

Kettlebrook Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133583
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	360536
Inspection dates	17–18 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Kirsty Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed, in part or in full, 13 lessons and each of the unit's three class teachers. They held meetings with the chair of the management committee, the local authority's link advisor and the exclusions officer, the inclusion officers of two of the client secondary schools, leaders of three alternative providers, staff and students. They spoke with the School Improvement Partner. They looked at policies and reviewed documents and the data the unit has on students' progress. They scrutinised seven parent questionnaires and spoke with one parent.

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

- Do students in each of the unit's groups make equivalent progress against their targets for learning?
- How effective is teaching and is there evidence that teaching is improving for students in each of the groups?
- Do all students experience a curriculum that is right for them?
- How effective are senior leaders in improving the work of the unit, especially in improving attendance?

Information about the school

Kettlebrook Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) caters for students from five secondary schools and one special school in the Tamworth area. Students have either been permanently excluded, are at risk of exclusion or have had difficulties in attending their mainstream schools. Kettlebrook also caters for students with medical conditions and young mums to be. Most of those who attend the unit have a history of disrupted education. There are more boys than girls. The great majority of students are of White British heritage. More than is typical are known to be eligible for free school meals. Students are taught in separate groups depending on their needs. Most are taught in the unit, but a significant number are not. These students are taught by training providers or at the local college and a few are taught at home. The headteacher took up her position in September 2009.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Kettlebrook is a satisfactory and improving pupil referral unit. Staff are united behind the headteacher and together they have worked hard and well to develop the unit. Many aspects of the provision are showing improvement. Improving teaching is contributing to students' better progress over a wider range of courses. The links with the client schools are increasingly effective and the management committee is better at its work. The partnership with parents and carers is gaining in strength and students receive more effective support and guidance in helping them deal with their difficulties. The increasing expectations for teaching and learning and the compassionate ethos are helping more students be successful in overcoming troubled times in their lives and in their education. The capacity for continuing improvement is good. One parent, recognising the positive impact of the unit on her daughter's learning and on her growing as a young person, wrote: 'I just wish my daughter could stay at the unit until she finishes her time in education.'

The unit is a safe and welcoming place. Students join the unit with different capabilities and histories of learning in the subjects. The challenge for teachers is always to match their lessons to the disparate needs of students. When this is done well students often make good progress against their targets for learning. However, in too many lessons planning is not securely based on what students know and can do. As a result, students sometimes find tasks either too easy or too hard and this limits their progress. Most attend regularly. They show good attitudes to their work, make good progress in the well planned lessons and often see learning as meaningful again. A small minority do not attend regularly enough to gain full benefit from all the unit offers and, consequently, they make little progress. Therefore, notwithstanding the good progress seen in some lessons, the rate of progress overall is satisfactory. But this is changing: records over the last two years show a small but recognisable improvement in progress, especially in English and mathematics. Also, over their time at the unit students are dealing more effectively with their social and behavioural difficulties. An increasing number return successfully to the client secondary schools and a greater number continue in education and training when they leave the unit at the end of Year 11. These show that students are being prepared better for the next stage of their education and life thereafter.

Students like being at the unit. They appreciate the staff because they are 'understood by them' and because staff help them 'learn more than in their other schools'. They gain good support in taking greater control of their behaviour and emotions. Because of this, the unit is usually a calm and well-ordered place in which staff and students go purposefully about their business. Students' understanding of right and wrong is secure, although they do not always make the right choices, especially when these have to do with staying safe and keeping healthy.

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Through the self-evaluation procedures the headteacher, the senior leaders and the management committee know the unit's strengths and weaknesses well enough to recognise the emerging impact of the headteacher's initiatives. They are aware that the procedures for recording and assessing the gains students make are not refined enough to support the continuing rise in standards and progress. They are not helping teachers well enough in planning lessons that are always right for students or for recognising the progress students make against their targets. Senior leaders have made progress in developing procedures to judge how well the unit is doing in all its work, but more needs to be done to realise an accurate judgement.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may

- receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work rigorously and creatively to increase the attendance of students who are regularly absent.
- Make better use of assessment information for:
 - planning lessons activities that are relevant to each student because they match well with their learning needs
 - judging students' progress against their targets for learning
 - judging the quality of the work of the unit.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Typically, students join the unit with levels of learning below those expected for their age. Most make satisfactory progress against their targets for learning. This includes the small number of girls and those who receive tuition outside of the unit, including in their homes. The poorest attenders make too little progress in their learning and in dealing with their difficulties. Progress is good in the lessons that match with students' learning needs. In the lessons in which students are active in their learning, for example, in those in art and in food studies, they routinely work hard, show positive attitudes and behave well. The good relationships they have with their teachers and teaching assistants help make these lessons purposeful, friendly and fun events that are enjoyed by students and staff alike. For example, in one lesson in food studies students enjoyed learning to make a curried salad. They listened well, worked hard, used their tools correctly, paid regard to hygiene considerations and were proud enough of their finished meal to visit the headteacher and invite her to taste it.

