



First Base, Ipswich

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133715
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 282340
Inspection dates 6 June 2006 to 6 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Ian Naylor LI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Raeburn Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		IP3 0EW
Age range of pupils	3 to 8		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01473 719553
Number on roll	15	Fax number	01473 274974
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Sue Thomas (Acting)
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Eithne Leming

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

First Base Pupil Referral Unit is part of the Suffolk Behaviour Support Service serving the south of the county. It provides preventative and assessment services for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment is lower than that found in children of their age. Most pupils have dual registration and attend on a one day a week basis. Many come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and are from a predominantly White British heritage. Pupils normally remain in the unit for two terms and there is therefore a high rate of pupils returning to mainstream schooling. The unit also provides an outreach support service to local nursery and primary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

First Base evaluates itself as a good unit but inspectors feel that it is outstanding. The unit has gone from strength to strength in the provision that it offers and this now includes a thriving outreach service that is highly praised and valued by receiving schools and by parents. Teaching is consistently good and often excellent. It is based around individual learning and relevant curriculum needs. This ensures that personal development is outstanding. General attitudes by pupils to their learning improve enormously in a very short time. Consequently, children's achievement in their basic communication, social skills, and self-confidence is good and often outstanding, so that they quickly learn how to adjust their behaviour and to form a more positive outlook to attending school. Teachers and teaching assistants provide a caring and supportive learning atmosphere in which pupils quickly feel safe, secure and able to enjoy their learning. They create positive relationships with parents and carers and offer help, advice and training so that they are more closely involved in their child's learning and development. A close and very successful partnership with staff from mainstream nurseries and schools has been established and this helps to open up avenues of support for the re-integration of pupils. Staff also work successfully with mainstream colleagues to provide support, training and advice. Strong and productive links have been forged with other agencies, professionals and voluntary groups. The headteacher provides very effective and inspirational leadership to an expanding team of expert teachers and support staff. Valuable support is given to staff by the school management committee. Self-evaluation processes are good and there is a good capacity for further improvement. Facilities for physical education need improving along with some other aspects of accommodation and resources. The unit provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide better facilities for physical education. - Complete the planned work to improve accommodation and resources to better provide learning opportunities for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and pupils make exceptional progress during their relatively short time at the unit. In particular, pupils make outstanding progress in their communication skills, social and emotional development and relationships and in meeting their individual targets. Pupils improve significantly in their achievements in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs make at least good and often very good progress. There is good improvement often seen within just a few weeks in pupils' concentration, awareness and self-confidence and in their levels of enjoyment and ability to learn. This is a result of the very good teaching and management of their behaviour and the appropriateness of the learning

tasks available to them. The unit's own data and assessments using commercial testing materials, show a rapid increase in pupils' receptiveness for learning and a readiness for re-integration to mainstream schooling. There is evidence from lessons and in pupils' workbooks, displays and from teacher's case studies, which shows that pupils achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum areas offered, and particularly in their personal and social skills. Feedback from parents is very positive and they feel that their children make swift and rapid progress in many areas of their learning so they are better able to cope with mainstream. The mainstream schools also recognise that pupils make good progress on their return. Pupils themselves feel they 'like First Base and do very well with their work'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. These excellent qualities contribute to most pupils' successful reintegration into their mainstream schools. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show excellent attitudes towards learning, enjoy their lessons and want to learn. They show very good progress in settling to work, asking for help and dealing with problems in appropriate ways. Pupils have excellent relationships with and trust in the adults who help them. They work very hard and are eager to please, and are proud of what they achieve. Pupils feel safe, able to confide in an adult and have no worries about bullying. They increase in their understanding of healthy lifestyles and willingly take part in physical activities. Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Pupils make use of valuable social and life skills opportunities at breakfast, break and lunchtimes through discussion, turn-taking, sharing, and talking with staff. Staff are excellent role models, and this develops pupils' self-confidence and good relationships. They provide positive rewards and encouragements that promote good conduct and, as a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. Pupils have opportunities during personal and social sessions for spiritual reflection about the benefits of good behaviour and to discuss the feelings of others. Pupils enjoy using the good outside play area to develop their social and physical skills. They are aware of the importance of staying safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. This judgement is in accordance with the headteacher's own evaluations. The quality of team work between teachers and teaching assistants is exceptionally high and this produces a uniform approach with very stable, positive and enjoyable learning experiences for pupils. Staff have exceptional knowledge of pupils' needs and quickly establish relationships of a high quality with them to secure their trust, and enthuse pupils with their own success. Lessons are well planned, prepared and matched to the individual needs of pupils. Activities are lively and interesting and presented in such a way that pupils have no

time to get bored or to lose concentration. There is a high expectation of pupil cooperation and participation. Staff use good skills and strategies in the management of pupil behaviour and these contribute successfully to pupils' rapid progress in their personal development, confidence and willingness to learn. There is good use of resources including information and communication technology (ICT). Specific behaviour and learning targets are set and staff record and evaluate pupils' responses continuously and use this information well to inform the next steps in learning. Staff keep a close and productive communication with parents, carers and staff from mainstream schools.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Pupils' learning and behavioural needs are addressed in a very individualised and relevant way. Planning of the curriculum is very well organised and based on a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Because pupils attend for one day a week over a two term period, the curriculum is specifically shaped to reflect those aspects which are key to the aims of First Base: to re-introduce pupils to full-time mainstream schooling and attendance by improving their behaviour, social skills and attitudes to learning. Particular emphasis is given, therefore, to meeting the educational, personal and social development needs of pupils, and enhancing their spiritual, moral and cultural skills, well being, self-esteem and self-confidence. This is achieved mainly through the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Good emphasis is given to developing pupils' awareness regarding a healthy and safe lifestyle. Home corner role-play, visitors to school and support provided by older pupils from local high schools help to enrich social development opportunities. Life skill development is planned through structured and free play and in literacy, numeracy, and physical development. ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Closed circuit television is also used well by staff to help pupils improve their behaviour and performance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. There is excellent welfare and pastoral support. There is very good attention to all aspects of health and safety and safeguarding practices are all of high quality, regularly reviewed and staff receive all relevant training. There are good procedures for the assessment of pupils' academic, social and emotional development and these help staff to quickly identify and meet pupils' learning and behaviour needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for through the direction of the designated coordinator. There is outstanding collaboration with partner schools, parents and carers, together with wide-ranging liaison, consultation and joint working with a host of other agencies, professionals and voluntary groups. The unit's home-school link worker provides information to and from parents, other schools and is very active in extending the support for pupils and their families. The unit's web-site helpline service and the use of electronic mail provides regular access to information, advice and support for parents and schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is a very effective leader who provides a clear vision and direction for the unit. She has established a very successful and still developing behavioural support service. Staff work very successfully as a team. The headteacher and staff are well supported by the school management committee. The senior management team has been further strengthened by the promotion of an experienced serving teacher as deputy headteacher. Leadership skills are shown in the unit's very good organisation, teaching and welfare systems and are reflected in the huge impact they have on pupils' personal development, progress and successful return to full time mainstream education. The unit's self-evaluation of all aspects of provision is extensive and high quality and includes feedback from all the stakeholders. Excellent attention is given to making the school a safe, happy and secure place for learning. The school improvement plan is realistic in its scope and sets key priorities. These include further plans to improve accommodation. There is an urgent need to improve the facilities for pupils' physical education. The outreach provision is still an area of growth and is particularly well organised, highly valued and well received by other schools. The training courses for teachers and those for parents provided by First Base staff are popular and receive high acclaim from participants.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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	1	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	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	1	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?	1	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	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	NA
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

Thank you very much for making us feel welcome when we visited First Base yesterday and for letting us see your work and visit your classrooms. We think that you work very hard and enjoy all your lessons. We think you are making very good progress! You seem very happy with all the fun activities that there are to do at First Base. We like the way you work and get along with one another. You listen well to what you are told to do. You eat your breakfast and lunch very sensibly and know which things are healthy to eat. You play very well with all the toys and games. We think that your headteacher and teachers do a very good job to help you in school. They give you lots of great things to do. They show you how to do your best work. We would like them to find you a bigger place for doing PE, especially when it is raining!