

The Darley Centre

School Road, Ashby, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN16 2TD

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress current pupils make, although improving, is not consistently good, particularly in Year 11.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan work that meets the needs of each individual. Work is not appropriately matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Some teachers plan the same work for all of the pupils in the class.
- Teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding quickly enough.
- Leaders and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Consequently, pupils do not have high aspirations.
- There are too few opportunities for writing at length across all subjects, including English. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their skills.
- Leadership capacity is hampered by a lack of essential senior and middle leaders to share responsibilities with the headteacher.
- Leaders do not have a thorough understanding of how to evaluate and use the information they collect. Leaders are unclear about the effectiveness of actions they take to improve the school.
- Leaders do not always provide sufficient opportunities for teachers' professional development.
- Governors' skills and understanding are improving; however, governors do not hold leaders rigorously to account.
- Governors have not ensured that robust checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning. They have not challenged weaknesses revealed by the school's tracking systems.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's work to keep pupils safe, including the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are welcoming to visitors and show respect for staff.
- Skilled staff provide early and consistent support to vulnerable pupils. This has a positive impact on their behaviour and confidence as learners.
- Key stage 4 pupils undertake work experience, which develops their understanding of the world of work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
 - making sure that the school’s development plans focus on clearly identified priorities and contain measurable actions that will positively impact on pupils’ learning and progress
 - sharing leadership responsibilities to ensure that school improvement priorities are carried out thoroughly and rapidly
 - providing appropriate professional development for staff to ensure high-quality teaching so that pupils make at least good progress
 - making sure that checks by leaders on teaching are focused on the impact they have on pupils’ learning
 - exploring opportunities to increase leadership and management skills by working collaboratively with colleagues in similar settings
 - strengthening governors’ skills so that they can challenge leaders more rigorously.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use assessment information effectively to plan and implement activities that match the individual needs of pupils and build on their prior knowledge and skills
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, so that they challenge pupils effectively
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum
 - make sure pupils are aware of their short-term targets and what they need to do to achieve them successfully
 - allow time in lessons for pupils to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection leaders have not further developed the quality of teaching. Weaknesses in staff performance mean that pupils' outcomes have not improved.
- A lack of senior leadership has led to an overreliance on one person, the headteacher, to develop the school. A collaborative approach has therefore not been possible. While the headteacher clearly understands the needs of the pupils well, leadership capacity has not been available to tackle areas for development quickly enough.
- Pupils in key stage 4 receive a broad and balanced curriculum. They access an appropriate range of courses, both academic and vocational, to meet their needs and aspirations. In addition, pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that enable them to develop their skills, talents and interests. In key stage 3, however, the curriculum does not always meet pupils' needs.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. There is a determination to provide an experience for disaffected pupils that re-engages them in education. The school prepares those who are able to return to mainstream schools well.
- The headteacher understands the need for emotional support for staff and he supports this well.

Governance

- Governors are extremely loyal and supportive of the school. They are hardworking and give their time generously. They are ambitious for all pupils and families and determined to rapidly improve outcomes.
- Governors place a high priority on keeping children safe. They are aware of local issues and ensure that leaders act accordingly. However, they do not meet with the designated lead for safeguarding to make the robust checks that are required.
- Recent appointments have strengthened the capacity of the governing body with the skills to analyse key aspects of the school's performance. The role of the new governors needs to be developed so that their experience and expertise are fully realised.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe at the school.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are detailed, well organised and stored securely. Regular training means that all staff have a strong understanding of the importance of safeguarding.
- Staff are vigilant and know how to look out for any signs of abuse. Leaders and staff know their pupils well and make pupils' well-being a priority. They understand the

implications of the latest version of 'Keeping children safe in education', including their responsibility to prevent extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils or set tasks for them with sufficient challenge. Consequently, pupils lose interest and do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some pupils have difficulty in expressing and explaining their ideas, as there are not enough opportunities across all subjects for pupils to write at length and practise this skill.
- Most pupils enter the school with lower levels of achievement than their peers in English and mathematics. School information shows that key stage 3 pupils subsequently make steady progress. However, there are some doubts about the accuracy of this, because the school does not always check that it has the most up-to-date information on achievement from pupils' previous schools.
- Pupils are encouraged to read; however, they do not have enough opportunity to develop a deeper understanding and comprehension of text.
- Too often, teachers set the same work for pupils with different starting points. Consequently, pupils, particularly those who are the most able, do not receive enough challenge. Some pupils must wait to move on to the next learning activity while others catch up. Pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding are not given enough time and support to catch up quickly.
- Teachers' planning for lessons is well structured and informative. However, planning lacks precision because teachers do not use information about pupils' achievements well enough.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge to promote interest in the curriculum and successfully re-engage pupils in their education. This enables some pupils to moderate their behaviour on their return to mainstream schools.
- Teachers have expert knowledge about the nurture and teaching of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff dedicate themselves to improving outcomes for their pupils. They use their skills to identify how and when the pupils need additional emotional support. They use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure and can begin to access their education.
- Displays place a strong emphasis on emotional well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of education. These reinforce the lessons staff teach.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The exceptionally positive relationships between staff and pupils permeate the work of the centre and help all pupils, particularly those with emotional vulnerabilities, to gain

confidence. Pupils have complete trust in the staff so that they are able to share any concerns they have, knowing that staff have their best interests at heart.

