



Cotelands PRU

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123976
Local Authority Croydon
Inspection number 292847
Inspection dates 9–10 November 2006
Reporting inspector William Geoffrey Robson

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Selsdon Park Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		South Croydon
Age range of pupils	11–19		CR2 8JJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02032 522020
Number on roll (school)	43	Fax number	02032 522021
Number on roll (6th form)	14		
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Jennifer Adamson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–19	9–10 November 2006	292847

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Cotelands is a pupil referral unit (PRU) for teenage parents and mothers-to-be. It also provides for pupils with emotional difficulties or mental health problems that have resulted in them refusing to attend mainstream schools. Most pupils are aged 14–16 but the unit continues to support more vulnerable pupils in Year 12 to help them to complete examination courses or move into further education, training or employment. In addition, a teenage pregnancy reintegration officer, based at the unit, supports the personal development and well being of several teenage parents to the age of nineteen. Most pupils are White British but there are several Black British pupils of Caribbean background and a few from mixed ethnic backgrounds. An on-site nursery provides full day care for children up to the age of three and makes it easier for girls to continue their education when they have had their babies. The unit has been reorganised since the last inspection, when it was part of a PRU that also catered for pupils who had been excluded from mainstream schools. This is therefore the first inspection of the new unit, which was registered as a PRU in April 2005 and moved to new premises last November.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cotelands is a good, effective unit with some outstanding features. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has resulted in all staff working very well together, with a shared commitment to help all pupils to overcome their difficulties. The recent move to impressive new premises has been managed very well. The headteacher has ensured the further development of excellent links with several agencies. There are greatly improved links with the further education college on the same site, helping more pupils to continue their education after the age of sixteen, with excellent ongoing support from staff in the unit. The on-site nursery and links with teenage pregnancy professionals play a very effective role in enabling teenage mothers and mothers-to-be to continue their studies. They also receive essential education about health and childcare. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services team (CAMHS) works effectively with pupils with mental health problems and also helps teachers to support these pupils very well.

As a result of such teamwork, pupils' personal development is outstanding. One parent wrote, 'We are watching our son grow again. He is in safe and caring hands; he is gradually finding himself again and learning to cope with life.' During their time at the PRU, pupils' attendance improves significantly and is a sign of their growing confidence and trust, especially as several have not previously attended mainstream school for more than a year. They feel part of a supportive community, begin to enjoy education and develop healthy lifestyles. Many respond willingly to the opportunity to train as mentors so that they can help younger pupils to reintegrate into mainstream education at the further education college. A suitable focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) ensures that pupils make good progress with these basic skills and prepares them well for their economic well-being. However, many still lack the extra confidence to participate in work experience opportunities that are offered to them.

Although standards are below average, pupils achieve well during their time in the unit. They respond well to the good teaching they receive, listen carefully and behave extremely well. However, teachers miss opportunities to enable pupils to participate more fully in lesson activities. They do not emphasise sufficiently what is to be learned in lessons or refer enough to pupils' targets. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently aware of how well they are doing or how they can improve. The headteacher is developing clear procedures for evaluating pupils' progress. The advisory committee is very supportive of the PRU's work. However, it has not established clear criteria for evaluating the overall success of the unit or the value for money that it provides. This prevents it from challenging the headteacher and staff as effectively as it should.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision for post-16 students is good. The unit continues to provide excellent support for students' personal development and well-being after the age of sixteen when

required. This is especially valuable for teenage mothers whose education has been interrupted while they have their babies. These students do not study towards qualifications in the unit but benefit from sensitive support and guidance from the teenage pregnancy reintegration officer. This enables them to continue their education successfully in local colleges of further education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers help pupils to take a more active role in lessons.
- Help pupils to assess their own progress, both in lessons and towards their individual targets.
- Develop clear criteria for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the unit's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Most pupils enter the unit with very low standards because of their prior difficulties and often long-term absence from mainstream schools. They make good progress towards challenging targets and last year all Year 11 pupils gained at least one GCSE or entry level qualification; several gained grade C in a range of subjects. The longer and more regularly pupils attend the unit, the better they do. As a result, when pupils with emotional difficulties begin to attend consistently, they tend to make better progress than teenage mothers-to-be, whose education is further disrupted while they have their babies. However, staff continue to support pupils after Year 11 when necessary, either in local colleges or in the unit itself, and many achieve well in later years as a result. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Achievement is therefore good, even though standards remain below average at the end of Year 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, especially in view of the severe difficulties that they have experienced previously. They feel very safe in the unit and clearly trust teachers and support staff. Pupils report that there is no bullying. In this safe, supportive community, pupils clearly enjoy their education, as shown by their vastly improved attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Many begin to reflect on and come to terms with their past experiences. They grow sufficiently in confidence to help others. For example, teenage mothers and mothers-to-be provide emotional and practical mutual support. Other pupils willingly communicate by e-mail with a fellow pupil who is selectively silent. Many pupils are prepared to put forward their views and those of their friends about

