



Wokingham Secondary Pupil Referral Service

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101493
Local Authority Wokingham District Council
Inspection number 286082
Inspection date 16 October 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Foxwood
School category	Pupil referral unit		Milton Road
Age range of pupils	11–16		Wokingham RG40 1DD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01189 890211
Number on roll (school)	11	Fax number	01189 890211
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Ms Joanna Holt
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–16	16 October 2006	286082

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Pupil Referral Service (PRS) provides for a small number of students who have been permanently excluded from their secondary school for persistent disruptive behaviour. Their previous attainment is well below that expected for their age. Students come from broad socio-economic backgrounds. Nearly all are of White British heritage and there are a small number of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage. The Service underwent a significant restructuring in September 2005 when two pupil referral units were amalgamated to provide for the whole secondary age range. A new headteacher was appointed. The Service, which is currently based in temporary and shared accommodation, is waiting to move to new premises. The PRS is part of a school federation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Service provides a good quality of education for its students. The inspector agrees with parents, carers and the students themselves that it is effective in meeting the various needs of learners. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the PRS and are very grateful for the support they receive. A parent remarked, 'My son is much better behaved and communicates much better with his brothers, sisters and adults without losing his rag'. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear understanding of the service's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve provision. She has established an effective staff team who work well together to bring about improvement. At the heart of the service's work is the importance of the personal development of every student.

The motto of 'potential for respect and success' is effectively promoted through all activities. There is an effective emphasis on ensuring students understand that it is their responsibility to manage their own learning and behaviour. Students respect this approach, and through excellent relationships with staff and each other, they gain in confidence and self-esteem. As a result, their behaviour is good. An ex-pupil remarked, 'The PRS made me feel like I am somebody'. Comments from other former students consistently support this view.

Although overall standards in Year 11 are below average, students' achievements are good in relation to their starting points and many gain GCSE passes. The majority of students arrive with standards that are well below average as a result of the various interruptions they have had to their learning and their personal difficulties. Nevertheless, they make good progress as a result of the good quality teaching, support and care they receive. They enjoy their learning and many significantly improve their attendance and behaviour. However, the poor attendance of a few students limits their achievements. The emotional and social development of many is excellent considering their starting points. The tracking of students' progress is not sufficiently robust to help teachers plan for the next steps in learning. As a result, students are not always clear about what they have to do to meet the challenging targets that have been set for them

The curriculum meets the needs and interests of the students and there are good opportunities for vocational learning through work experience placements and courses at the further education college. Students are well prepared for reintegration into mainstream schooling, further education or employment when they leave the PRS. A parent remarked, 'Home life is so much more pleasant since she has attended the PRS and I am so pleased she has completed her GCSEs'. Despite the fact that a management committee has not yet met, there is satisfactory support from the local authority for the strategic management of the PRS. The service clearly demonstrates it has a good capacity to improve its provision and raise students' achievements still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the tracking of students' progress so that teachers can use this information to plan for the next stages of their learning.
- Ensure that students' targets are regularly discussed and reviewed to help them reach the challenging targets that have been set for them.
- Work with students to improve their attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students achieve well. In 2005/6 all students entered for GCSE examinations gained passes in the range A*-G. Although standards are below average overall this represents good progress when considering their very low starting points, the substantial barriers to learning, and the short period of time they have to study before taking the examinations. They achieve well as a result of their hard work and the teaching and support they receive which gives them the confidence to improve. All students achieved a minimum of level 1 in the basic skills tests and the certificate for working life. As well as making good progress in all subjects, students make significant gains in their personal and emotional development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students, including the social, moral, spiritual and cultural dimensions, is good. They understand the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and adopting safe practices. Students feel secure in their learning, which they enjoy. They really appreciate being treated with respect and trust by the adults in the PRS. While attendance is very low, when considering their previous record, many students make excellent improvement in their attendance and punctuality. One student remarked, 'I never attended my last school, I enjoy coming here because I am treated with respect'. However, the poor attendance of a few students has a detrimental effect on their achievements. Behaviour is good and students feel confident to express their moods because they know they will be met with understanding from both peers and adults. Students have a good sense of community. Through their attendance at college and at the various work experience placements, they gain confidence and learn new skills. Although basic skills remain low they are prepared satisfactorily for the world of work. A parent wrote, 'Since my daughter has been attending the PRS she has settled well and really enjoys her lessons. Being settled and happy at school has reflected so much on her home life too, thanks'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and as a result students make good progress. Teachers motivate students with challenging activities that have meaning for them and prepare them for their next stage of learning or employment. There is a positive reward and celebration ethos in lessons where learning is made fun and ongoing feedback and support makes it clear to students how they may improve. However, the monitoring and recording of students' progress and individual target setting is underdeveloped and is not used consistently in teacher's planning. Relationships between adults and students are a strength and staff ensure that students are confident and happy in their learning. A student wrote, 'I work better here because I have a better relationship with the teachers and also they treat you as an adult, not as a kid'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and clearly focuses on the needs of the students. Reintegration into mainstream schooling is well supported and there are many successful stories. Students, whose needs are more long-term, benefit from a range of opportunities. These include, taking a range of GCSE subjects, vocational studies, and further education and work experience placements. The variety of subjects and the relevance of them to their future are effective in motivating students to achieve. Teachers are developing links between subjects but these connections are not yet established firmly enough to support students' learning effectively. The curriculum is supported by a wide range of providers including the further education college, youth service and local employers. There is a good emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education which ensures students are taught effectively about sex and drugs as well as learning to build relationships, which promote healthy and safe lifestyles. Students receive good careers' advice and guidance which is complemented by the PRS's own programme of support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for students are good. There is sensitive and effective provision which gives students confidence that their personal needs are understood and can be met. The PRS works well with external support agencies to ensure that students' personal and emotional needs are met. Any students at risk are identified early and effective arrangements put in place to support them. The PRS works well with parents and carers and there is effective communication.

Students are confident that they are learning in a caring and positive environment that allows them to make mistakes without feeling bad about themselves. They are well informed of their future options and supported to make decisions for themselves.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Students have personal achievement targets, but they are too infrequently reviewed and strategies for improvement are not written into the planning. As a result they do not always know how well they are doing. There are good systems in place that minimise risk and ensure students are safe and well looked after. Child protection procedures are in place and clearly understood by staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads by example, demonstrating her clear views on treating students with respect, and motivating them to have confidence and to believe that they can succeed. There is effective co-ordination of the wide range of vocational and academic providers to ensure that the needs of students are met. This motivates and encourages students to improve their attendance and attitudes to learning and ultimately to appreciate their own progress and achievement. The headteacher and senior teacher work effectively as a team and all staff are clear as to their roles and responsibilities through the management and monitoring of their performance. Self-evaluation processes effectively identify strengths and weaknesses and the PRS knows what it needs to do to improve. However, the tracking of students' progress is not sufficiently robust to ensure that all students are doing as well as they might.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making my visit such a pleasant one. Thank you for telling me what you thought about the PRS. I agree with you and your parents and carers, that the PRS is supporting your needs well and overall, you get a good deal. As an ex pupil said to me, 'they sorted my life out'. I think many of you would agree with that too. The things I particularly liked were:

- you make good progress in your studies and learn to be responsible for your own learning and behaviour
- all staff care and support you very well; they listen and treat you with respect
- you are friendly and get on very well with everybody; relationships are excellent and many of you significantly improve your attendance and behaviour
- you understand how to be safe and healthy and you are successful in your work experience placements; you like your lessons and enjoy making personal progress
- you are learning skills that will support your next stage of learning or when you attend further education or when you get a job
- the curriculum meets your needs and you are taught well
- your parents/carers really appreciate the improvements you make while attending the PRS
- your headteacher is leading and managing the PRS well and is aware of how to improve it further.

The areas for improvement are:

- making sure that teachers use the information they have about you to plan lessons which help you get better by meeting your needs fully
- teachers give you more help to reach the challenging targets that have been set for you
- some of you need to improve your attendance to get the best out of your education.

See where you can help the PRS to improve in these areas. Good luck for the future.

Best Wishes

Mike Smith, Lead Inspector