

# Berkshire Adolescent Unit Pupil Referral Unit

Barkham Drive, Wokingham, RG40 2RE

## Inspection dates

16–17 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Students of all ages and backgrounds make outstanding progress in subjects and in their personal development because every student is challenged to reach his or her full potential.
- Outstanding teaching and highly effective partnerships with health services, parents and home schools enable all students to catch up rapidly with their learning and return to their mainstream school or other appropriate provision.
- All Year 11 students in 2012 gained a wide range of GCSE A\* to C grades including in English and mathematics and moved on successfully to further education, training or employment.
- Teachers' very high expectations, together with their unceasingly enthusiastic approach in lessons and elsewhere, mean that students are always highly engaged in learning.
- The trusting and respectful relationships that exist between staff and students underpin their exemplary behaviour and safety.
- All students make outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and enjoy opportunities to do volunteer work in the local community.
- Students in the adolescent unit say they like coming to the unit, because it helps them to believe in themselves and their future.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, together with the management committee, have sustained outstanding student achievement and teaching. This has been achieved through accurate checking of the school's work and has been strengthened by the use of external experts.
- The management committee has a wide range of skills and expertise that it uses very well to support the school and challenge it to do even better. It recognises that some information could be presented more succinctly.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed four lessons taught by two teachers, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- No teaching was seen on day one of the inspection as it is a therapeutic day for pupils.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, the Chair of the Management Committee and other members, health staff and a representative of the local authority. Telephone discussions were also held with parents and home schools.
- The inspector held discussions with groups of students, heard some students read and observed their behaviour at break, lunchtime and after-school sessions.
- A wide range of documents were looked at, including the school's plans for improvement, information on students' progress, lesson plans, work in students' books and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- There were insufficient responses to the online inspection questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector took into account the school's own parental surveys. Questionnaire responses from members of staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Berkshire Adolescent Service (BAU) Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is for young people aged 11–18 who have severe and complex mental health difficulties.
- Referrals to the BAU are received from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams.
- Length of stay and attendance in the unit are determined solely by the medical needs of the students.
- Students may receive between one and seven hours of education at the unit per week.
- All students are dual registered and remain on the roll of their mainstream school or special school.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds and are girls.
- Some students have not attended their mainstream school for significant periods.
- The unit operates within a National Health Service Hospital.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and students known to be eligible for free school meals) varies with the different groups at different times. At the time of the inspection, no students were eligible. These additional funds are not made available to the unit.

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

- Ensure information on aspects of school performance are written in a more summative way so it is easier to check.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Students make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. Learning is matched precisely to each student's individual needs so that they make excellent progress and often exceed the expectations of their parents and their mainstream schools, despite the complexity of their health needs.
- As a result of the exceptional skill and care taken by teachers to find out what each student needs to learn, and the individual programmes which are then put in place, students make very rapid progress from their starting points. Their skills in reading, writing and mathematics improve considerably, and at a faster rate than the national average.
- Most students read regularly for pleasure and many make significant gains in reading and spelling in all lessons because of the high focus on developing students' understanding and use of specific vocabulary related to that subject.
- Highly effective medical and therapeutic work and excellent partnerships with home schools ensure students overcome their barriers to learning and take part successfully in education. By the end of Year 11, students have gained a range of GCSEs, including English and mathematics, at grade C and above. Since the previous inspection, the number of GCSEs gained by students at grades A\* to C has risen steadily and looks set to rise further in 2013. As a result all students achieve exceptionally well and the unit prepares them exceptionally well for their next placement or return to school.
- All groups of students make equally outstanding progress, including boys and girls, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Intensive individual support and the use of subject specialist staff enable them to learn extremely well and the small groups ease their anxiety particularly well.
- Students have many opportunities to use computers to support their studies and develop their research skills very well. Literacy and numeracy are supported extremely well across all aspects of the unit's work. Students' skills in these areas are supported and extended by teachers even when their stay is very short.
- In English lessons, all students are highly motivated and achieve very well. This is because teachers match tasks to their needs accurately. Similarly, in mathematics lessons students settle quickly. They enjoy their work and contribute exceptionally willingly to class activities.
- Parents are delighted with the progress their children make, both socially and academically. One parent stated, 'This unit has been a lifeline for our family.'

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- The local authority and headteacher are clear that, while a great deal of medical and therapeutic support is provided, the aim is to help students get back into learning. School leaders have ensured that teaching is outstanding and consistently strong across all year groups.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and have the understanding and skill to change a lesson if they feel that it is not pitched at the right level. Targets are regularly reviewed so that learning is moved swiftly on when students are ready for more.
- In an outstanding English lesson, the teacher provided a range of challenging work in line with the different level of qualification within the courses the students follow. Consequently, students were highly motivated, knowing that while the work was challenging, they could succeed.
- Lessons are designed to be practical and fun. Students also respond exceptionally well to teachers' high expectations of what can be achieved. In an outstanding science lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning to deepen students' understanding of the effect of heat on different materials. Students were highly engaged by the enthusiastic approach of the teacher; they enjoyed the discussion opportunities and were able to apply knowledge from previous

lessons and made rapid progress in their learning.

