



Oldham Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134759
LEA Oldham
Inspection number 282678
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Kath Halifax CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Broadbent Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		Watersheddings
Age range of pupils	10 to 16		Oldham OL1 4HU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 911 3185
Number on roll	165	Fax number	0161 911 3186
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	NA
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms Nikki Shaw

Age group 10 to 16	Inspection dates 15 March 2006 - 16 March 2006	Inspection number 282678
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The Oldham Pupil Referral Unit opened in April 2004 and serves the whole of the Oldham Authority. The unit is based on two main sites, with vocational and personal development activities taking place on several other sites. The Pupil Support Centre (PSC) is for pupils in Years 7 to 11 who have been excluded, or who are at risk of exclusion, from mainstream schools. In addition, the PSC offers a 'pick and mix' provision for Pupils at Risk of Exclusion (PARE), where pupils remain on the role of their neighbourhood school but attend the unit between two and nine half days each week. The Specialist Learning Centre (SLC) is for girls who are pregnant or young mothers. In addition the SLC provides home tuition to sick children, including those with mental illness.

Of the 165 pupils on roll, only 35 are girls. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage with some Asian and a few mixed race pupils. All speak English as their main language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. Some pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities with 45 having statements for social, emotional and behavioural needs. A number of pupils are offenders. Nineteen pupils are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils have a negative attitude to education and many have been out of school for long periods of time. Attainment on entry is well below that expected of pupils of this age.

The unit is in a period of transition. Following the closure of the secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs, Year 10 and 11 pupils and their staff were transferred to the PSC. A building programme is now underway and due for completion in the early summer. The local authority is currently reviewing its provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. A child care inspection of the before and after school clubs in the PSC building took place at the same time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Managers are accurate in their judgement that this is a good unit with some outstanding features. Overall, achievement is good. As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils who attend regularly make good, and sometimes very good, progress. Excellent links with other professionals, together with outstanding support and guidance, result in very good improvement in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and career prospects. Pupils who have been in custody have been helped to rehabilitate and gain qualifications. All Year 11 pupils leave with nationally recognised awards. This enables them to go on to further education, training or employment. Most pupils make good improvement in their attendance. However, the sporadic attendance of some affects their achievement. In the time the unit has been operating, thirteen pupils have successfully returned to mainstream education. Leadership and management are good overall, but, because so much change has been thrust upon the unit in a very short time, managers have not had chance to monitor and evaluate all aspects of its work. In addition, because pupils with statements of special educational need have only been on roll for a few months, the documents have not been amended to ensure the provision meets the needs identified. Nevertheless, under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, much has been accomplished in a very short time. With the skill and enthusiasm of staff, the unfailing support of the management committee and greatly enhanced accommodation, the unit is in a strong position to continue to improve at a very good rate. Parents, pupils and other professionals speak highly of it. Furthermore, it is held in high regard by mainstream schools, particularly the preventative work done through PARE. Value for money is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve pupils' rate of attendance.
- Establish systems to keep a check on all aspects of the unit's work.
- Ensure statements of special educational need are amended to reflect the curriculum pupils need and receive.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards are very low but pupils who attend regularly make good progress academically and in their behaviour. Pupils on home tuition make good progress towards their targets. Skilful and sensitive teaching enables those with degenerative conditions to maintain their skills. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils in all sectors of the unit make good progress and achieve general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in up to six subjects. High achievers are identified and stretched through, for example, a link with a science college. Lower attaining pupils suitably earn units through the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) and the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) because of a good

programme, daily routines and work towards the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. In addition, pupils achieve a range of vocational awards. Pupils of all ages who have difficulties with literacy make good progress because of individual and small group work and daily reading for all pupils. Pupils of all capabilities achieve highly in art and design with standards equal to those in mainstream schools.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

While provision for pupils' personal development is good overall, it is outstanding for their moral and social development. Pupils join the unit at a time of major disruption in their lives. Nevertheless, staff have very successfully helped most manage their aggression, control their behaviour and modify their language. Behaviour and attitudes are good overall. Pupils recognise the importance of abiding by rules, allowing others to speak, and showing respect for all. They understand the need to live a healthy lifestyle and to be safe. As a result, reported instances of substance misuse have significantly reduced and a considerable number of pupils have been helped to stop smoking through a successful cessation programme. Most pupils have a much improved attitude to education. The majority show good improvement in their attendance. Useful systems are being introduced, but managers recognise attendance is unsatisfactory and an area for development. Pupils are proud of their contribution to the community, speaking enthusiastically of the work undertaken to refurbish parks and clear gardens; and of the artwork exhibited in the Civic Hall, hospital and art gallery. Most pupils have little time for things spiritual, but they have been greatly affected by the untimely accidental death of one of their peers and appreciate the quiet seating area and carving dedicated to his memory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in all parts of the unit. Pupils learn at a good rate because teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of working with pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. Staff have worked particularly hard on managing pupils' behaviour, with the result that interruptions to learning are few. Pupils who only a few months ago would assault staff and storm out of lessons are now showing good levels of concentration, applying themselves to their work and, overall, wanting to succeed. Teachers and support staff work together very effectively and are skilled at creating a calm purposeful atmosphere and giving pupils confidence in themselves. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to gain pupils' interest and to make lessons lively. In Years 10 and 11, assessment meets the criteria of the examination boards and national tests. While informal assessment takes place and is used well to plan further work, managers recognise the need to make this use consistent and to link it to National Curriculum

levels. Staff work hard to involve parents and carers in their child's learning through weekly workshops, for example, about managing behaviour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the requirements for a pupil referral unit.

Managers endeavour to ensure that it reflects the curriculum of mainstream schools to allow for smooth transfer. All pupils have a personalised learning programme, including those admitted from the school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs, and who have special educational needs. They are achieving well, particularly in English, mathematics and PSHCE, but no check has been made to ensure they are receiving their full entitlement as required in their statement. Provision for pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers is good, providing them with qualifications as well as preparing them for parenthood, although girls within the specialist learning centre do not have the opportunity to take part in physical education activities. Home tuition is good and enables pupils with medical conditions to keep pace with their work. Work related learning is good, but pupils do not have the opportunity to take part in enterprise projects. Alongside the wide range of nationally recognised awards and very good PSHCE, the programme prepares pupils very effectively for the next stage of their lives. Though a pupil who has a sporting talent has been placed on a sport leadership course, there is no system to identify and provide for the gifted and talented. Very good use is made of the community to enrich learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff are committed to providing high quality care. They know pupils' personal circumstances exceptionally well, working closely with parents to enhance learning and behaviour. Pupils appreciate the support they receive from their teachers and named learning mentors. Health and safety arrangements, and those for the protection of pupils and staff, are clear and understood by all. Links with numerous voluntary agencies and community support groups are outstanding. This is particularly so for pupils who are especially vulnerable, such as those in the care of the local authority, pregnant schoolgirls, those who are offenders and those who are anxious or phobic. Arrangements for new pupils moving into the unit are carefully thought-out and ensure these pupils are well prepared for change. Suitable plans are in place for pupils who return to their neighbourhood school. Older pupils receive very good advice when choosing options and career choices. The work of the unit prepares pupils extremely well for life after school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

While leadership and management are good overall, the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and excellent support of key members of staff have helped the unit to

function effectively despite massive upheavals over the past few months. The admission of 40 pupils all at once from a closing school has been achieved efficiently while maintaining the quality of provision for both new and existing pupils. In addition, during this time, the headteacher has overseen the refurbishment of the second site, which is being accomplished with minimum disruption. The passion, vision and dedication of the headteacher have resulted in a quality service, not only for pupils in the unit, but also a significant number who have been helped to stay in their neighbourhood schools. Managers have coped exceptionally well with the speed of change. They are tracking pupils' progress and well-being effectively, but recognise they have not spent time analysing the information or checking the effectiveness of other aspects of the unit's work, such as the curriculum. The work of the unit's leadership and management contributes very significantly to its capacity to improve further.

Parents, carers and pupils have been consulted during the changes. Events have overtaken the development plan, which is constantly under review. Nevertheless, the focus is still firmly on raising standards and ensuring the well-being of pupils and staff.

Following all the changes and the promotion of the deputy head, the senior management team has been re-organised and extended. Though some are new to post, all are clear about their roles, very enthusiastic and make useful contributions to discussions. While formed only a year ago, the management committee has helped steer the unit through very demanding times. As individuals they provide very good professional support. The sub-committee structure is working well and the headteacher is held to account particularly on standards and attendance.

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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?	1	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	NA	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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?	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?	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	1	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

As you know, we met a number of you during the recent inspection of the PRU. Thank you for talking to us and helping us in our work.

What we liked most about the PRU

- Many of you make good improvement in your behaviour and attendance and achieve well.
- Staff work hard to support you and help you succeed.
- Your lessons and links with community groups prepare you well for life after school.
- Mrs Shaw is a very good headteacher and is working hard to make the PRU even better.

What we have asked your teachers and the management committee to do now

- Further improve attendance rates.
- Keep a closer check on what is happening in all aspects of the work of the unit.
- Make sure pupils with statements receive the provision they are entitled to.

We enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.