- School leaders ensure that all pupils receive the additional emotional support they need. They are quick to identify those with complex backgrounds and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school works closely with a wide range of external agencies to provide considerable targeted help where needed.
- Pupils conduct themselves well, look smart and are polite to others because staff model these behaviours consistently. Pupils show respect and tolerance for one another.
- The curriculum is used effectively to help pupils to stay safe and manage risk to themselves and others. Pupils fully understand the dangers of being online and using social media. They know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils talk at length about the important things they should and should not do when online. They actively promote this with their peers outside of school.
- Parents, pupils and members of staff raised no concerns about bullying. Pupils identify staff members that they can talk to if concerns arise.
- All pupils receive impartial careers guidance in key stage 4 from their host schools and have the opportunity to take part in a period of work experience. A dedicated member of staff promotes work experience well and ensures that pupils have a positive experience.
- Key stage 4 pupils are supported well with college applications and visits. This enables pupils to transition successfully to their destination colleges when they leave The Darley Centre.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Some pupils present challenges, particularly when they first arrive. They quickly learn the rules of the school and how to cooperate and improve their behaviour. The school places an emphasis on using appropriate language and has a zero-tolerance approach to drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour at the school well, and there are positive systems in place to reduce any poor behaviour. Staff use praise and rewards appropriately and effectively to motivate pupils.
- Little lesson time is lost through disruptive behaviour. Staff are quick to intervene and take positive action to alleviate or distract so that other pupils continue to learn. The proportion of pupils excluded varies due to the nature of the school and the individual pupils attending at the time. Leaders use exclusion as a last resort when other pupils' safety is put at risk. Leaders are working hard to implement strategies to support pupils further and to decrease the number of exclusions.
- While pupils' attendance is below the national average, it is improving rapidly because leaders put measures in place to support regular attendance. For example, absences are followed up with phone calls and, where appropriate, home visits.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils arrive at the school with skills well below those of other pupils nationally. The lack of thorough information about what pupils can and cannot do on entry to the school means that pupils' progress is not always measured accurately, as this school does not assess pupils on entry.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make some progress over time, but this is inconsistent. The school has yet to show consistent progress throughout key stage 4. There are early signs that this is improving, and leaders are ambitious to provide a more consistent approach across all key stages.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to other pupils at the school and requires improvement. The school does not receive additional funding for these pupils as standard, but leaders can have access to funding from the host school if the need arises. Additional funding requested and received by the school has been used to meet pastoral needs, resulting in improved attendance for individual pupils.
- Systems to track the progress of pupils and groups are developing. The school collects a large amount of information, but leaders and teachers do not use it well to effectively improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders do not analyse data well enough or use it to inform themselves about where pupils need academic interventions or additional support.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils move into sustained education, employment or training which successfully matches their career aspirations when they leave the school.
- Leaders have appropriate plans to improve procedures and processes to improve outcomes for pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	117704
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10049000

This inspection of the school 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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Clark
Headteacher	Mike Burnett
Telephone number	01724 705023
Website	www.thedarleycentre.org.uk
Email address	admin@thedarleycentre.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 January 2012

Information about this school

- The Darley Centre is a pupil referral unit that educates pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have an education, health and care plan on arrival and others obtain one with support from the school.
- Most of the key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils attending remain on roll at their mainstream school as well as The Darley Centre.
- There has been a significant change in the pupil profile since the last inspection. Pupils attending the school now have a higher level of need associated with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Pupils can join the school at any time during the school year in all year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The school provides a free breakfast club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms and some lessons were formally observed. Learning walks took place, one jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' book across all key stages. They observed pupils carrying out other activities and as they moved around school at breaktimes and lunchtime. Inspectors also observed the arrangements that are in place for pupils as they arrive at school and as they leave at the end of the day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff, teachers and support staff. Meetings were also held with the members of the management committee and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally to discuss their experiences of school.
- The inspectors considered the views of nine members of staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire. Too few parents responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to take account of their views. Inspectors took account of views expressed in the school's own recent surveys and from two individual parents.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to: pupils' plans; individual pupil progress information; governors' records of meetings; the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness; school improvement; and pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors also examined arrangements for safeguarding, checked procedures and scrutinised records relating to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Sara Roe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lyndsey Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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