- Teachers and support staff are very experienced to know when to step in and support learning and when to give students time and space to work things out for themselves. This supports the development of students' independence exceptionally well. Developing independent learning skills is a key strength within the school.
- Students are taught to take pride in their work and consequently the quality and presentation of written work, for example, is high.
- Staff make sure they praise every step to success and so students are keenly aware of when they have done well. Learning stamps are added to students' work, very often during lessons, which enable students to identify very clearly how well things are going, and written comments inform students about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Throughout the school, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and students have a range of ways to review and reflect on their own and others' work, including the use of photography.
- Careful records of lessons and regular meetings with all concerned ensure that students' well-being and overall progress are carefully tracked and programmes adjusted. This means that even where students are on the roll for a very short time, the impact of their illness or need on their achievement is as small as possible.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is outstanding. This is because behaviour is managed very effectively in the unit because all staff have a thorough understanding of each student's needs and difficulties. Individual care and education plans for students ensure consistency across all professionals in their support.
- Staff report that following induction to the service, students' behaviour improves very quickly because of the therapeutic and psychological support provided. This is greatly appreciated by students and their families. As one student commented, 'Without the school, I would not cope.'
- Relationships between staff and students are exceptionally positive and this is an important factor in managing their behaviour successfully. Adults get to know the students quickly. The strong support they provide encourages students to trust them and they gain the confidence to step back into learning.
- Throughout their time here, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, a remarkable achievement given their personal difficulties prior to enrolment.
- Students say that bullying does not exist. They have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying including the use of social network sites. They learn to understand about harassing behaviour and the formation of positive relationships with others through the counselling and therapy they take part in.
- Students have a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy although some, because of their particular illnesses such as anorexia, find it difficult to put this into practice. The unit works exceptionally well with medical colleagues to support their particular needs.
- All parents agree that their children are kept very safe. They are pleased with how well their children are supported and delighted to see them so happily engaged at such a difficult time.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher is a highly effective leader. She has been uncompromising in driving the work and improvement of the unit. The vision of supporting students to succeed in any school is shared by all.
- Partnerships with parents and home schools are exceptional and make a substantial contribution

to students' excellent progress and their ability to follow their studies. For example, where the unit does not teach a particular subject, then appropriate subject specialist staff are used. Arrangements made for students to sit examinations at the unit when they are unable to attend their home school ensure no student is discriminated against and all are included in everything the unit has to offer. Consequently, all students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.

- Specialists, such as mental health nurses and therapists, ensure that the complex needs of the students are exceptionally met and ensure that the transition back to mainstream school or other appropriate provision is highly successful.
- Senior leaders have well-established and very effective procedures for checking how well the unit is performing. They have a very clear picture of the centre's strengths and realistic plans for what it needs to improve. Leaders rightly recognise that they need to present summary information on school performance so that it is easier to check.
- All staff are involved in this process and support each other exceptionally well. They share the best ways to ensure that students achieve as much as they can by working and planning together very well. Consequently, the unit has excellent capacity to maintain the current excellent standards.
- Staff performance is checked very carefully and pay increases are linked directly to improvements in students' achievement. Tailored and effective regular training have maintained and improved the very high quality teaching found at the previous inspection.
- Students make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The highly relevant curriculum supports this exceptionally well and provides excellent opportunities for students to follow personal interests and enjoy learning again through, for example, volunteer work in the local community, enterprise and fundraising activities.
- The local authority works in close partnership with the school. It has effectively supported the school in judging the quality of teaching and checking data on the progress of students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee is highly effective and passionate about ensuring that students' progress is outstanding. This is because members are highly experienced education and health professionals and because of their close relationship with the unit staff and leadership. Members attend training and are exceptionally well informed and bring the right balance of support and challenge to ensure the school continues to improve. They have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and use the performance management systems to reward good teachers through progression along the pay scale. They use data to effectively monitor the school's performance. The committee maintains careful supervision of the unit's finances. Although pupil premium funding is not devolved to the centre, the committee ensures that all groups of students achieve the same excellent progress as their classmates through specialist staff and resources. The committee has a strong influence on the monitoring of students' performance and the use of this funding appropriately to support students in achieving their goals. It ensures that all the required safeguarding procedures are in place and students' safety and well-being are given a very high priority.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	128088
<b>Local authority</b>	Wokingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	403812

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	7
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The management committee
<b>Chair</b>	Julian Bushell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Marsden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 495007
<b>Fax number</b>	01189 495006
<b>Email address</b>	smarsden@bauschool.wokingham.sch.uk



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