



Hospital and Home Education PRU

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133164
Local Authority CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
Inspection number 294044
Inspection date 7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Susan Aldridge

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Thorneywood Education Base
School category	Pupil referral unit		Fairmead Close, Off The Wells Road
Age range of pupils	4-19		St Anns, Nottingham NG3 3AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 9153862
Number on roll (school)	112	Fax number	0115 9153863
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Dilip Nathan
		Headteacher	Mr David Staveley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors over one day.

Description of the school

The pupil referral unit (PRU) provides an education for pupils who are unable to attend their own schools for medical reasons. These include recuperation after surgery, life limiting illnesses and complex psychological disorders. The time spent at the PRU varies from a few days to some pupils who receive all their education at the PRU. Pupils come from a wide area across a region stretching from Cambridge and Norfolk to South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

The PRU operates across three sites, one at Nottingham City Hospital and one at the Queen's Medical Centre. The third and main site, Thorneywood, forms part of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The Home Tuition Service operates from this site. Here, there is a purpose built school adjacent to a residential unit operated by CAMHS. A fire in December 2006 destroyed part of the school, including the resource base for the home tuition service. The PRU is subject to reorganisation, with a proposed merger of the two hospital bases. It has not previously been inspected.

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 PRU that provides good value for money, which is how it sees itself. Parents, pupils and health professionals value the service that it provides. It successfully re-engages pupils in learning and enables them to keep pace with their studies or make up for lost time. Provision for children at the Foundation Stage in hospitals is good. Across the age range, standards vary widely, but are broadly average. Pupils are well supported, because the PRU staff link effectively with a wide range of external agencies to gain access to help. As a result, pupils make good progress in overcoming personal difficulties. Because the teaching is good, pupils make good academic progress and achieve well. The PRU is not always able to demonstrate the good progress made by pupils because staff do not systematically collect assessment information and analyse it to measure the gains made by long stay pupils. A small number of long stay Advanced (A) Level students make satisfactory progress, as the time for study each day is relatively short.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils with a history of poor attendance or non attendance in schools are well supported by home tutors and they improve their attendance dramatically. A few achieve 100% attendance. The home tuition service has started to teach small groups of pupils at Thorneywood, and this more efficient use of time provides pupils with good opportunities to socialise with one another as well as greater teaching hours. Expansion of this worthwhile development is not possible whilst space is limited there.

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons. Most are well motivated and concentrate on the tasks set. They feel safe at each of the bases and say that there is no bullying. Behaviour is good. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the PRU and the wider community. The extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. They develop those skills that improve their chances of future employment well. A high percentage of home tutored pupils go on to further education at 16.

Staff strive to provide a wide range of appealing and relevant learning experiences, but they are limited by a lack of specialist facilities. The recent fire at the Thorneywood base has limited what can be offered at that site, although the internal layout has been reorganised to make the best use of the accommodation. The result is the loss of a playroom for primary aged pupils, teaching space, a resource base, a meeting area for home tutors, and a design and technology room. There are no plans to replace the accommodation lost in the fire.

The success of the PRU is underpinned by good leadership and management. The headteacher and staff with responsibility for leading and managing each base or service discharge their responsibilities well. They work effectively as a team and show a strong commitment to continuous improvement. There has been a good response to an external audit of the provision undertaken in 2005, and planning and preparation for the proposed merger is good. The role of the management committee is satisfactory. While the accommodation at the Thorneywood site remains restricted, further

development is compromised. The capacity to improve is therefore satisfactory rather than good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Collect and analyse assessment information for long stay pupils to measure the progress that they make.
- Liaise with the local authority to restore the accommodation lost in the recent fire.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' standards on entry to the PRU vary widely and are lower than average overall. Almost all pupils make good progress and achieve well. Those that were previously well behind their peers because of missed schooling, reach standards similar to those expected nationally for their age. Those who are hospitalised do not fall behind their classmates because there is good liaison with schools, and staff provide work that is suitably challenging. One noted that, 'with the help of a tutor, I have managed to take seven GCSE subjects.' Parents are full of praise too.

Good achievement is associated with the good quality of teaching and the wide range of support mechanisms made available to pupils. For many, it is associated also with their motivation and consequent improved attendance. Between them, the 11 home educated pupils entered for GCSE examinations in the summer of 2006 achieved 43 passes at A* to G grades and 19 at A* to C. Similarly, 11 pupils achieved between two and eight OCN (Open College Network) awards in a variety of academic and vocational subject areas.

A small number of long stay pupils following A Level courses make satisfactory rather than good progress. They have a relatively short school day and reduced capacity for private study.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a good, strong aspect of the PRU. Pupils gain a good awareness of social, moral, spiritual and cultural matters through clearly focused lessons, discussion and special events such as a recent 'multi faith' day. They behave well and improve their attendance significantly, as well as gaining in confidence and self belief.

Pupils enjoy their learning for the most part. Some are very positively motivated and excited by the activities provided. Others take quiet satisfaction in being able to continue their learning in examination subjects. Many schools, parents and pupils sing the praises of the PRU in maintaining or developing pupils' positive attitudes to education. Pupils feel secure and know how to act in ways to keep themselves safe in many situations in the outside world. They learn much about how to live a healthy lifestyle, especially about what they should and should not eat and drink. There are limited opportunities for physical activity. Similarly, although pupils willingly help

several different charities, including Oxfam and Children in Need, they have few opportunities to take on responsibilities or contribute within the PRU. Most long stay pupils make good progress in their literacy, mathematics and computing skills to help their future lives in work or continuing education, but have limited opportunities to develop teamwork skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess pupils carefully when they enter and take account of information provided by schools to plan activities that are most often well matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Occasionally, pupils find tasks too easy. The PRU improvement plan identifies the need to refine the use of assessment to help teachers plan pupils' tasks more accurately. Planning identifies clearly what pupils are expected to learn, and these outcomes are shared with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know what is expected of them. In the best practice, in the Home Tuition Service and at the hospitals, pupils are involved in evaluating their progress at the end of each session, for instance, by using a simple traffic light system. Staffing levels are good and pupils appreciate the immediate help they get in lessons. This keeps their motivation high. Staff have good relationships with pupils too, so they are able to encourage and coax the occasionally reluctant pupil to tackle tasks. All bases lack specialist facilities, but teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to make up for this. For instance, simulations of scientific investigations and the Internet are used well to promote understanding of scientific principles.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Many aspects of the curriculum in the hospital bases are good. Pupils are taught a wide range of subjects at levels that are usually right for their needs and their learning difficulties or disabilities, whether they are temporary setbacks the pupils are suffering, or longer term ones. Staff are very good at choosing topics that will motivate and stimulate pupils, whatever their age. Teachers in the hospitals have access to a very wide range of resources, but the home tuition service lost resources in the recent fire. Often, teachers choose to hold special events, or to cover a topic that is perhaps being taught in a primary school that one or more pupils attend. These might be, for example, about healthy eating, pirates, or sound and light. For long stay pupils, there is a suitable emphasis on English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. Flexibility of staffing enables pupils to continue subjects like a modern foreign language with a part time teacher. The main area of difficulty is the lack of physical education facilities for physically fit pupils, although those at Thorneywood use a local swimming pool weekly. As a result of the fire at the Thorneywood base, pupils have lost the use of an indoor play area, a design and

technology room and teaching space. In addition, ways of supporting the small number of A level students better have not been fully explored yet.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well cared for and feel secure at each site. All of the current requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. Pupils know that they can speak with any adults about their problems, and many of them do seek help and guidance. They feel well supported in settling in and when the time comes for them to leave.

Pupils, and where appropriate parents, are involved well in setting and agreeing personal and academic targets. However, marking of pupils' work is not consistently good across all sites, so occasionally it is not clear what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils' progress and well-being is regularly and thoroughly reviewed. Many professionals contribute to this process. Much guidance is concerned with pupils' personal welfare, and in this the PRU excels. Pupils have clear advice and counselling, and this helps them to develop academically and personally, including preparing for their future.

In general pupils are well supported in their learning, whether by the individualised teaching and use of resources, or by the very capable help given by support assistants.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the PRU secures high levels of satisfaction from those who use its services. Pupils, parents, schools and health professionals are full of praise for the work that it does. Its satisfactory self-evaluation draws well on these views, and it is in the process of developing indicators of its success. At present, it does not systematically measure the progress made by pupils who are at the PRU for a long time, although it is beginning to develop ways of measuring their personal development. The PRU's self-evaluation is accurate and enables it to identify suitable priorities for its improvement plan. The resources at its disposal are well targeted to support developments. There is a strong commitment to providing the best for all pupils so that all can make equally good progress.

The work of the management committee is satisfactory. The improvement plan recognises the need to make this a more effective group. Although the headteacher provides the group with comprehensive reports, members carry out little direct monitoring of the provision.

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

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	3
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?	3
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.

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	3
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	3
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

8 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Hospital and Home Education PRU, Thorneywood Education Base, off The Wells Road, St Anns, Nottingham, NG3 3AL

Thank you for making us welcome at Thorneywood, The City Hospital and the Queen's Medical Centre yesterday. A special thanks to those of you that spoke to us about your experiences of being at the PRU.

We came to see how well you are all getting on and whether there are any aspects that might be improved.

We were both pleased to see how well you are all getting on and to hear that you feel safe and secure at each of the bases. Almost all of you are making good progress, catching up with work that you have missed in the past or keeping up with it while you are in hospital. Some of you have not been to school for a long time, and you are successfully improving your attendance. This is helping you to make progress too. The good teaching and the high level of support that you get is helping you to make good progress in your work and to feel better about yourselves. Those of you that stay at the PRU for some length of time are successful in passing examinations and many of you go on to continue your education at college.

The headteacher and staff who are responsible for each base are good leaders and the PRU is well run. They work very well with a large number of others, especially your parents, staff in your schools and the health service to make sure that you are well supported.

There are two things that we have asked them to do to make the PRU even better. Firstly, they are going to collect more information so that they can measure the progress that you make better while you are at the PRU. Secondly, they are going to work with the local authority to restore the building that was destroyed by the fire at Thorneywood.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Mrs Sue Aldridge

(Lead Inspector)