspects of its work. Subject leaders make a good contribution to the centre's effectiveness. They have a clear knowledge of strengths and areas for development in their subjects, and take an active role in driving improvement. Leaders regularly check the attendance, progress and behaviour of individual pupils who spend some of their time at alternative provision.
- The medical provision and the hospital school are led and managed well, and the medical needs co-ordinator has been instrumental in shaping provision for pupils with medical needs across the authority. There are good systems in place for identifying what is working well and what could be improved. Parents are full of praise for the contribution the provision makes to their children's education.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. At Key Stages 1 to 3, the main focus is on preparing pupils for reintegration into mainstream school and strengthening their literacy and numeracy skills. At Key Stage 4, pupils have the opportunity to take a number of GCSE subjects at the centre as well as functional skills and vocational qualifications. Advice and careers guidance are carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs so that they are helped to make decisions that reflect their hopes for the future.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by regular trips out in the local area, for instance to parks and stables, and visits further afield, such as that to a Caribbean event in Brixton. Involvement in special events and a strong personal, social and health education programme contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The centre fosters positive relationships between pupils, tackles discrimination and encourages them to develop tolerance, including that required for life in modern British society.
- The centre makes good use of its pupil premium funding. It has used it to fund one-to-one and small group work focused on overcoming gaps in pupils' learning, and for purchasing materials aimed at raising standards, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The centre uses its primary sport funding effectively. The funding has been put to a six-week outdoor activity programme and to help with the costs of swimming lessons for pupils throughout the year. The funding has enabled pupils to gain skills in canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, high ropes and team building. Many of the pupils had not been swimming before and they have made very good progress. The funding has contributed not only to pupils' physical skills and well-being but also to their self-esteem and confidence.
- The centre's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Thorough systems are in place for protecting pupils, and staff have a detailed knowledge of the issues that affect each pupil's life. There is very close liaison with other agencies, and risks are assessed in detail including for pupils who attend college and alternative provision.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Training includes teaching assistants, and teachers have good

opportunities to share their practice with one another. The management of teachers' performance is used well to reward effective teaching and it has been used to tackle underperformance. In addition, there are frequent informal visits to lessons although the findings of these are not recorded. The leadership of teaching is not outstanding because work to move teaching from good to outstanding is not as sharply focused as it could be.

- The centre collects a wide range of information about each individual pupil's performance. It uses this well to identify pupils who need extra help and to make sure that pupils all have equal opportunities. However, it does not analyse and present overall performance data as efficiently as it could. As a result, patterns in the performance of different groups of pupils are not as clear as they could be, including achievement at any given time across the different sites.

■ The governance of the school:

- The academy trust and the governing body have a detailed knowledge of the centre's work and make a good contribution to its effectiveness. They share the staff's commitment to 'never give up on a pupil' and have a clear vision for the centre's further development.
- The trust includes a number of mainstream headteachers and the governing body provides a range of expertise. The role of the trustees and governors is very clearly defined and the two work together productively, providing support and challenge to senior leaders.
- The trustees and governing body have a detailed knowledge of how the centre manages teachers' performance and are able to talk about the quality of teaching and what is being done to tackle any relatively weaker teaching. They have regular reports from the headteacher on how well pupils are achieving, and understand the school's performance data, including checking on how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour improves greatly during their time at the centre. Once they settle in, pupils' attitudes to education improve and pupils say that they enjoy attending the centre. As a result, they apply themselves in lessons and concentrate exceptionally well when learning captures their imagination.
- The transformation in many pupils' behaviour is reflected in the high proportion who successfully reintegrate into mainstream school. It is also evident in the neat presentation in pupils' books and in their readiness to learn in most lessons. Records show that pupils behave well in alternative provision.
- Teachers work very closely with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and with educational psychologists in order to understand pupils' difficulties and meet their individual needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are firm but also sensitive to pupils' needs and difficulties. Pupils appreciate the fact that they are treated fairly, and respect and value the staff who work with them.
- The centre has very effective systems for managing pupils' behaviour and for tracking behavioural incidents. Staff provide excellent personal support to individual pupils and do everything possible to help them turn their lives around.
- The attendance rate on the primary site is close to the national average and most pupils on the secondary site attend regularly. The centre communicates closely with parents and other agencies to encourage pupils to attend. However, it is continuing to seek a solution to the very small minority of pupils on the secondary site who are persistent non-attenders.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It undertakes careful risk assessment to ensure the safety of pupils who attend alternative provision or work experience placements. Pupils say that they feel safe in the centre, and they have good opportunities to find out about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, older pupils receive fortnightly advice on sex education delivered by a nurse.

