



Ipsley Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130987
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 282156
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 13 March 2006
Reporting inspector Alan Dobbins AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Longdon Close
School category	Pupil referral unit		Woodrow South
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Redditch, Worcestershire B98 7UZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 514068
Number on roll	9	Fax number	01527 598949
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Garner
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Henley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This pupil referral unit (PRU) caters for pupils in Years 1 to 6 excluded from the first, primary and middle schools in the north eastern region of Worcestershire, including the towns of Redditch and Bromsgrove, and those at risk of exclusion. At the time of the inspection, all the pupils were boys and all were White British. Pupils spend from 6 to 20 weeks at the unit. Those at risk of exclusion spend three days each week at the unit and attend their other schools on the other days. Those who have been excluded spend all their time at the unit. Most of the pupils return to mainstream settings. A minority move to the local authority's Key Stage 3 PRU or to special units. The unit recently moved into new accommodation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ipsley Pupil Referral Unit is a good and improving unit that provides good value for money. This judgement reflects the unit's own view of its effectiveness. The good leadership and management have helped improve the work of the unit since the last inspection, and the capacity for continuing to improve is good. The unit's strength is in dealing with the personal, social and emotional issues of pupils that make it difficult for them to always behave appropriately. The powerful way in which the unit improves pupils' behaviour is reflected in the very high percentage that return successfully to mainstream settings. Teaching is good and many pupils surprise themselves by enjoying their learning again. The curriculum appropriately focuses on pupils' primary needs and they benefit from the good advice gained from staff and from those of many other agencies. The management committee provides good support to the leaders but pays too little a part in monitoring the referral of pupils to the unit and in checking the effectiveness of the unit against its aims. Records of pupils' academic progress are not precise enough to make a good contribution to school self-evaluation.

What the school should do to improve further

- The management committee should monitor the effectiveness of the provision and the process for the referral of pupils.
- Monitor and record pupils' individual progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well. They gain in confidence and become more mature and responsible as they take greater control of their emotions and behaviour. This has a direct effect on their response to the good teaching and enables them to make good academic progress in their lessons.

Pupils make outstanding progress in dealing with their personal, social and emotional issues. Those who spend part of their week at the unit make outstanding progress toward their targets in these areas. An exceptionally high percentage of pupils return full time to their other schools to successfully continue their learning. Over the last three years, of the 28 pupils who returned to their other schools only one has been excluded. The pupils who spend all their time at the unit do equivalently well in dealing with their difficulties. All of the 11 who returned to mainstream schools are still there.

Pupils enter the unit with broadly average standards, and the short time they are there means that their overall standards remain within the broadly average band. Even though their time in the unit is short, the records of their progress, for example, how much they improve in reading or against the levels of the National Curriculum, are not precise enough to accurately judge the gains they make.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal and social development is excellent with moral and social development particularly outstanding. Pupils demonstrate very strong relationships with staff, readily speaking with them on any matter, including those that are difficult to talk about. They show significant improvements in self-esteem, anger management and emotional literacy and are starting to understand conflict resolution, thanks to well planned lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and the additional workshops. Pupils respond very well to the clear guidelines on what is right and wrong and what is acceptable, because the behaviour programme, including the traffic light and zone procedures, is very well thought out and consistently applied by all staff. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour have reduced appreciably over the last three years. Pupils feel safe in the unit.

Pupils realise that being at the unit is very good for them. This is reflected in many ways, including the way they work hard in lessons, their good behaviour and outstanding attendance. They relate to each other well and show obvious respect for the building. One pupil commented that the unit 'has helped me to be calm, not only in the unit but at home also'. Parents are quick to praise the work of the unit, one saying she cannot believe how lucky she is that her son attends the unit as he is 'now my lovely son again'.

Spiritual and cultural development are good. The importance of leading healthy lifestyles is made clear in lessons and when pupils speak with staff. Pupils swim weekly and enjoy taking part in seasonal games. They gain essential skills for living, such as shopping and budgeting, that lead to economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Class sizes are smaller than was the case in pupils' other schools. As a result, they gain support more quickly. Teachers, and their assistants, know the pupils very well. This helps them plan lessons that are made up of tasks that match well with pupils' learning needs. For example, in a mathematics lesson, all pupils made good progress because they worked on tasks relevant to them, even though the youngest was in Year 3 and the oldest was in Year 6. Even after a short time in the unit, pupils realise learning can be fun again. In most lessons, they enjoy working hard to do their best. In this, they are helped by the consistent way in which the strategies for promoting acceptable behaviour are applied. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. They are deployed well and are especially effective when they work with individual pupils.

