

The Orchard Centre PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104288
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	286899
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	147
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Jo Wood
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003
School address	Great Brickkiln Street Wolverhampton WV3 0PR
Telephone number	01902 555947
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Orchard Centre is a large pupil referral unit with most pupils based in the main centre. In addition there are 30 dual registered pupils on roll based in a local hospital and another 42 dual or sole registered, receiving home tuition. A small number of pupils are young mothers. The youngest pupils who attend the centre currently are in Year 6. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds with high levels of deprivation. Pupils have a range of learning difficulties and disabilities, but are mainly placed at the centre for emotional, social and psychological reasons. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very small minority from different ethnic groups. There is very high mobility with pupils being based at the Centre for only part of their education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Orchard Centre pupil referral unit (PRU) is good. It successfully transforms the lives of the pupils who attend. This is a result of good leadership and management, which constantly strive to improve provision. When pupils arrive they have usually been out of school for some considerable time or have attended school very irregularly and the standard of their work is below the national average. After a short time, in the caring and happy atmosphere of the Centre, their confidence and self-esteem soon improve and they begin to enjoy their education and attend regularly. They arrive with big gaps in their learning, but then begin to experience success and make rapid strides in almost all their subjects and courses. This is often described by parents as 'fantastic'. The progress and achievement, even for those remaining for short lengths of time, are therefore good, and for several pupils they are outstanding. This good learning is a result of strong and effective care, support and guidance and good teaching. In particular, staff set challenging targets in all subjects and pupils' progress towards them is well monitored. Consequently, staff are able to provide additional and well targeted support if they fall behind. Pupils make the least progress in speaking and listening skills because not enough attention is paid to developing these across the curriculum.

The Centre is a highly complex organisation, which is run very smoothly. The good curriculum is exceptionally rich and offers a flexible, individually tailored range of courses to engage and inspire pupils to want to do well. Pupils' good personal development and well-being are supported through effective programmes run by highly skilled staff and excellent links with other agencies and organisations. Pupils who are taught at home or in hospital make equally good progress and the curriculum is adapted imaginatively to meet their particular needs.

Pupils behave well and act safely. Several commented about how much they enjoy being with the other pupils who they find kind and friendly. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the centre and wider community and are involved in many different projects, such as working with community groups and helping to develop the new cycle track. This has helped improve many of their skills including their self-confidence and social skills.

Because self-evaluation is good the Centre leaders understand its strengths and weaknesses well. They have identified for example that despite good progress in their personal development, a few pupils cannot transfer their new found confidence to new situations. This affects the ability of these pupils to attend examinations and to remain in their next placement. The Centre staff are working hard to address this issue to ensure longer-term success for more pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more support for pupils so that they have greater success in attending examinations and in maintaining their placements after they leave the Centre.
- Improve pupils' skills in speaking and listening throughout the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils experience success in a wide range of subjects for pupils in all age groups and of all abilities, and progress and achievement are good. Although pupils arrive with limited recent learning and below average standards, they make particularly rapid progress in science, mathematics and reading. They make less progress in speaking and listening, and, although it

is satisfactory, teachers of all subjects do not pay enough attention to this basic skill. Some pupils make outstanding progress compared to their performance in previous schools. This is because they are able to receive a lot of individual help in a safe, supportive environment. The number of qualifications achieved is high, including a good range of vocational subjects to help prepare pupils well for their future careers. Pupils are particularly successful in their art GCSE examinations and their displayed work is of a high standard. Pupils in the hospital school and those on home tuition are helped to keep up with their school work and often make exceptional progress in some subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show a thoughtful and sensitive understanding and respect for others. Pupils are beginning to understand how to live healthy lives, although they do not always bring healthy food to the centre. They know how to keep safe, there is almost no bullying and any is quickly resolved which pleases pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to the Centre, and this is usually the first time they have attended school regularly. Their contribution to the work of the Centre and the responsibility they take is excellent. For example they work with community playgroups, have produced leaflets for the welcome pack for new pupils, and contributed to the design of the playground murals. They take particular pride in looking after the fabric of the building. In almost all ways pupils are very well prepared for their future economic well-being, with increased social, basic and computer skills, an ability to work independently and in teams, and a good understanding of the world of work. This transformation is significant for the majority for their future lives. As a result of their mental health issues, a small minority of pupils are too afraid to sit examinations and their increased confidence and personal skills are not always successfully transferred when they start work or college placements. This adversely affects opportunities for the future for this small group.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In all settings, lessons are planned well to meet the very wide range of different abilities within each class and pupils make rapid progress as they catch up on missed education. Pupils often say, 'I do much more work here than I did at my old school.' Teachers assess what is learned well so that they can set challenging targets and build systematically on what pupils have learned before. Relationships are strong and so behaviour is good and pupils can concentrate on what they are doing. Work is planned well and many opportunities to work individually or in groups provide the pupils with necessary skills for the future. Teaching assistants make a substantial and skilled contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards imaginatively to make lessons enjoyable and motivating to pupils. Several lessons though miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and the type of questions used do not always encourage lively discussion.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum overall meets the needs of a very complex group of pupils well. This is true in the main centre, for the young mothers, for home tuition and in the hospital. Planning to