- The centre's records show that bullying and racist incidents are rare. Pupils confirm this and they have a good awareness of different forms of bullying. They say that any disagreements between pupils are dealt with straight away by the staff.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspection findings, the centre's own checks on teachers' work, pupils' books and progress data all indicate that teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teaching has a good effect on pupils' achievement and learning.
- Teachers are quick to establish productive relationships with pupils and create a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils are tested in English and mathematics when they join the centre and the resulting information is used well to set targets for them. Throughout the centre, there are good systems for gathering information from mainstream schools about pupils' attainment and for keeping them informed where pupils are dual-registered and these are used well on an individual basis.
- In lessons where pupils make outstanding progress, teachers use their very good subject knowledge to motivate pupils and engage their interest in the subject. In science lessons seen, pupils readily took part in detailed discussions and used every minute of their time productively because the teachers made the topics fascinating. In information and communication technology, a group of pupils chose to stay on and produce more work because they were enjoying working on their computer-generated presentations so much. In art, pupils' sketchbooks and finished work shows that they become deeply involved in trying out different techniques and the teacher instils in them a clear enjoyment of the subject.
- The teaching of literacy, numeracy and communication skills is good. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons through discussion and focused question and answer sessions. Teachers make sure that literacy and numeracy are included when planning lessons in subjects across the curriculum, and pupils are expected to record a good amount of information in a range of subjects.
- Teachers make good use of their teaching assistants, many of whom are highly skilled in supporting pupils' learning. They also use information and communication technology and other resources effectively to make lessons interesting and to support pupils' achievement.
- Homework is included in the planning for all subjects and contributes appropriately to pupils' learning. Sometimes, this consists of written work and at other times involves pupils in thinking about or researching a topic.
- Teachers use the assessment information they have effectively to provide the right amount of challenge for all the pupils. Just occasionally, they give pupils work that involves the most able practising some of their existing skills rather than offering them sufficient challenge.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils join the primary and secondary sites with attainment that is well below national expectations for their age because of a history of poor attendance, disrupted education and underachievement. They typically have negative attitudes to learning and some have been out of school for a period of time. Attainment is more variable on entry to the medical provision and hospital school: some pupils are working at or above national expectations but others have significant gaps in their learning.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in a range of subjects. Particular strengths are evident in art and design, where pupils produce some high quality work. Their progress is also strong in science, information and communication technology and physical education.
- Throughout the centre, pupils make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and communication.

This gives them a belief in their ability to learn and contributes greatly to their successful reintegration into mainstream school.

- Pupils readily explain their thinking and contribute to discussions in class. Their books show that they produce a good amount of work. On the primary site, pupils make good progress in learning about phonics (the sounds that letters make). In mathematics on both sites, they make good progress in working through a range of different topics. Those who receive support with their literacy make good progress in increasing their reading and spelling ages.
- Different groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils for whom the centre receives pupil premium funding make as much progress as their classmates. In 2014, their attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4 was at least as good as that of other pupils and in some cases, slightly better.
- For pupils who are in-patients in hospital, the centre concentrates on maintaining their education and helping them to keep up with work that is being done in their home school. By working closely with their home schools and other agencies, the centre is successful in supporting their return to school as quickly as possible. Home tuition and tuition in the medical provision enables pupils who have sometimes been out of school for lengthy periods of time to catch up with their work and achieve much better than could ever have been expected in their GCSE coursework.
- Pupils at Key Stage 4 gain a range of qualifications and vocational skills which prepare them well for the world of work. Those who spend some of their time with alternative providers make good progress. As a result of the progress pupils make during their time at Key Stage 4, the very large majority go on to employment, training or further education when they leave at the end of Year 11. The centre does not enter pupils early for GCSE.
- Although there are occasions in lessons where teachers do not challenge the most-able pupils as much as they could, these pupils make good progress overall. For example, support by home tutors has enabled individual pupils to gain as many as nine A* to C grades at GCSE. There are examples of the most-able pupils producing imaginative, high-quality writing as a result, such as, 'A feeling of foreboding comes over me. The crows swoop around me, hungry eyes looking for food. Their loud squawking fills my head. Fierce clouds overpower the once gentle blue sky. The sun is suppressed by the intense, mysterious blackness. I stand in the middle of the field of wheat and it reminds me of a sea of gold.'
- The irregular attendance of a very small minority of pupils on the secondary site limits their achievement. The centre's records show that they generally make slower progress than the other pupils.

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

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| Unique reference number | 139320 |
| Local authority | Bedford |
| Inspection number | 448002 |

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 | 5–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 75 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Christine Highams |
| Headteacher | Terry Ashmore |
| Date of previous school inspection | N/A |
| Telephone number | 01234 408477 |
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