

# Wodensborough Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135254
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	360710
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Dobbins

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Angell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Wodensborough Community College Hydes Road, Wednesbury WS10 0DR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out one additional inspector. The inspector observed, in part or in full, eight lessons and each of the unit's three teachers. He held meetings with the vice chair of the management committee, the chairman of the local authority's behaviour and attendance partnership, the manager of special educational needs provision, the unit's improvement partner, the headteacher of one of the client schools, staff and pupils. He looked at policies and reviewed documents and the data the school has on pupils' progress. He scrutinised two parent questionnaires and spoke with one parent.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the unit's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How clear an understanding the unit has of pupils' progress in their learning and in their personal and social development?
- Are pupils learning what is right for them and how effectively do teachers meet pupils' individual learning and their additional needs?
- How well does the unit know its role within the overall provision of the local authority and how effective are the unit's leaders in matching the provision to the role?

## Information about the school

Wodensborough pupil referral unit (PRU) caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded from, or are at risk of exclusion, from five secondary schools in the north of the authority. The unit is co-located with one of these secondary schools. Permanently excluded pupils attend the unit full time and those at risk of exclusion spend part of their week there, with the remaining time in their other schools. The unit has a maximum of 18 pupils in attendance at any time, but throughout the year as many as 60 pupils will spend some time at the unit. Most who attend the unit have a history of disrupted education. Typically, there are more boys than girls. About half of the pupils are of a White British heritage and most of the others are of Black heritage. Since the last inspection the unit has gained a good number of awards including the ArtsMark award and the Titan Travel award.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Wodensborough is an outstanding pupil referral unit. The unit is a purposeful and well-organised place with high expectations for learning and for helping pupils cope with their additional needs. Over their time there many pupils rediscover the joy of learning and commit themselves to success at the next stage of their education and later life. It is a safe and secure place characterised by the respect pupils show to the staff, their outstanding behaviour and the outstanding progress they make in their learning and in dealing with their other difficulties. One pupil spoke for many, saying: 'There is no messing around here. Everyone gets on with each other and, because the staff are so friendly and supportive, we all want to do our best for them; that is why we are learning so well.'

Most pupils join the unit with histories of disturbed education and with below average levels of attainment. The emotional, social and behavioural difficulties many bring with them act as severe barriers to learning. Despite this, outstanding teaching and care, both carefully tailored to meet the specific needs of each pupil, help them realise outstanding progress in their learning and in dealing with their difficulties. In reading, for example, pupils make more than double the expected progress as they gain, on average, two reading months for each month spent at the unit. In mathematics, they do just as well and they make equally outstanding progress in science and in art and design. And, because they learn to cope with their additional difficulties, pupils are prepared exceptionally well for their return to mainstream schools, where most thrive as learners.

Teaching is outstanding because teachers use the detailed assessment information they have on pupils to plan lessons made up of tasks that are right for each one of them, not too hard and not too easy. Class sizes are small and teachers and their learning support assistants make very effective teams. Through their good attitudes and outstanding behaviour, pupils make an important contribution to their own success as learners. They know they make rapid progress and many become excited about this. Some, for the first time, experience the enjoyment of learning and of working hard to do their best. The curriculum focuses on improving literacy and numeracy skills and in providing the specific advice and guidance required for helping each pupil deal more effectively with their additional difficulties. Staff quickly establish outstanding relationships with pupils. The way pupils listen to, most often, act on the advice, and guidance provided by staff shows the high regard they have for them. The work of specialist teams and agencies, such as the behaviour support team and the family intervention programme, makes a significant contribution to pupils' development and in helping parents and carers improve their parenting skills. During their time at the unit, pupils gain an excellent understanding of the importance of being safe at all times. There is very little bullying and only a few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. They have a secure awareness of right and wrong and many show maturity when they have choices to make, including those to do with staying safe

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and keeping healthy. Almost all attend regularly enough to gain full benefit from the unit. A very small number do not and, despite the best efforts of the unit and the officers of the education welfare service, they gain too little. Client headteachers have a very high regard for the work of the unit because they know that pupils who join their schools from the unit most likely will prosper as learners.