The classrooms are attractive places in which to learn. Although resources are generally good, computer technology is not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning.

However, this should change with the recent placement in each classroom of an interactive whiteboard and the availability of commercial software designed to promote learning in English and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and the pupils who spent part of their time at the unit are prepared outstandingly well for the full time return to their schools. This is because their curriculum focuses very well on their personal, social and emotional needs. It provides many highly effective opportunities for them to gain in maturity. It is planned very well to ensure that learning in the lessons in PSHCE is fully supported by all the activities of the day, including the informal 'chats' pupils have with staff during break and lunchtimes and through the choice of topics in the subjects. For example, in an outstanding lesson in English, pupils explored some aspects of bullying through discussing the actions of a bully in the book they were reading, and by doing so revisited their feelings on bullying previously explored in lessons in PSHCE.

For pupils who spend all their time at the unit, the curriculum is good. The provision for their personal, social and emotional development is just as strong in helping prepare them for their next schools. They have appropriate opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy, but spend less time learning other important subjects, such as science and information and communication technology (ICT), than is the case for pupils in many equivalent units.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for and supported very well. The arrangements to protect their welfare and safety are rigorous. Staff are well trained and have clear knowledge of the procedures to follow if they are concerned about any pupil.

Personal support plans and the related targets in pupils' individual education plans are very effective in helping pupils take better control of their behaviour. Information from personal development measures, such as the self-esteem scale and the readiness for return scale, provide persuasive evidence of the unit's success in this aspect of its work. Targets in the subjects are less successful in promoting learning. This is because they are not linked closely enough to National Curriculum levels so that pupils' progress can be accurately recognised and reported to their next school.

Mainstream staff have a high regard for the help and advice given by the behaviour support staff who visit them in their schools, for example, on how they might deal with the inappropriate behaviour of a single pupil or of small groups of pupils. Specialist advisors from many agencies play a full role in very effectively preparing pupils and, sometimes, their families, for their full time return to mainstream settings or other schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The head of unit gains considerable support from professional officers of the local authority and from all staff. The team ethos is strong and the good improvement in recent years is a result of this. The unit is a purposeful and happy place for pupils and staff alike. It is being increasingly recognised by headteachers in the client schools as an important extension of their own provision for dealing with pupils who challenge them. The capacity for continued improvement is good.

Self-evaluation is recognised as an important part of the process of ongoing improvement. Much is done well. For example: recognising improvement in pupils' behaviour; regularly gaining the thoughts of parents on the work of the unit; and the performance management of staff, which includes very effective procedures for checking teaching and learning and for identifying relevant training. Even so, no accurate judgement is possible on the progress pupils make in the subjects, how effective the unit is in meeting its aims and on how well the unit is doing against other equivalent units.

The management committee oversees all the authority's PRUs. Whilst this is administratively acceptable, the committee needs to be more assertive in ensuring that the procedure for admitting pupils to the unit identifies only those who can benefit from the provision. Moreover, the committee should expect the head of unit to provide more detailed evidence on how well the unit is doing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	3	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	3	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	3	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	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

I very much enjoyed my time with you and would like to thank you for talking with me and for helping me find out about your unit.

I was impressed with what I saw because

- You behave well in lessons and around the unit, and are extremely polite in the way in which you deal with each other and with visitors to the unit. This pleases me very much because I know that many of you have difficulties in always controlling how you behave.
- You like the staff very much and you feel safe and happy at the unit.
- The head of the unit, helped by staff and others from the local authority, is making the unit better at helping you deal with your difficulties and in preparing you for your full time return to your other school, or to your new school.
- What you learn is right for you and you make outstanding progress in dealing with your behaviour and in becoming more mature and responsible.

There are some things that can be done better

- The head of the unit should develop ways for showing how well you do and how good the unit is in its work.
- The committee that helps manage the unit needs to keep a check that only those of you who really can be helped by the unit should be referred to it.

With best wishes

Dr D Alan Dobbins Lead Inspector