

Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124528
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359691
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

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	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	David Siddall
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Three lessons and three part-lessons were observed, and five teachers and two support assistants. Learning was also observed in the voluntary railway project, where students help to maintain a local railway track and develop team skills in the work place and at the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO). Telephone discussions were held with a few parents and carers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of students, a representative of the management committee, and of the local authority. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including assessment information and tracking data, safeguarding documentation and attendance records. Eight parental questionnaires were analysed, along with staff and student questionnaire returns.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors considered whether there are any significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or students with a statement of special educational needs, and how well teaching is matched to differing needs.
- They looked at how well teaching assistants are deployed to support teaching and learning and what features of their work contribute to the progress of students with a statement of special educational needs.
- They explored how effectively the unit encourages students to adopt safe practices and deal sensibly with risks during outdoor activities when they attend alternative vocational or work-based provision.
- They looked at whether the unit's community cohesion audit and action plan are comprehensive and have contributed to students' cultural development and their contribution to the wider community.

Information about the school

Westbridge is a 32 place pupil referral unit, serving the southern area of Suffolk, for students at Key Stage 4 with a range of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All students have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities as requiring additional support beyond that provided in their schools. Many joined the unit having been excluded from school with histories of low attendance and fragmented education. A high proportion have a statement of special educational needs and a significantly above average proportion are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few students are looked after by the local authority. There are significantly more boys than girls. Students attend off-site provision, such as colleges and NACRO, for part of their education during their time at the unit.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Westbridge Unit provides good education and care for its students, which is reflected in the positive views of parents and carers. Typically, one parent wrote, 'My son has settled very well into this school and I am very pleased with the progress he is making'. Another described the school atmosphere as 'warm and friendly' and staff as 'encouraging and motivating, going above and beyond their call of duty to ensure my son's happiness and success.'

Attainment is broadly average and standards have been rising steadily from year to year. Students make good progress from their low starting points, and achievement is good. This is because teaching is always matched well to their individual needs so that all learn well and make good progress in lessons. There is no significant difference between the progress of girls and boys or those with a statement of special educational needs. The curriculum is highly personalised to cater for different needs and interests and provides highly relevant examinations and vocational courses which stimulate enjoyment and interest in learning. Pupils' progress towards challenging targets is clearly recorded and teaching assistants carry out thorough assessments to plan individual support programmes for those who need additional help, such as those with a statement of special educational needs. This enables students to experience success and re-engage with learning.

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for ensuring the smooth transfer of students when they leave the unit is outstanding, as is support for those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. Attendance is broadly average but strategies for reducing the persistent absence of the few pupils with low attendance have had limited impact. Students have a satisfactory knowledge of healthy living, however, procedures to ensure that they all understand the health risks of smoking are not always effective. Good procedures are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of students, who say they feel very safe in the unit. This is also reflected in their good behaviour. Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Although they make a good contribution to their local community, their involvement in the wider community and their appreciation of the diversity within communities nationally and globally is limited. The unit's audit of community cohesion and action to promote it further are limited and do not include national and global dimensions.

All staff share in the drive for continuous improvement under the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy. Good monitoring of teaching and learning has led to accurate self-evaluation, which is used well to set clear priorities for improvement and to address any potential shortcomings. This has given rise to sustained improvements in teaching and standards, demonstrating the unit's good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work more closely with other agencies and with the parents and carers of the very few pupils who do not attend regularly to reduce the rate of unauthorised absence by 50% within a year of their arrival in the unit.
- Improve students' awareness of healthy living by:
 - increasing their knowledge of the health risks and other harmful effects of smoking
 - providing individual support to students who are trying to give up smoking.
- Extend students' cultural awareness, their appreciation of national and global diversity and their contribution to the wider community by:
 - conducting a more detailed audit that takes into account religious, cultural and socio-economic aspects of the local, national and global community
 - developing a comprehensive community cohesion action plan.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enter Year 10 with attainment that is below average and sometimes low as a result of their history of poor attendance and disruption to their education. By the end of Year 11, their attainment is broadly average, demonstrating good achievement. Students make good progress in the unit because most improve their attendance significantly and this enables them to re-engage with learning and catch up quickly. In the lessons and outside activities observed by inspectors, students focused on learning throughout and constantly tried to improve. They were seen to work independently for sustained periods of time, for example in the 'tyres and wheels' option of the motor mechanics course at NACRO, in an art lesson and in music. They listened to teachers, followed instructions and acquired new skills rapidly because learning was personalised for them. Students with additional learning difficulties and those with a statement of special educational needs make equally good progress in lessons because support for learning is highly effective and individualised. Students make good progress towards their targets, which are challenging and based on accurate assessments. Most leave the unit with between two and four GCSEs in a range of subjects and a number of vocational qualifications in construction, building, car mechanics, decorating, catering and/or hair and beauty. A few students make outstanding progress, gaining A* to C grades at GCSE in subjects such as physical education, art and mathematics from low starting points. All students, including those with statements, move on to further education and/or employment in their chosen areas when they leave the unit and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Students enjoy learning and all that the unit offers them, which is reflected in a high uptake of the activities. They participate actively in sport and they exercise vigorously. Many Year 11 students gain junior sports leaders awards and make a good contribution to their local community, providing coaching in local primary schools. Students are aware of the need to make healthy eating choices. Many are already smokers when they join the unit and this limits their ability to stay healthy. Students often reflect on what led them to the unit and use this increased insight to inform decisions and improve their life chances. Their good moral and social development is reflected in their good behaviour, respectful attitudes and good relationships with others. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily

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promoted through personal, social and health education and in subjects such as art and music.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

Good teaching was seen in nearly all lessons and accurately reflects the school's own views about the strengths of teaching. Teachers maintain good relationships with students, manage behaviour well provide interesting and varied activities to engage them in learning and develop their curiosity, carefully matching each task to their prior attainment. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher captivated a student's interest by showing him a large photograph of an iceberg to introduce a topic on flat and solid shapes. In a science investigation, the teacher used iodine, starch solution, and milk to show students how quickly sexually transmitted diseases can be transmitted through casual sex. As a result, students reflected maturely on the outcomes of their investigations and the importance of maintaining sexual health. Teaching assistants considerably enhance learning for those who require one-to-one or small-group support by using assessment information well to choose special approaches and resources. This ensures that activities are matched to students' needs and learning styles and move learning forward. The range of courses available within the curriculum has increased since the last inspection, with a good balance between vocational and academic courses. These are carefully matched to the interests and needs of students, with a strong emphasis on

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English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. As a result, the curriculum is highly relevant. Good partnerships with local providers such as colleges of further education, NACRO, local mainstream schools and sport facilities have a positive impact on learning, enjoyment and students' well-being.

Effective careers guidance and a range of work experience placements. Enable students to learn about work-related skills. Good links with the Connexions service, close involvement of parents and carers in reviews, and strong links with colleges enable very smooth transition when students leave the unit. Good use of external professionals ensures that those whose circumstances make them vulnerable achieve equally well. Procedures for promoting good attendance are nearly always effective, although the unit recognises more could be done to further reduce unauthorised absence. The unit refers a number of students to the local authority smoking cessation team, although strategies for reducing smoking and nicotine addiction are not as effective as they should be.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported ably by the deputy and senior leadership team, provide a clear sense of direction and drive for improvement which are shared by all staff. Performance management is embedded in practice and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored through lesson observations every half term. As a result, the unit knows its strength and areas for development well and takes the necessary action to bring about improvements. The impact of this is evident in rising standards and improvements in the use of assessment, the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Although the management committee provides satisfactory strategic oversight for the unit's work, the local authority provided good support to enable the unit to function effectively. Safeguarding is promoted well throughout the unit's provision with thorough vetting of all staff and visitors, Sharply focused opportunities within the curriculum develop students' awareness of staying safe, including when they take part in activities outside the unit. This is reflected in the student HHHealth and Safety Certificate, which all students are obliged to take in food technology and vehicle workshops before participating in these activities.

The unit's good engagement with parents and carers includes opportunities to involve them in reviews of their children's progress, regular consultation meetings and home visits as required. The majority of parents and carers take advantage of what is on offer and are pleased with the information they receive from the unit. Strong partnerships with external agencies and local providers promote students' learning and well-being effectively.

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Equality of opportunity is promoted well and reflected in equally good attainment and progress for all groups of students, including the very few students looked after by the local authority and those entitled to free school meals. Discrimination is tackled effectively with no recorded incidents. Community cohesion is promoted well locally. However, the audit is very general and has not been used well enough to plan opportunities for students to learn more about diversity in communities in the national and global contexts. Furthermore, the unit has not evaluated the impact of its community cohesion provision on students' cultural development and their contribution to the wider community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately a quarter of all parents and carers returned their questionnaires, this is a broadly typical response for this type of establishment. Responses to questionnaires and telephone discussions were very positive and demonstrate strong support for the work of the unit with no negative comments or concerns. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the progress their children are making and link this to the good quality teaching and care provided by the unit. They are pleased with the information they receive from the unit, particularly in relation to their children's progress and say that the unit is well managed. They believe that behaviour is good and that their children are safe at the unit. Inspection findings endorse parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westbridge 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 inspection team received eight completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 31 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	88	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	75	2	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	50	4	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)	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	75	2	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	88	1	12	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).

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



24 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit, Ipswich, IP1 2HE

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we inspected the Westbridge unit recently. We welcomed the opportunity to speak with you and to hear your views. You go to a good unit. We were particularly pleased with your good behaviour and with your good learning and progress. You have a good choice of examination courses to follow and many interesting places to learn such as NACRO, local colleges and sports facilities. Most of you make good improvements in your attendance, which reflects how much you enjoy learning in the unit.

Here are some things that I have asked the unit to do to help it improve:

- to work more closely with the parents of those of you with low attendance and with the education welfare officer to make sure you attend regularly - you can help by trying your very best to attend the unit every day
- to develop ways of reducing smoking to enable those of you who smoke to be healthier - you can help by giving up smoking and reminding yourselves of the harm nicotine and tar is doing to your body
- to provide more opportunities for you to learn and appreciate the differences in other communities throughout the United Kingdom and the world.

Keep doing your best and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy

Lead inspector

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