

Hampden House Hostel

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124530
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293024
Inspection date	19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	7–14
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	16
School	
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr A Chidwick
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Cats Lane Great Cornard Sudbury Suffolk CO10 2SF
Telephone number	01783 373583
Fax number	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This pupil referral unit (PRU) provides for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. All but two have statements of special educational need. Unusually, the PRU provides boarding and there are currently 11 boarders. The majority have been out of school for some time. As a result, their attainment on entry is well below that expected. Pupils may enter at any time of the year and they come from all over Suffolk. Length of stay varies from a few months to two years. The PRU aims to return pupils to mainstream schools in their home communities. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Their socio-economic circumstances vary. Since the last inspection there has been a change of headteacher and a series of three deputy headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective pupil referral unit (PRU). It provides a good quality of care and education and is successful in achieving its aim to return pupils to mainstream schools in their home communities. It provides good value for money. The boarding provision makes a strong contribution to the PRU's success as do the good leadership and management. Parents appreciate the provision that the PRU makes for their children.

The PRU is successful in improving pupils' attendance and behaviour because there are good procedures for encouraging these important aspects of pupils' personal development, which is good. Pupils' life chances improve considerably whilst they are here, but they do not have enough opportunities to develop teamwork and enterprise skills. However, they enjoy the many activities provided, particularly through the 24-hour curriculum, which is good. They also adopt healthy lifestyles and learn to keep safe. Gradually, they take greater responsibility for themselves and contribute well to the community. Once pupils have settled they make good progress and achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Although standards rise in the short time that pupils are at the PRU they remain well below average. The PRU links constructively with local mainstream schools to secure part-time placements for pupils when they are ready for this. These lead to full-time attendance followed by transfer to schools in pupils' home communities. The good support that pupils get during their transition contributes to their successful transfer. Similarly good links with parents and external professionals ensure that pupils are well supported and their individual needs met effectively.

Self-evaluation is good. It is accurate and correctly identifies strengths and areas for development. An important part of self-evaluation is measuring pupils' success in achieving their personal targets. However, occasionally targets are not measurable which makes it impossible to say whether they have been met. Assessment of both academic and personal development is used well to identify the gains that individuals make, but this information is not always put together to give a picture of whole-PRU performance and improvement. Exceptions are the number of pupils successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools, exclusions and overall attendance.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Despite having had a succession of deputy headteachers since his appointment, the headteacher has ensured that the strengths of the provision have been maintained. He has been well supported by a management committee, which fulfils its responsibilities well. There has been good improvement in the boarding provision and in the classroom accommodation. A recently appointed deputy headteacher has strengthened the management team and the PRU's capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The boarding provision effectively meets the National Minimum Standards, as demonstrated in the latest report of Ofsted's Social Care Inspectorate (January 2007). Good progress has been made on the single action point identified in this report. Boarding provision contributes well to pupils' personal development and achievement. Pupils have good opportunities to mix socially with the wider community through a variety of trips and they learn to become resilient when facing such challenges as learning to sail a Thames barge. The good support provided by care managers and staff for reintegration into mainstream schools also ensures pupils' successful

