



# Whiteheath Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103887  
**Local Authority** Sandwell  
**Inspection number** 286798  
**Inspection date** 14 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Susan Morris-king HMI

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

|   |                     |                         |                  |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Pupil referral unit | <b>School address</b>   | Throne Road      |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Pupil referral unit |                         | Rowley Regis     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 5-16                |                         | B65 9JP          |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed               | <b>Telephone number</b> | 0121 5594623     |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 53                  | <b>Fax number</b>       | 0121 5614360     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body  | <b>Chair</b>            | Vacant Position  |
|   |                     | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Rowena Challoner |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 7 October 2002      |                         |                  |

|                          |  |                                    |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>5-16 | <b>Inspection date</b><br>14 November 2006 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>286798 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Whiteheath Education Centre consists of three parts: a centre which about 25 pupils attend at any one time, a home tuition service and a class at Sandwell Hospital. The hospital class caters for any school age pupils who are well enough to be taught, including those who are regularly admitted for short periods. Pupils receive home tuition because they are unable to attend school for medical reasons; these may be physical, psychological, or psychiatric. Primary age pupils are then, unusually, able to be reintegrated into mainstream schools. Where older pupils' needs are likely to require more long term specialist attention, they usually attend the main centre after a short period of home tuition. Some secondary-aged pupils are educated at the centre for several years. A significant number of pupils spend the whole of Key Stage 4 at the centre. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Many pupils have been assessed by the Community and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Almost all of the pupils are White British.

The headteacher has been acting head for the last year; the other senior leaders have also been in acting positions. All have been appointed to their substantive positions during the last month.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Whiteheath Education Centre provides a good quality education which is poised to be outstanding. Pupils' views of their education are overwhelmingly positive. They speak warmly of the excellent care they receive from the staff, and how this makes them able to regain their confidence and achieve academic success. In this nurturing environment, most pupils make outstanding progress with their social and emotional development. The management and leadership of the centre are good and the leaders are highly dedicated to ensuring that pupils are enabled to be successful. Careful, well-structured steps allow many pupils to graduate rapidly from a programme of part-time home tuition to full-time education at the main centre. Many pupils who have had very poor attendance at their previous school achieve over 90% attendance at the centre despite their often complex health difficulties. They greatly enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities available to them. All pupils who are well enough take part in work experience in Year 11 and almost all go on to education, training or work at the end of their time at Whiteheath. Parents appreciate the chance that their children are given to get their education back on track. The centre has forged excellent partnerships with a range of agencies and these greatly enrich the pupils' educational experiences and strengthen the care and support they receive.

The standards attained by pupils who attend the centre are below average overall, although some pupils each year attain standards which are in line with, or above, the national average for their age. Pupils' attainment prior to attending Whiteheath or receiving home tuition has often been affected by periods of absence from school as well as by anxiety and a lack of confidence. Nevertheless, a highly supportive environment and good teaching allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' achievement in their academic work is good, for some outstanding and never less than satisfactory. Standards reached by the pupils who attend the hospital class are dependent on their prior attainment as they attend the class for only short or intermittent periods of time. However, the supportive and carefully planned teaching helps to ensure that they do not fall behind as well as helping them to cope emotionally with being in hospital.

Teaching is good and promotes pupils' learning skills well. An appropriate balance is usually reached between challenging pupils and supporting them, which helps them to feel confident enough to gain new skills. High expectations are coupled with help given at the right time so that pupils have to try to be more independent and to think for themselves. Occasionally pupils are not helped enough to expand their answers, which limits the development of their understanding. Pupils' work is regularly assessed, but they are not always clear about their targets and what they have to do to improve. Moreover, although teachers record how well pupils are doing, this is not gathered together systematically enough to sufficiently inform the leadership team and tutors how well pupils are achieving across the curriculum. The curriculum offers pupils a suitable range of subjects and a very good selection of enrichment activities, which many are keen to take up.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the educational experience she wants pupils to receive and a very good understanding of their needs. She is rightly ambitious for the centre to become outstanding in all aspects. During her short time in post, as well as in her acting capacity, she has developed important aspects of the centre's work and she has gained a very good understanding of the effectiveness of the home tuition service and hospital class. Together with the senior team, she has begun to improve systems for the monitoring of crucial aspects of the centre's work, such as the progress which pupils make. The senior team understands the need to ensure that the information gained from this monitoring is evaluated thoroughly and used more rigorously so that it leads to improvement wherever necessary. Capacity to improve further is good.

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

- Develop a robust system to track the pupils' progress in each curriculum area, set challenging targets and quickly notice and act upon any underachievement.
- Consistently share assessment and target setting information with pupils to help them to take more responsibility for their own progress.
- Ensure that monitoring activities are carefully evaluated and rigorously used to promote further improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The needs and prior attainment of the pupils vary from year group to year group and consequently so do the standards attained at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. However, overall standards are below average. Pupils have often missed significant amounts of their schooling prior to attending the centre and therefore they have made less progress by their time of entry than they should. Nevertheless, despite standards being below average, a significant number of pupils achieve creditable results and worthwhile qualifications. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2006, five of the eight pupils in Year 9 gained standards which were in line with provisional national averages in English, mathematics and science. Of these, three attained above average results in English and mathematics, and one did so in science. Ten pupils completed Year 11 at the centre or on home tuition in 2006. Pupils gained between one and seven GCSE or Entry Level qualifications. One pupil gained 5 A\*-C grades and three others gained at least 5 A\*-G grades.