how the PRU might be further improved, although there is no formal structure such as a student council to facilitate this.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils develop healthy lifestyles. They willingly participate in physical education and sporting activities and some attend a smoking cessation group. Pupils make good progress towards their economic well-being by developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well. Such is the severity of many pupils' difficulties that decisions are rightly taken not to attempt reintegration into mainstream schools. However, progress is such that a very large majority of pupils who were previously socially isolated manage to move on to further education or training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers develop very good, trusting relationships with pupils, which are often shown through the good, constructive use of humour that allows pupils to relax, enjoy their work and make good progress. Teachers know their subjects well and provide clear explanations as a result. They plan and prepare resources well, basing the work on a good knowledge of pupils' needs. Work is generally suitably challenging but teachers rightly seek to avoid placing vulnerable pupils under too much stress. However, they miss opportunities to encourage more active participation from pupils in lessons. For example, much discussion takes place with the whole class and is dominated by the teacher rather than enabling all pupils to contribute. Teachers do not share learning outcomes with pupils enough. Pupils often know what they are going to do but not what they are expected to achieve. This is also shown when teachers mark pupils' work as, although they let pupils know their grades, they do not explain clearly enough what they should do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The unit provides a good curriculum that meets pupils' needs well. As pupils have missed so much of their education because of previous difficulties, the unit rightly concentrates on English, mathematics, science and ICT, while providing the opportunity for teenage mothers to study child development. The opportunity for accreditation from GCSE to entry level enables all pupils to gain recognised qualifications. Good links with mainstream schools enable a few mothers-to-be to continue studying other subjects that the PRU is currently unable to provide, such as a modern foreign language. A good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) helps many pupils to come to terms with aspects of personal and emotional development that are especially relevant to them. Excellent links with CAMHS help teachers to develop this programme further. The curriculum helps pupils to make a smooth

transition to the further education college on the same site. However, recently organised taster courses with other colleges were unsuccessful and staff are working hard to improve these links. A weekly options course broadens pupils' interests well and during the inspection pupils responded very well to a visit from a representative of the Courtauld Institute of Art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

This aspect of the unit's work is good; there are some outstanding features. Child protection procedures are thorough. Excellent links with a range of agencies are very well coordinated so that teenage mothers and mothers-to-be benefit from easy access to the on-site nursery and health professionals. Pupils with social and emotional difficulties have excellent support from the Headstart team. As a result, pupils' personal development is excellent and this in turn enables them to achieve well academically. This excellent support does not end in Year 11. A teenage pregnancy reintegration officer and support assistant ensure that pupils have further valuable support up to the age of nineteen. As a result, many pupils make excellent progress in the adjacent further education college. One nineteen year old mother said, 'If it hadn't been for Cotelands and the nursery I'd have given up education. Now I'm applying for university.' The PRU sets targets for pupils as part of their individual learning plans. These relate to academic and personal, social and emotional aspects of learning. However, teachers do not refer to these as much as they should, with the result that pupils are not clear about their precise targets or how well they are progressing towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership by establishing a clear vision for the developing role of the PRU, which is shared by all members of staff. The recent move to new premises has involved staff in much extra work but the smooth transition reflects excellent teamwork and a commitment to improving provision for all pupils. All staff are fully involved in evaluating their subject areas and contribute to the improvement plan. Good monitoring of teaching and learning has led to the identification of areas for improvement. The views of parents and pupils are also taken into account. The headteacher monitors pupils' progress closely and is beginning to use data effectively to evaluate the PRU's work. The PRU's capacity for improvement is therefore good. Overall, this good self-evaluation enables pupils to benefit from good teaching, a worthwhile curriculum and some outstanding aspects of care, support and guidance. However, the advisory committee does not analyse the available data to evaluate the value for money that the unit provides.

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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
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	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
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	1	
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	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

I really enjoyed visiting your unit and would like to thank you for your welcome and for being so friendly and helpful. I agree with you that Cotelands is a good place to learn. You told me that you get on very well with the teachers and I could see that during lessons. This letter is to let you know what your unit does well and how, with your help, it can be an even better place to learn. My main finding is that the unit provides you with a good quality of education and in some respects it is excellent.

The best things about the unit are that

- even though you have been going through a difficult time in your life you begin to overcome your difficulties because the staff help you to enjoy education again and make excellent progress, personally, socially and emotionally
- Cotelands staff work very closely with other support workers to provide you with excellent support when you need it
- staff continue to support you very well indeed when you leave Cotelands, especially when you go to the local college
- your headteacher is an excellent leader and teachers help you to make good progress with your work.

To make your unit even better, three main things can be improved:

- teachers can encourage you to take a more active role in lessons
- teachers can help you to work out how well you are doing by showing you how to assess your work and making sure that you know your individual targets
- the advisory committee needs to work out exactly how well Cotelands is doing.

Thank you again for your help. I hope you continue to work hard, do well and make the most of the good opportunities that Cotelands provides for you.

William Robson

Lead inspector