develop basic skills, especially speaking and listening across the curriculum, is however not so well developed. Nevertheless, there are some significant strengths within the curriculum. Many interesting courses and activities are designed to help pupils understand the world of work. As a result many pupils go on work based learning when they leave, although a few struggle to cope. The richness of the curriculum to bring learning alive and help pupils develop all-round personal skills is outstanding. For example, pupils' fish, cycle, play golf, climb, visit the theatre and go on residential trips. The strong provision connected with the Activemark and Healthy Schools Award is helping pupils lead more active lives. The Centre uses an outstanding array of links with other organisations such as Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club and the local tourist board to make activities and learning meaningful and exciting for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to safeguard and care for pupils are robust. The support to help pupils develop personally is good overall. For many pupils the support is excellent in helping them to attend school, change their attitudes and behaviour and begin to learn. The Centre is very successful in helping pupils who have a wide range of serious conditions which effect their learning and behaviour. The well stocked shop containing items that can be bought by exchanging reward points is particularly effective in motivating pupils to work hard and behave well. The sensitive way pupils' personal needs are managed is highly skilled. The links with other agencies to support this work is excellent. The one area, which is less successful, is the support to help some pupils transfer their new found social skills into real life situations when they leave. This is beginning to be addressed. The systems for guiding pupils to reach high standards are very well organised and individual target setting is increasingly accurate. This is a significant reason why pupils are making such good progress and why several make outstanding progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leaders have done an excellent job of making such a complex organisation successful in almost every aspect. There is a very strong drive to keep improving provision, and especially the progress pupils make in their academic as well as their personal skills. The role of middle management in this work is still developing. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is good.

School leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Centre well and have begun to make some highly relevant improvements recently, in particular the collecting and monitoring of information about how well pupils are doing to see where they could do better. This has led to recent improvements to pupils' achievements in mathematics, science and reading. They have also started to examine how they can better support some pupils when they leave the unit. As a result, the capacity to continue improving is good.

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Annex A

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?	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

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	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	3
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.

Annex A

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	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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

The Orchard Centre PRU, Wolverhampton, WV3 0PR

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we visited your centre. We enjoyed meeting you very much, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

We found your centre to be successful, well run and very caring. It is a good centre, just like you told us. It helps all of you to make good progress in your lessons, and in your social and personal skills. Your headteacher and senior staff do a good job in seeing that you all do well and that the centre keeps improving. The contribution that you make to the centre and community is outstanding and we found you to be hard-working and well behaved. Your teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at helping you to do your best and they teach you well. We would like them to help you improve your speaking and listening skills even more. The way you work together and care for one another is impressive and you clearly enjoy coming to the Centre, or having help in hospital or at home. We think that this, alongside your good skills in English, mathematics and ICT, will stand you in good stead for your next move and future lives. We do have one concern, which we share with your headteacher, and that is that some pupils in the past have lacked the confidence to sit examinations or stay on in future placements. We have asked your teachers to look at ways that they can help and support you more in these situations in the future. Maybe you will have some ideas about this.

We were pleased to see that you take plenty of exercise and join in with so many things. Your teachers see to it that you have a good range of subjects and activities to help you learn well and prepare for your next school. The centre is good at looking after you and at helping you to become mature well-rounded people. It also guides you well to do your best.

We are pleased with the mature way that you take on responsibilities and help whenever you can. We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely Lead inspector