The results in the Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations represent good progress overall for the pupils, given their complex needs and prior attainment. They are able to achieve these results because the centre enables them to make such significant progress with their personal development.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being reflect the superb levels of care and support for each individual. The relationships of pupils with one another and with adults are excellent. When asked to identify the most positive aspect of their school, several pupils simultaneously said 'the teachers'; one added, 'they would do anything for you'. Because pupils feel so well supported, they begin to grow in confidence from the time they start home tuition, and this continues when they join the centre. As a result, many attempt activities they have never tried before, such as a recent outdoor activities trip to Wales, where pupils worked in teams, supported each other, and coped very well with being away from home. Pupils take responsibility for each other very well; for example, established pupils become 'buddies' for new pupils. Because pupils feel so safe and secure and enjoy their learning so much, their attendance improves enormously. Many are reluctant to join in with physical activity but the range of activities such as walking, dance, archery and fencing leads pupils to become involved and interested; this in turn helps them to develop a secure understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. The centre recently gained the National Healthy Schools Gold Award. Through a good range of charitable events, combined with the ways in which pupils take responsibility in the centre, they make an excellent contribution to the community. Pupils' moral and social development is excellent, and their spiritual and cultural development is good. Work experience and work-related learning prepare pupils well for life beyond school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good. Teachers are good at focusing on pupils' strengths in lessons and encouraging them to try new experiences, such as through the activities afternoons. The headteacher's observations indicate that she is aware of the strengths in teaching and the areas which need to be developed. She has begun to take steps to even out some variability, with the aim of ensuring that all teaching is as good as the best. The best marking, for example in information and communication technology (ICT) and English, gives pupils clear guidance about what they need to do to improve as well as what they have done well but this is not sufficiently widespread. The centre displays some excellent examples of pupils' artwork and work from other subjects, and celebrates achievement through the use of annotated photographs. Classroom environments are less vibrant and tend to lack learning prompts such as key vocabulary. The hospital classroom is bright and welcoming and arranged sensitively to take account of the wide age range which is taught.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The centre plans the good curriculum carefully to balance the need for pupils to gain relevant qualifications with the need to allow them to develop socially and emotionally. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their experiences in music and in art and produce work of a good, and sometimes excellent, standard. The newly developed curriculum for ICT is starting to improve pupils' skills and is enabling them to study for appropriate accreditation. At Key Stage 4, pupils can select from a suitable range of options as well as taking English, mathematics and science at GCSE or entry level. An activities afternoon each week includes varied choices such as dance, walking, cookery, 'holiday Spanish' and Indian hand painting. The curriculum gives pupils a very good range of enrichment opportunities which helps to ensure that they are interested and engaged, such as theatre visits, outdoor activities, a trip to London, creating a radio broadcast, and entering a poetry competition. Pupils receiving home tuition are taught by subject specialists whenever this is appropriate for their needs. The hospital curriculum is well matched to pupils' ages and stages of development, and communication with the pupils' schools is good. The headteacher and local authority have rightly identified the need to increase the amount of teaching time which is offered to pupils, and to extend the number of opportunities for physical activity, which are currently too limited.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong; staff have a very good knowledge of the pupils' emotional and social needs which they use well to ensure an excellent standard of care. A counsellor visits the school on a weekly basis and pupils value this support. A good range of outside agencies works with the centre, such as the school nurse, CAMHS, and an education welfare officer. Careers guidance and work experience help pupils to make suitable choices about what to do next. Risk assessments are thorough and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. A tutor system ensures that all pupils, including those who receive home tuition, have a member of staff who is responsible for overseeing their welfare. The academic guidance which pupils receive is more variable. At its best, pupils understand what their target is for a particular subject or examination course and what they have to do to achieve it, but this is not sufficiently consistent.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management by the headteacher and the senior team through a period of some uncertainty have enabled the centre's high standards to be maintained and pupils to gain a positive educational experience. Now that the senior team's positions have become substantive, they are able to plan for the next steps they need

to take: this process has already begun and they have a good understanding of how to improve further. Pupils were complimentary about the headteacher's knowledge of them as individuals and they value the fact that she regularly teaches them both for English and during the activities afternoons. The local authority has improved its systems for managing its pupil referral unit (PRU) provision, including Whiteheath, and, importantly, the centre is now receiving regular visits and support both from the line manager of the PRU service and from a school improvement adviser. The management committee has also improved in the last year. The chair has a clear understanding of the committee's role and spends time visiting the centre. Regular reports from the headteacher have begun to allow the committee to provide a good level of challenge and support.



**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### 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   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| 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   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| 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                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 2   |
| 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 me welcome when I inspected Whiteheath this week. I particularly enjoyed talking with you about the progress you have made and about your experiences at the centre. You were overwhelmingly positive about being at Whiteheath – everyone I spoke to said that they really appreciated the staff and the way that they help you to build up your confidence and therefore to learn. I agree that they do this very well indeed. One thing which particularly impressed me was how much most of you have improved your attendance since joining the centre; this indicated to me that you feel safe and that you enjoy the experiences you are getting. It was good to hear about the visit you made to the City Learning Centre, to see photos of pupils on outdoor activities, and to watch a musical performance. All these aspects really help you to build your confidence and to make progress. Many Year 11 pupils gain good qualifications and go on to work, college or training.

Clearly, Whiteheath is a good centre, and the way it allows you to develop personally is excellent. I have asked the headteacher and the senior staff to take the following actions to improve your education even further:

- develop a way of tracking your progress in each subject: looking each half term or term at how well you are getting on and whether you need more support (or perhaps more challenging work) to be able to reach your targets
- make sure that you have plenty of information about how well you are getting on, for example by writing detailed comments in your books and discussing your targets with you
- check that every part of the centre's work is always as good as it can be.

I know that many of you have found school difficult in the past and it is really good to see you achieving and showing such positive attitudes to your work. I wish you every success in the future.