



BAU PRU at Berkshire Adolescent Psychiatric Unit

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 128088
Local Authority Wokingham District Council
Inspection number 293596
Inspection date 20 November 2006
Reporting inspector Bill Stoneham

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Wokingham Hospital
School category	Pupil referral unit		41 Barkham Road
Age range of pupils	11–18		Wokingham RG41 2RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 949 5007
Number on roll (school)	2	Fax number	0
Number on roll (6th form)	1		
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Mrs Sally Marsden
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	20 November 2006	293596

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Berkshire Adolescent Psychiatric Unit was established as a pupil referral unit in September 2005. It has not previously been inspected. The unit operates within a National Health Service hospital. Students are referred on the basis of their mental health medical needs and those who attend the unit do so primarily to access the medical care available. The students have severe and complex medical conditions and are unable to cope with the demands of secondary school life. The unit can accommodate up to eight students aged from 11 to 18. When students enter the unit the expectation is that they will be patients for 40 days but this varies according to the severity of their illness. While at the unit, medical care is the prime concern but students attend lessons for up to six hours a week. As far as possible work is set by the students' home schools and the unit staff endeavour to offer a full and varied curriculum in the time available.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The BAU PRU offers a good standard of education with a number of outstanding features. Though the students spend most of their time in the unit on medical and therapeutic treatments, their educational needs are not ignored. Most students make good progress in their education and this is attributable to the quality of teaching and good leadership and management provided. The headteacher works with considerable drive, passion and determination and her commitment to the students is matched by the rest of the staff. All staff have a full understanding of the profound medical difficulties facing the students, but these are not used as an excuse. There is an overwhelming belief that high quality medical care can be enhanced by high quality educational provision and the educational staff have worked hard to ensure that a lively learning environment has been established. Such thoughtful provision ensures that most students are able to continue with their learning and to maintain their broadly average standards so that reintegration to their home school is made easier.

Staff cater for individual needs extremely well and each student follows an educational programme that reflects their individual requirements. The curriculum is outstanding and has been carefully planned. Thus, each student is able to follow an appropriate academic curriculum supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Personal development is outstanding. Considerable attention is successfully paid to encouraging the students to lead healthy and safe lifestyles and, given the challenging and difficult circumstances in which the unit functions, innovative strategies are very effective in promoting responsibility and economic well-being.

Students settle into the unit well. For some their admission is planned, but others arrive with little notice. The unit serves a very large geographical area covering 10 different local authorities. Excellent working partnerships have been established with a plethora of agencies and very good working relationships have been developed with some schools but it is difficult for the unit to establish working links with all schools in its potential catchment area. Thus, there may be delays in the unit gaining examination and assessment data about the students and this can create problems in planning. Electronic communication systems are not currently used to speed up the transfer of records and relevant information.

The circumstances in which the unit operates makes it difficult to comment on standards, though, over time, many of the youngsters who are educated in the unit reach at least national standards in their work. Achievement is good because of the quality of care, support and education provided. Staff are good at keeping home schools informed of each student's progress and relevant assessment records are kept. However, the use of assessment data, and self-assessment, to guide learning and set each student realistic, yet challenging, targets needs further development. This issue has been identified in the unit's own self-evaluation.

Staff have developed a good improvement plan and the advisory board is extremely supportive and prepared to challenge the educational aims and objectives of the unit.

The quality of self-evaluation is good and there is a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Though the unit caters for students aged 16+, it does not offer a separate sixth form provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of electronic communication so that students' records can be gained more quickly from home schools.
- Make more effective use of assessment techniques, including self-assessment by the students, to improve standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement is good because of the effective support the students receive from staff for their learning and personal development. Staff have high expectations that the students will succeed despite their difficult personal circumstances. This positively affects the way the students view themselves and their potential to do well. Previous learning and academic success are difficult to gauge as they may have been adversely affected by poor attendance, illness and emotional difficulties. The progress of some students is highly inconsistent because of their medical conditions. From evidence seen during the inspection, however, it is evident that many students make good progress because their individual needs are catered for so well. The unit is excellent at monitoring improvements in health and personal well-being but is less consistent in monitoring academic progress by using performance data and encouraging the students to self-assess their work. Wherever possible, however, suitably challenging targets are set by working in liaison with the students' home schools. Standards are difficult to evaluate. However, though the numbers involved were small, students attached to the unit in the academic year 2005/06 gained above average GCSE and AS results indicating that they achieved well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The students' personal development is outstanding. Part of the unit's ethos is that the youngsters being treated should develop greater responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. The medical and educational teams work very well together to achieve this goal. Though some students may have behavioural problems, the behaviour seen