transition and good academic progress. This improves pupils' chances of future employment. Residential care staff ensure that any homework set in lessons is completed. The wide choice of nutritious food prepared on site, the good range of physical activities and the good support provided for pupils' health needs effectively promote pupils' healthy lifestyles. Pupils say they enjoy boarding because there are fun things to do in the evenings. The effective involvement of key workers and outside professionals such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) ensures that pupils stay safe and feel secure at the PRU.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen self-evaluation by ensuring that pupils' individual targets are always measurable and by analysing the data available to give a picture of whole-PRU performance and improvement.
- Enhance the curriculum by providing opportunities for pupils to take part in enterprise activities and other activities to develop their ability to work in teams.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils arrive their attainment is well below that expected. Although standards remain well below average, pupils make good progress during their relatively short stay and achieve well. This is associated with improved behaviour and attendance, more positive attitudes to learning and good teaching. Progress is particularly evident in gains that pupils make in literacy and numeracy, both of which receive a good emphasis in the curriculum. Assessment information for individuals shows that, in a seven-month period, several have made gains of up to two years in their reading and spelling ages. Most of the individual targets set for pupils are measurable and challenging, and they are achieved in the timescale set. However, the PRU does not analyse assessment information to show average gains made in literacy and numeracy ages, or percentages of targets achieved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem as their length of stay increases, and many are ready to integrate back into mainstream schools. Improvements in behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils learn how to stay safe, to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Their enjoyment of learning is good, as reflected in good attendance and this helps them to re-engage with learning and make good progress. Pupils' relationships with staff and others are generally good, although there are few opportunities for pupils to work in groups or teams. Pupils make a good contribution to their community through fund-raising and by taking responsibility for keeping their own bed space clean and tidy, to care for their own belongings while respecting those of other people and helping to serve and clear away plates after breakfast. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. It is most often good in lessons and is nearly always at least satisfactory in less structured times. During mealtimes in the boarding provision, pupils' behaviour is often exceptional, but on occasions there are instances of poor behaviour, such as refusing to join lessons after a break. As a result of their stay at the PRU, pupils' are more mature, have developed their basic skills well and have better attitudes to learning. These improvements mean that they are much better placed to benefit from education, take their place in society and more likely to gain employment in future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Monitoring and support for teachers have helped them to improve their practice in line with the PRU's policy. Lessons are well prepared and planned to take account of pupils' ages and abilities. Staff manage pupils well and this results in a calm and purposeful atmosphere in most lessons. Pupils' engagement, interest and enjoyment is effectively secured by a range of strategies, such as breaking up the lesson into a series of short activities, including games, and using appealing resources such as video clips. Learning is reinforced well using practical approaches, such as making three-dimensional junk models of different human cells. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively so that pupils who need help do not become frustrated. Pupils are generally clear about the learning outcomes in lessons. Teachers remind pupils of these as well as pupils' individual targets. Effort and behaviour points are agreed at the end of each session, linked to the points system. Staff have identified the need to extend this to include a review of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is particularly well enriched, both by a wide range of activities in the 24-hour curriculum, such as swimming, football and skating, and also through a good range of visits, such as to the Imperial War Museum. Visitors with particular expertise, such as musicians, add variety. Enrichment contributes positively to pupils' re-engagement with, and enjoyment of, learning. The curriculum is planned effectively to accommodate the wide range of pupils' needs. Pupils follow a broad range of subjects within the National Curriculum with a strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and scientific skills. This emphasis on basic skills meets pupils' individual needs well and prepares them effectively for successful transfer to mainstream. However, there is little to enable pupils to develop enterprise skills. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and it supports the development of personal safety and healthy lifestyle choices. For instance, the local community police officer visits the school to raise pupils' awareness of the dangers and consequences of drug, alcohol and tobacco misuse.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils' key workers and effective links with parents and other professionals contribute to excellent pastoral care. The care manager makes at least one home visit per term and detailed weekly reports are provided for parents. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are excellent. Pupils have access to weekly counselling if they choose. Good assessments of potential risks take place, for example on every educational visit, from a walk in the local park to the residential experience. The small number of racist incidents, episodes of bullying and instances of challenging behaviour are systematically recorded and used in planning effective strategies to reduce these. Pupils are well supported in their academic and personal development by the points system that leads to rewards. Although there are good systems in place to track pupils' progress, the fact that targets are occasionally not measurable makes it difficult to measure every success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership. He provides a clear direction for the PRU and ensures that staff are well supported in carrying out their roles. He is well supported by an experienced head of care and a good management committee. Good opportunities for training ensure that staff have appropriate skills, such as in safe restraint of pupils. The well-being of staff has a high priority and consultation with them has resulted in the provision of a well equipped planning, preparation and meeting area for their use. Because teamwork is well established staff also support one another well. Inevitably, staff need to wear several hats, but a sensible approach ensures that their workload is manageable. For instance, there is a rolling programme of subject policy review and development. There is also suitable involvement of local authority advisers to support staff in developing the curriculum. Classroom teachers take responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress. They contribute a good range of assessment information that enables the headteacher to analyse the performance of individual pupils, but this is not used to provide a full whole-PRU picture, of frequency of incidents or average gains in numeracy skills, for instance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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 and efficiency of boarding provision	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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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
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

20 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hampden House Hostel, Sudbury, CO10 2SF

Thank you for making us welcome at the hostel. We enjoyed our day with you. We came to see how well you are all getting on and whether there are any things that could be improved.

We were pleased to hear that you enjoy coming here. You certainly have a great range of enjoyable activities, especially in the evenings. We were impressed to find how well you improve your attendance and behaviour. You also make good progress in improving your reading, spelling and number skills by working on your individual targets. These improvements really increase your chances of doing well in later life. It is good that so many of you get back to attending mainstream schools close to your homes. We enjoyed the meals we had with you and could see that you eat healthily. You also join in lots of physical activities and learn well about the risks linked to things like drugs and alcohol. We heard how much more responsibility you take for yourselves while you are at the hostel and saw some of you being very helpful and polite. We heard that you also raise funds for charities. You told us that you feel safe and you are certainly very well cared for.

It was good to see you working hard in lessons and behaving well as this helps you to learn and make good progress. The teaching is good and staff work hard to help you all improve. They also work together well and are doing a good job.

The staff are going to make a few improvements. They will make sure that all your targets are measurable so that they can say definitely whether they have been met. They will also use information about individual improvements to work out how well you have done as a group. This way they can see how effective the hostel is as a whole. We have also asked them to give you more experiences of working in teams including enterprise activities.

We wish you well in the future.

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector