



# Hospital and Outreach Education

Inspection Report

Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 133717  
**LEA** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 282342  
**Inspection dates** 30 January 2006 to 30 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Dobbins AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Cromwell Centre
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		Northampton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16		Northamptonshire NN1 2TE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 239730
<b>Number on roll</b>	90	<b>Fax number</b>	01604 239730
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Lynn Mayer

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<b>Age group</b> 3 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 30 January 2006 - 30 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282342
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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 with medical and health-related conditions which prevent them attending their mainstream schools. It was registered as a PRU in 2002 and since September 2003 has expanded its provision. Now, it is made up of an administrative centre, two teaching bases, one in Northampton and the other in Kettering, and two others at the hospitals in the same towns. The number of pupils on roll regularly changes as they enter the PRU and return to their schools. They spend varying periods of time at the PRU, from a week to more than a year, depending on the severity of their conditions. Currently, there are 96 pupils on roll, 42 boys and 54 girls, who are dual registered with mainstream schools. The range of their capabilities is very wide, including gifted pupils, but for most it is closely linked to the severity of their health difficulties. Pupils receive a minimum of five hours of tuition each week, either in their homes, at the teaching bases or the hospitals. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Almost all are White British.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The Hospital and Outreach Education Unit is a good PRU that provides good value for money. The headteacher leads and manages very well and gains the full support of very competent assistant headteachers. Because of this the PRU's capacity for improvement is good. Pupils are very well cared for and supported and the curriculum is tailored to closely match with their learning and additional needs. This and the good quality of teaching at all the locations helps most pupils develop very well as young people and become sufficiently self-confident and self-assured to return successfully to their other schools. The leaders know the PRU well, from the considerable information they have on the progress of pupils and on other aspects of the PRU such as the quality of teaching. The inspector agrees with their positive view of its effectiveness. However, not enough use is made of this data in showing how good the PRU is against comparable information, including that derived regionally and nationally. The absence of dedicated teaching space at one of the hospitals and the size and location of each of the two teaching bases limit the work of staff. The management committee does not sufficiently challenge the leadership or influence or support developments.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the accommodation at three of the teaching bases.
- Continue to refine the procedures for judging how good the PRU is.
- Ensure the management committee fully meet its responsibilities to the PRU.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievements are good. Over their time at the PRU, they begin to like themselves again and develop better attitudes to their futures as they become sufficiently strong enough as young people to return to their other schools. A high percentage, 73% of the pupils who entered during the last year, was successfully returned. This is the strength of the PRU.

It is difficult to quantify the overall progress pupils make in their learning because they are at the PRU for different periods of time, from five days to more than a year. However, most pupils meet their targets for learning and are well prepared to continue their learning, when they rejoin their classes in their other schools. Those who leave at the end of Year 11 gain good success in a wide range of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects and other accredited awards, such as Assessment and Qualifications Authority (AQA) units and ASDAN bronze and silver certificates. For example, last year seven pupils passed five or more GCSE subjects and 15 pupils gained at least one pass. More than 90% of last year's leavers enrolled on courses to continue their education, a placement percentage well above the expectations of Connexions advisors for pupils in equivalent units.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. This includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Social development is helped by the very strong relationships staff have with pupils that allow pupils to approach them to speak easily on any matter. All staff are excellent role models. They expect pupils to work hard and achieve high standards, but do so whilst recognising, and being sensitive to, the health and emotional issues pupils are dealing with.

Pupils see the PRU as important to them. This is reflected in their good attendance, behaviour and the good efforts they make to overcome their difficulties and improve their learning. One pupil in talking positively about the PRU said that she is 'getting a second chance here'. Parents are very appreciative of the good effect the PRU has on their children, one saying how relieved she was that her daughter 'now wants to get up in the morning, dress and go to school, just like any normal young person.'

The importance of leading healthy lifestyles and staying safe permeates all the work of the PRU. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills required to change their lifestyles, to their benefit and often to the benefit of their families. One parent reported that her daughter has been 'transformed' since starting at the PRU because she 'looks after herself much better and takes real pride in her appearance.' Essential skills for living, especially personal independence, and the importance of economic well-being, are addressed well in a number of ways, including through enterprise projects that simulate small business activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge who have developed the necessary skills for teaching individual pupils and small groups of pupils. Those who teach at the hospitals quickly link with teachers at the pupils' other schools to find out what they are learning in the subjects, so that these topics can continue to be followed in the time allowed for teaching by the medical consultants. As a result, learning for many of the hospital pupils is disrupted very little over the time they are away from their schools. When teaching in pupil's homes is similarly guided, lessons are relevant to pupils' needs and capabilities and progress is most often good or better.

An important aim of all lessons is to help pupils become more self-confident and more assured in preparation for their return to their other schools. This is achieved especially well at the two teaching bases. Careful planning results in pupils having many opportunities to work together and to be involved in open discussions in order to practise the skills of teamwork and gain confidence in expressing their thoughts and opinions in front of others. Increasingly, pupils realise the importance of committing

themselves to their learning. Most often, they try hard to do their best and gain considerable enjoyment from their successes.

Electronic communication is sometimes used to help individual pupils who are taught at home with their learning, although this use is not sufficient at present. Teachers are not able to present lessons to pupils or send messages to them through computers, and pupils are not able to continue their learning through controlled access to the Internet. This limits the extent of their learning and makes their arrangements for learning less flexible than is the case for pupils in many equivalent PRUs.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets the requirements of the LEA's curriculum policy for PRUs and is built on the national 'good practice' model. The minimum aim of providing five hours of tuition each week to maintain learning in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is met for all pupils. Most gain additional hours of tuition; for some, as many as 15 additional hours per week, depending on the severity of their needs.

The curriculum is planned well in an effort to meet the needs of each pupil. For example, pupils in Year 11 are able to take a range of nationally accredited awards that accurately reflect the extent of their learning. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils take the examinations they were preparing for in their other schools, which for last year's pupils included GCSE Spanish, physical education and dance, as well as the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Enrichment days, when pupils may meet each other for the first time to, for example, visit local places of interest, provide important opportunities for them to mix with each other, as a first step to attending the teaching bases.

The small size of each of the two teaching bases and their unsatisfactory locations limit what can be easily taught. There are no specialist rooms for any subject and little storage space. This means that teachers have to carry equipment for lessons, including those in science, art and design and design and technology. Some subjects, notably music cannot be taught. Also, at one base, the important aim of developing pupils' socialisation skills is compromised. At this teaching base, pupils start the day, take their breaks and end the day at different times to the other pupils who share the location because they do not 'mix' well. At one hospital there is no dedicated teaching space and teachers work at pupils' bedsides. This limits what can be taught and, especially, the opportunities for pupils to gain from joining with others for their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are cared for and supported well. The arrangements to protect their welfare and safety are extremely rigorous. Staff are trained very well and know the procedures

to follow if they are concerned about any pupil. The work of PRU staff at the hospitals is seen as integral to the process of recovery and is valued by the medical consultants.

The strong relationships staff have with pupils and their parents provide a solid platform for advising and supporting pupils. More specifically, targets in pupils' individual learning plans (ILPs) and personal education plans (PEPs) work very well in identifying their learning and additional needs and in assisting them to improve. Pupils, and their parents, are aware of these and know what they have to do to meet them. With the help of the close links with many related agencies, pupils' additional needs are met well. For example, CAMHS personnel are very effective in helping pupils deal with their emotional and associated difficulties. Connexions personnel are equally effective in introducing pupils to opportunities in further education and in providing work experience.

The powerful impact of the support and guidance offered pupils is reflected in the change in one Year 9 pupil. Initially unable to go outside her home, she now attends a teaching base and takes great enjoyment in telling a visitor that 'I have a future now I have my life back. I am even making new friends.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads very well. She has clear plans for continuing to improve the PRU and is committed to fully realising those plans. She is very ably supported by the two assistant headteachers and those in charge of the teaching and hospital bases. Her high expectations are seen in the smooth day-to-day management and in the close and beneficial links formed with the staff of many agencies and schools. Because of this the capacity for continued improvement is good.

The headteacher, and the linked professional officers of the LEA, rightly recognise that the accommodation for the two teaching bases and the arrangements for teaching at one of the hospitals are unsatisfactory. It is to the credit of staff working at these locations that the effect of these limitations on pupils' progress is minimised.

Self-evaluation procedures are used well in guiding teaching and learning for individual pupils, in deciding when they are ready to join the teaching bases and when they should return to their other schools. Pupils' records are persuasive evidence of the good progress they make in their learning and in developing themselves as young people. Nevertheless, this wealth of data is not being used well enough in checking how effective the PRU is in its work, for example, against regionally and nationally derived information.

The management committee meets regularly, but does not have a named chairperson. Although the committee satisfactorily meets its basic responsibility to the PRU, overall, members do not know enough about the strengths and weaknesses. Because of this, they do not challenge the headteacher sufficiently to show how good the PRU is or support it well enough in debate with professional officers and elected members.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

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 much of what I saw. The key strengths look to be:

- Even though many of you found it difficult to begin learning again, you like the staff very much and see the importance of continuing your learning.
- You attend well in the hours agreed for you and behave well in your lessons. You are extremely polite in the way in which you deal with each other and with visitors to each of the centre's bases.
- Your unit is led very well by the headteacher and assistant headteachers. They make sure that you are safe wherever you are being taught.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants, and those from the many other agencies who deal with you, work hard for you. Because of this you make good progress in your learning and, especially, in becoming better able to cope with the requirements of your other schools. So much so, that most of you who join the centre are able to return successfully to them.

I would like some things to be better. These include:

- The committee that helps manage the unit needs to help the headteacher more.
- The procedures for recognising how good the unit is need to be better.
- The teaching bases, and the arrangements for teaching at one of the hospitals, are not good enough and need to be improved.

With best wishes

Dr D Alan Dobbins Lead inspector