during the inspection was exemplary. The students spoke warmly of the help and encouragement they are offered and all staff work tirelessly to establish a safe, calm and protective learning environment. The unit works most effectively in partnership with many external agencies such as Connexions and such work prepares the students very well for their lives beyond the unit. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy and safe life styles. Through both their education and therapeutic programmes considerable emphasis is successfully placed on helping the students to take responsibility for their own actions and to develop life styles that are safer and healthier than they have lived hitherto. Students really enjoy their work. Opportunities to contribute to the unit's life are good and enterprise days and work experience successfully promote economic well-being. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is very well and imaginatively planned through a cultural studies programme that covers personal education, citizenship and therapeutic care.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good because staff quickly get to know the students and successfully adapt course material to meet individual needs. Lesson planning is of a high standard and the teachers are skilled practitioners who are adept at challenging and nurturing the students. Staff use a range of activities that successfully engage the students. The use of assessment information is being developed but there was good evidence to show that self assessment is used well in art. The quality of teaching helps the students to achieve well. Once the students are settled in the unit, staff liaise well with the students' home schools about work to be covered. In most cases the unit has good knowledge about the students but, in some cases, information about previous examinations results and current performance is slow to arrive. Staff do not currently use electronic communication to ensure that records and other information arrives swiftly so that teachers are even better informed about the students in their care.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Given the context in which this unit operates, the curriculum offered is an excellent one. English, mathematics and science are taught by specialist staff and all other National Curriculum subjects can be offered. For example, German was taught well during the inspection. The curriculum is also outstanding because it is highly flexible. It meets individual needs so that students can study for GCSE and A/AS level examinations and it incorporates key-skills, citizenship and a very good range of

extra-curricular activities. The curriculum successfully aids the students' academic and personal development and prepares them very well for their return to school and for life beyond the class room. Work-related opportunities are available to all students in Years 10 and 11, with much thought being given where specific needs are hard to meet. Collaboration with external agencies is wide-ranging and excellent in quality. For example the unit's partnership work with the careers service and a local specialist Arts College has widened choice and improved the quality of provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of care is good because of the time and thought given by staff in considering the most appropriate course of action to support each individual student. In difficult and challenging circumstances the medical and educational teams work harmoniously to promote outstanding personal development and well-being. This is driven by a clear focus to ensure that all students make at least good progress. As the headteacher commented: 'We aim to develop the young people into effective, confident learners, who will use their skills in future educational and work placements'. The students are appreciative of the care and support offered. One student said that she did well because: 'I like the one-to-one teaching and the help I am given'. The students are well-guided and supported. When it is provided, good use is made of assessment data from home schools, though the role students play in setting and reviewing targets for themselves is less well developed. The unit is most successful in managing the medical and emotional needs of the students and ensuring that their education does not suffer. This enables many youngsters to return to their home schools and readily resume their academic studies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good and strongly support integration and achievement. There is an excellent commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for youngsters who, through their mental illnesses have found themselves placed at a considerable disadvantage. The head of the unit is passionate about her work and determined that the students will succeed despite their complex problems. All staff share this vision and are equally determined to help the youngsters to succeed; staff and the unit's advisory board are firmly committed to fostering a strong learning ethos. The strengths of the unit are in offering an educational package that properly and effectively supports each student's medical treatment and in ensuring that students can make progress in their studies and maintain their dignity. Evaluation of the unit's work is good but there is also an understanding that self-evaluation and the monitoring of students' progress can be improved further.

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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	NA	NA

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	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	1	

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?	1	1
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	1	
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

Following my recent inspection visit I would like to share my findings with you and thank you for the friendly welcome you offered me. I was also pleased to learn that you like your staff and that you appreciate the work they do with you. I was certainly impressed by the standard of work you are doing.

I have concluded that your unit is providing a good quality of education. Your staff are most supportive, they make excellent provision for your personal development and they want you to do well in your studies. They offer you good care and are keen to make your education room attractive and lively. Your staff are also keen to make your curriculum as varied and as challenging as possible. What they offer you is excellent.

Your staff also work well with your home schools but there are sometimes administrative difficulties in ensuring accurate information arrives promptly from your home school to help your staff plan accurately for your needs. I have asked your staff to address the following two points:

- develop the use of electronic communication so that records can be gained more quickly from your schools
- make more effective use of assessment techniques, including self-assessment by yourselves, to improve standards further.

I enjoyed meeting you and would like to extend my best wishes for your futures.

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector