



Fountain House

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117703
LEA Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number 280134
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Margerison

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Fountain Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		Hull
Age range of pupils	14 to 16		HU2 0LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01482 226166
Number on roll	28	Fax number	01482 609806
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Management Group Chairman Barry Dibnah
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Michael Melvin

Age group 14 to 16	Inspection dates 21 March 2006 - 22 March 2006	Inspection number 280134
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This school is a pupil referral unit situated in Hull, catering for pupils aged 14 to 16 years of age. However, the school roll is very unstable and over the course of an academic year as many as 100 pupils can attend the centre for varying lengths of time. This is because all pupils have experienced significant difficulties in coping with school life and many have been permanently excluded from previous schools. A third of pupils are dual registered with their mainstream school. The school aims to prepare pupils for returning to mainstream schools, and pupils have an initial placement of between six to eight weeks before moving on to a new school. However, for some pupils this has not been successful or realistic and they attend Fountain House full-time. A significant proportion of pupils have been involved with the Youth Offending Team and several have spent time in secure units. Thirteen pupils have a statement of special educational need. Seven pupils are in public care. All pupils are of white British origins. Eighty per cent of the pupils are boys. Attainment on entry is usually below average. Pupils have individual programmes that combine college placements, work experiences and time in school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features and provides good value for money. Inspection evidence fully confirms the school's view of its own performance. Due to effective leadership at all levels the school has improved well since the last inspection. Procedures for monitoring the work of the school are good and the facilities for science and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved very well: pupils now have full access to all aspects of these subjects. The range of accreditation has been extended well, particularly in vocational areas. The school has established good links with other schools and colleges, enabling many pupils over the course of a year to return to mainstream education. However, there is more scope for these links to be used to provide a broader range of accreditation for more able pupils. Teaching and learning are good; therefore, relative to their starting point, pupils achieve well and make good progress, particularly in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The school is particularly good at developing pupils' personal development in terms of building their social skills and self-esteem; as a result pupils' behaviour in school is outstanding. Pupils are confident to talk to adults and are very proud of their school. This is based on the very good care and support provided for pupils so they feel safe and secure. The school has very rigorous systems to assess pupils' attainment when they join the school and it uses the information well to set long term targets for pupils. However, the information is not always used as well to set sharply focused targets for pupils' learning or when discussing with the pupils how well they are doing. The curriculum is good and enhanced well by innovative, practical activities. The school is well placed to develop further.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the links with schools and colleges to ensure that more able pupils have the opportunity to gain accreditation appropriate to their ability.
- Use assessment information more rigorously so that targets in pupils' individual learning plans are sharply focused on what pupils need to learn next and use these to involve pupils more in reviewing their own progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all aptitudes and abilities achieve well. When pupils join Fountain House they have often missed a lot of school and have large gaps in their learning, particularly in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils' reading skills are well below those expected for their age. However, school data show that they make good progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematics. For pupils who attend the centre for short term placements, the vast majority improve their skills, with a good proportion making significant gains of up to the equivalent of four years in their reading ability. During the period most also gain external awards accredited by the Awards Scheme

Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Units of Accreditation in other subjects such as art and design, mathematics, ICT and science. The success of this work is reflected in the fact that in 2004/05, 90% of pupils on short term placements returned successfully to mainstream school. Pupils who attend the centre on a permanent basis also make good progress and leave school with secure literacy, numeracy skills and ICT skills. Last year virtually all pupils gained an ASDAN qualification, with half at the 'Silver' level, in addition to a broad range of AQA Units. The progress made by pupils is evident in the high numbers who entered college, training or work when they left. Current pupils are working at levels appropriate to their ability and have already gained a good number of AQA Units. They are expected to add to their portfolio along with an ASDAN qualification by the end of the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was outstanding. They showed a real pride in their school and were extremely keen to show off their work. Parents and pupils say that they really enjoy school. Considering that the pupils have had very negative experiences of school, often reflected in poor behaviour and subsequent exclusion, this is a really notable achievement. Most attend school very regularly but a few pupils are persistent non-attenders. Pupils say that one of the main strengths of the school is that everyone gets on well. Inspectors were impressed with the quality of relationships and the relaxed atmosphere around the school that help create a positive learning environment. This is also reflected in the very small number of exclusions in the last year. Pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. In school, they respond well, take part in all activities enthusiastically and generally accept the rules on issues such as smoking. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and have taken the lead in improving aspects of the school. Pupils also learn how they can make a positive contribution to the wider community through, for example, their work on the school allotment. Their good behaviour, enthusiasm and hard work have quickly endeared them to neighbouring allotment holders and they are now accepted as valued members of the society. Pupils are well prepared for moving on at the end of their schooling and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The major strength of the teaching is the very consistent approach teachers and support staff have to managing behaviour. School leaders make their high expectations very clear to staff and pupils, and this results in well paced, carefully planned and well organised lessons. Tasks are often practical and