Senior leaders make a very effective team. They know the unit's strengths and weaknesses very well. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has led improvements through the use of the very good self-evaluation procedures. As a consequence, pupils are making better progress; teaching is better; the curriculum provides a better match with pupils' learning and additional needs; and the procedures for admitting pupils into the unit and for providing support on their return to mainstream schools are all more effective. These, and other developments, show the capacity for sustaining improvement to be outstanding. The management committee is led well and meets its remit to the unit. However, notwithstanding the success of the unit in improving the life chances of pupils, there is no clear policy document outlining the local authority's defined role for the unit. Therefore, it is not possible to judge success of the unit against any stated aims.

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

- The management committee should work toward gaining a detailed description of the role of the unit.

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

**1**

Typically, pupils enter the unit with levels of attainment below average. This is because reduced attendance linked with significant social, emotional and behavioural issues caused difficulties in dealing with the demands and expectations of their mainstream schools. At the unit their progress in English, mathematics and science substantially improves. For example, the impressive gains pupils make in reading help about 30% to catch up and read at the level commensurate with their age. It is the same for mathematics and for science. This includes the minority of girls. Their improved attendance and behaviour, better attitudes to learning and greater self-confidence underpin the very high rate of successful returns into mainstream schools. The curriculum focuses less on the other subjects. Nevertheless, the high quality work in art seen since the opening of the unit has contributed to the recent awarding of the ArtsMark.

As they spend time at the unit pupils become increasingly comfortable and confident as learners. They know the unit is a good place for them because of the great strides they make in their learning and in coping with their other difficulties. The many who experience the enjoyment in learning again are motivated to do even better in their work. For example, in a lesson in data handling pupils learned to describe a distribution of scores through the mean, median, mode and range statistics and excitedly saw the application of their new learning to other distributions, including interpreting the position of their local team in the Premier League table.

Pupils have a clear awareness of the importance of staying healthy. There is no school council but as there are only a small number of pupils at the unit at any time staff easily gain their thoughts and opinions. They are encouraged to suggest improvements in the running of the unit and most recently contributed to the healthy school audit and helped to develop the travel plan submitted as part of the requirements for the Titan Travel

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award. Pupils have a good understanding of the local community, for example through their regular visits to the allotment and by visiting local primary schools to read to pupils. At last year's Wednesbury Arts Festival they won an award in competition with other schools. Cultural differences are celebrated through the special days of different religions and countries. The significant gains made in self-confidence and self-esteem, and the trust and respect pupils have for staff, support a good awareness of spiritual issues, such as the importance of belief and friendship.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Lessons are characterised by the small number of pupils and by teachers' careful planning. Both contribute to making learning relevant because lesson tasks match well with pupils' specific learning needs. Base line assessment procedures, which each pupil completes on entry to the unit, provide important and accurate information which teachers use to prepare lessons. Learning what is right for them makes an important contribution to their outstanding progress against their targets. Pupils' outstanding behaviour is a strength of the unit; more so when account is taken of the difficulties they had in fully controlling their behaviour in their other schools. Teaching and learning are as effective as they are because very little time is lost as a consequence of inappropriate behaviour or poor attitudes. About half of the pupils gain additional benefit by completing the homework, set once a week, through the unit's web site.

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The curriculum is outstanding because it is flexible enough to meet the primary learning needs and the additional needs of each pupil. This means that learning is relevant to pupils, which helps in maintaining their interest and promoting enjoyment. They say they enjoy coming to the unit, not only because they know that they are doing well in their learning but also because they can take part in activities they enjoy. These are made available because of the initiative shown by senior leaders in gaining Extended Schools funding to support, for example, learning magic, fruit picking, tending the allotment and joining cooking and karate clubs. The Titan Travel award is used well in helping pupils develop the skills and confidence to use public transport to and from the unit and, occasionally, when visiting training providers. Pupils are pleased that their work can be recognised through Open College Network certificates in, for example, personal hygiene, healthy relationships and travelling independently.

Pupils are looked after and supported outstandingly well. Each is very well known as an individual and each gains the expert help and advice needed to experience success at the next stage of their education and life thereafter. The unit makes every effort to involve families in supporting its work. One mother is very appreciative of this, reporting that her son is doing better in this school and the family is more united because she is better at dealing with him at home as a result of the advice and support she has gained through the family intervention programme. Transition into the unit works very smoothly. All permanently excluded pupils assigned to the unit enter within the six day period. Transition arrangements for the full-time return to mainstream schools are individualised for each pupil. The very high proportion of successful returns is testament to the effectiveness of these arrangements.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders have a very clear vision for the role of the unit as an extension of provision of the five client schools. It is a vision fully shared and supported by the senior leaders of the client schools. They recognise the success of the unit in many ways. Importantly for them, the substantial reduction in the number of pupils permanently excluded from their schools is a direct result of the preventative work of the unit. Unit staff are unified behind the headteacher. He has created procedures and systems that allow them to fashion learning opportunities that best fit the learning needs of individual pupils and to make best use of their counselling skills in dealing with pupils' additional issues. For the very great majority of pupils, the vision of the unit's headteacher and the senior leaders in the client schools is met in full. Since the last inspection, improved teaching and learning and the broadening of the experiences available to pupils in helping

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them and their families in dealing with their additional needs shows the unit's capacity for sustaining improvement to be outstanding.

The management committee takes seriously its responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of pupils. The behaviour and attendance committee operate very effectively in determining who will enter the unit and in identifying the school, to which they will return. Good reporting arrangements mean that members have a good knowledge of the work of the unit. Nevertheless, even though the headteacher and those in the client schools have a very clear vision for the role of the unit, there is no definitive document to guide the management committee in outlining the local authority's notion for the work of the unit. This weakens the management committee's position in recognising the success of the unit as there is no formal and consensually recognised template against which to judge the effectiveness of the unit as part of the local authority's overall provision.

There is no discrimination of any sort and a strength is that through the flexible curriculum each pupil has equal access to all the unit offers. Due regard has been paid to community cohesion. Pupils have a very good knowledge of their local community through many well-established links and their regular visits to local places. There is cursory regard for regional and international links. Partnerships with the client schools are so close that the client headteachers do not see the unit as an independent educational establishment, but rather as an extension of their own provision. Staff work very hard to involve parents and carers in supporting their work. They join with parents and carers to overcome particular issues, such as improving a pupils attendance and when brokering involvement in specialist programmes, especially the family intervention programme. Staff easily recount the notable successes which have radically improved the life chances of pupils and considerably advantaged them and their families. One pupil, commenting on his time at the unit, said: 'Being at the unit has changed my life for the good. Now, I know that I can learn as well as most people, I can behave as well as most people and I like myself more because of this. Also, life at home for me and my mother is much better because I go to 'school' everyday and don't get hassles in my life anymore.'



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The very small number of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire or who spoke with the inspector were in favour of all aspects of the unit.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wodensborough Pupil Referral Unit 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 inspector received two completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 17 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	50	1	50	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)	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	2	100	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



26 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Wodensborough Pupil Referral Unit, Wednesbury, WS10 0DR**

It was lovely for me to meet and talk with you when I visited your unit. I found it to be an excellent place that prepares you outstandingly well for your full-time return to your home school or your move to your next school. Here are some of the things I particularly liked about your unit.

The outstanding progress you make in English, mathematics, science and art and design. Your strong relationships with the staff, which helps you to enjoy many of your lessons, and even enjoy working hard to do your best.

The great gains you make in dealing with your emotions and improving your behaviour.

The very effective way all at the unit make sure that it is a calm and friendly place where you say you feel safe and secure.

The way staff are always ready to help you, and your parents and carers if they want help, in dealing with issues that trouble you.

There is one thing I have asked to be made better. I would like the committee that manages the unit to have a precise knowledge of how the unit fits in with the mainstream schools, and I have asked that they work toward gaining this information. When they have it they will be able to make an accurate judgement of how well the unit is doing, not only in meeting your needs but as part of the overall educational provision in the Borough.

You can help too, by attending regularly, and by behaving as well and always working as hard as you did over the time of my visit. I wish you a very successful return to your home school, or to your next school.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins

Lead inspector

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