The school council is becoming increasingly effective as the formal forum through which students can impact on the running of the unit. But the small number of students at the unit means that their opinions and thoughts are easily known to staff. The good relationships students have with staff are shown in many ways, for example, in the way they listen to staff offering support and advice and in the respectful way they interact with staff during the outdoor activity sessions. This is also evident when they work with staff toward gaining the healthy schools award, a project which has the additional benefit of reinforcing the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The change in the food

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available at lunch time is a direct result of this initiative, as is the greater uptake in the physical and sporting activities available during the afternoons. Awareness of wider national and international communities is gained primarily through the curriculum and the choice of the charities students choose to support; the most recent is the children's burns unit of a hospital in South Africa to which students sent the toys they collected. The significant gains they make in developing their self-confidence and self-esteem, and the respect they have for staff, supports students' growing awareness of the importance of spiritual issues in their lives, such as trust, belief and friendship.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teaching is improving because the programme for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning is requiring teachers to pay a greater regard to the need to make learning relevant to all students in each of their lessons. Occasionally, staff gain full information on students when they join the unit, which includes the levels that they are working at in each of the subjects, but mostly they do not. The recently introduced baseline assessment procedures are beginning to provide attainment information for teachers and they are becoming better at using this information in preparing lessons that match well with the needs of each student. As a result, teaching and learning are improving because less time is being lost in accurately recognising what students know and can do.

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To help students gain full access to learning in the other subjects and the skills of independent learning, the curriculum focuses on personal, social and health education and on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Providing vocational courses for the older students through training providers, for example in motor mechanics, building construction and health and beauty, complements the GCSE examination opportunities available in English, mathematics, science and art and design. The afternoon enrichment sessions in sports, such as boxing, football and golf, together with fashion design and working in the local community, provide good opportunities for students to learn skills and to control their behaviour and emotions in different settings. The recently introduced individual learning plans provide good guidance on the preferred pathways for students to follow to quickly return to a mainstream setting.

Students gain good benefit from the wide range of specialist support that, when required, is speedily accessed for them. The new procedures for improving behaviour work well. Students like these because they show clearly the improvements in behaviour and help in guiding them to their next challenge. The effort made by staff to involve parents and carers in the work of the unit is resulting in a greater number taking more interest in supporting their children at home. Transition arrangements for leavers into the local college and to training providers work well. Transition arrangements for those returning to mainstream schools work very well because they are tailored to meet the particular needs of the students and the schools. Staff have actively explored many avenues to improve the attendance of students who are persistently absent. However, more thought is required as to how the small minority of poor attenders can be attracted to the unit.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has made a considerable impact. She has refined the procedures for self-evaluation, which now give a clear awareness of what is required to make the unit a better place. She has managed improvements effectively. The tracking system for assessing progress is an important development; it is already showing accelerated progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics as the procedures to improve teaching are beginning to work. The individual learning programmes are becoming increasingly effective in charting the experiences students need to gain a quick and successful return to mainstream settings. Behaviour is better and there are fewer exclusions. The links with the client schools have strengthened. The budget overspend has been dealt with. The local authority has recognised the extent of improvement by reducing its level of support for the unit. The management committee is well led. Members have a

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good understanding of the role of the unit within the overall secondary provision in the region. They use this information well in challenging and supporting the leaders and in securing the remit of the unit.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough. Risk assessments are rigorous and regularly checked, staff are trained to a high level and the building is secure. When required, students gain specific help in minimising risk to their health and their futures through the use of personnel from relevant outside agencies. Due regard has been paid to community cohesion. Initiatives with the local community, for example with the nearby football club, the cleaning and tending of the nearby garden and the selling of vegetables from the allotment during the unit's open days provide a sense of identity and self-worth for students. Many parents and carers are grateful for the support and advice they gain from staff in dealing with the difficulties they have in their lives. Their regular contact, often through daily telephone calls giving information on how well their children are doing, is very much appreciated. The partnerships with the local college of further education and the training providers are used well in extending students' learning experiences beyond those available just at the unit.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Very few parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and so the statistical outcomes of the table on the next page should be treated with caution. Inspectors' judgements were broadly in line the positive views expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kettlebrook 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 seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 59 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	4	57	3	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	86	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	100	0	0	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)	6	86	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	86	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	86	1	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	100	0	0	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.



21 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Kettlebrook Pupil Referral Unit, Tamworth, B77 1AL

It was lovely for me and my colleague to meet and spend time with you when we visited your unit. Thank you for making us welcome. We found your unit to be a satisfactory unit which means that it does some things well but could do some other things better. These are some of the things we especially liked:

- the good advice guidance and support you gain from the staff
- the good way you work in the best of lessons
- the good relationships you have with your teachers and teaching assistants and the respect you show them most of the time
- the good way staff and those from outside the unit are helping you improve your behaviour and to take greater control of your emotions
- the way in which your headteacher and the other senior leaders are changing some things about the unit to help you in your learning and in growing up so that you are better able to cope with the challenges of the school, college or training base that you will move to.

There are a few things we would like to be done better. We would like all of you to attend regularly, so that everyone gains as much from being at the unit as they possibly can. By improving the assessment system we would like the senior leaders to make it easier for teachers to recognise what you know and can do, so they can plan lessons that are always right for you. This improved system should also help in judging how well you are doing against your targets for learning and give information on how effective is the unit in all its work.

We believe that these changes will help you to reach higher standards and make the unit a better place in which to learn and to deal with any other difficulties you may have. Of course, you can help, too, by always behaving as well as you can so that you limit the effect of poor behaviour on your progress in learning.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins

Lead inspector

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