based on real life situations so pupils understand the reasons for the lesson. ICT is used well as a teaching tool and teachers try to use imaginative approaches in lessons that capture pupils' attention. For example, in art and design, pupils have developed their understanding of scale and perspective through charcoal work and collages. Consequently, pupils concentrate well and respond positively. Pupils are assessed carefully when they arrive at the school and are set broad long term targets for learning, but these are not always translated into focused short term learning targets. As a result, the targets in pupils' weekly review booklets do not differentiate sharply enough between those for their personal development and their academic learning to help them understand how well they are doing and what they have to work on next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with a good balance between academic and vocational subjects. The school makes a lot of effort to provide a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of its pupils, most of whom are boys, and in the main it is successful. Pupils' personal, social and health education has a high priority and this is threaded through much of the curriculum. The use of the ASDAN programmes as one of the main accreditation routes means that the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are an integral part of many lessons. The curriculum is enriched well by the work-related activities such as work placements and college courses such as motor mechanics at Bishop Burton College. The school also works well with other schools and colleges to return pupils to mainstream education. However, these links do not currently provide enough opportunities for more able pupils to extend their skills and aptitudes to a level that would reflect their ability, such as to GCSE.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school is good. The great attention the school places on ensuring pupils' health, care and well-being is one of outstanding features of the school. Before they join the school, pupils are provided with a thorough induction programme that, where possible, involves parents or carers. Pupils in public care have a mentor who they can talk to, but each week all pupils have the opportunity to discuss their progress with a member of staff. Although the emphasis is more focused on supporting pupils' personal development rather than guiding their learning, this approach reflects the school's motto 'Changing Attitudes'. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure in school and are fully confident that they will be treated fairly and with respect. Parents are also very confident that the school listens to their views and they feel it makes a real difference to their children. For example, one parent wrote to the inspectors that Fountain House was 'a light at the end of a tunnel'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed at all levels. The headteacher is a constant presence around school and is an excellent role model for pupils and staff. Together with senior managers he provides clear direction to the school, which is reflected in the good improvement since the last inspection. Procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of its work are thorough and analytical. Data is used well as an indicator of the effectiveness of the school, and a comprehensive programme of monitoring ensures a consistent whole school approach to teaching and learning. As a result, the school knows itself well, priorities for development are appropriate, and new initiatives are tackled systematically. The school is well supported by the management group who have a good overview of the strengths of the school. Despite their limited powers, they play an important role in monitoring the school's work and supporting improvement. Overall, due to the strong teamwork between pupils, adults and other agencies who work with the school, it is well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Fountain House

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2 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school and helping me with the inspection. You were very polite and it was a pleasure to meet you all. However, I would particularly like to thank Sarah, Becky, Ben, Tom and the School Council who showed me around your allotment and told me more about what you do in school. I am pleased to report that I agree with you and your staff that you go to a good school. The things I particularly liked were:

that adults have very high expectations so your behaviour in school is excellent

that you make good progress in reading and other basic skills; as a result, you are well prepared for moving on to another school, college or work

that lessons are well organised, interesting and relevant to your needs

that your headteacher, senior staff and the management group manage the school well so it is continually developing and improving

that you are looked after and cared for very well.

I have asked your headteacher and the management committee to make your school even better by:

developing the links the school has with other schools to make sure that you have the opportunity to get the best possible qualifications in Year 11

make sure that the targets in your individual plans are focused on what you need to learn and use them when you are discussing with them how you are doing.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you well and I hope you make good choices for yourselves in the future.

Yours faithfully

Andy Margerison

Lead inspector