



# St Christopher's

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 134874  
**Local Authority** SUFFOLK  
**Inspection number** 294196  
**Inspection dates** 31 October –1 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Lemon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit	<b>School address</b>	St Christopher's Hall
<b>School category</b>	Community		Renfrew Road, Renfrew Road
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–14		Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 3HG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01473725115
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	10	<b>Fax number</b>	01473725157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S Whitney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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<b>Age group</b> 7–14	<b>Inspection dates</b> 31 October –1 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 294196
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Christopher's PRU admits Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils who are at risk of exclusion from school or who have already been excluded either temporarily or permanently. Pupils spend up to two terms at the PRU and depending on their circumstances they attend on either a full-time or part-time basis. The PRU's aim is to support pupils and change patterns of behaviour so that pupils can successfully return to school. Behaviour support assistants accompany pupils to school during their re-integration period. They also provide an 'outreach service' to schools to help teachers working with pupils who are experiencing difficulties. At the time of the inspection there were four pupils in Key Stage 2 and six in Key Stage 3. They have learning difficulties associated with social, emotional and behaviour problems. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Christopher's overall effectiveness is satisfactory but one aspect of the work of behaviour support assistants is outstanding. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils are cared for and supported well. The atmosphere in the PRU is warm and friendly. Pupils find this a welcoming and reassuring place to be in. All members of staff establish positive relationships with pupils. This builds pupil's self-confidence and motivates them to co-operate. As a result pupils work with adults and each other well. Pupils are happy, get on with their work and often show that they really enjoy learning. Pupils quickly respond to the PRU's positive values so that their personal development is good. Behaviour is good and they act responsibly, conduct themselves in a safe manner and are confident enough to identify what is right or wrong in their own actions and re-actions to situations. The good guidance and close attention provided by staff enables pupils to overcome their past difficulties. This paves the way for pupils to rebuild their lives, return to school and successfully resume their educational career. They leave the PRU better prepared to deal with future demands of school and life in general. In this respect, the work of the behaviour support assistants is outstanding. They rightly receive huge praise from partner schools and parents whose children are being helped.

Teaching and learning is sound. It is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. The school has been receptive to the advice provided by the local authority. Consequently the quality of teaching has improved. Learning objectives are increasingly more specific and being used to guide learning effectively. As a result, pupils make sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory. The effective teaching at Key Stage 2 enables younger pupils to make good progress. Pupils' are assessed when they first arrive at the PRU to establish levels of attainment and their progress is tracked at key points in English and mathematics. However, this is not done consistently and robustly across the PRU to ensure that pupils do as well as they can. The curriculum is satisfactory with sufficient emphasis on supporting pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The curriculum is planned better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 3. The curriculum for younger pupils is adapted well to meet pupils' interests and needs but this is not carried out to the same degree of success for older pupils.

The school recognises that there is still work to be done to ensure that the quality of teaching and the curriculum is comparable with the high standards it has achieved for pupils' personal development. Leadership and management are satisfactory demonstrating that the school has suitable capacity to achieve further improvements. Its draft policy for curriculum, teaching and assessment gives a sound basis for shaping further developments. The PRU's improvement plan specifies clearly what needs to be done to perfect the curriculum, teaching and assessment. There is clear commitment to bringing about the changes needed in relation to the outreach service and the PRU's outdoor areas. However, the enthusiasm to improve assessment is not so well marked and this is limiting the school in its ability to bring about the needed reforms for assessment in a timely fashion.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Implement its own curriculum, teaching and assessment for learning policy to improve the quality of provision, particularly at Key Stage 3.
- Rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of measures taken to improve pupils' learning and progress, especially at Key Stage 3.
- Give greater urgency to improving how pupils' progress is assessed and outcomes are used to meet pupils' needs.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The tracking of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics shows pupils are increasing their knowledge and skills reasonably well. While standards vary from pupil to pupil assessments show that attainment is broadly average. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress because teaching is effective. For example, in an English lesson, pupils listened attentively to a story and picked out adjectives as they occurred. They made mistakes to start with but persevered and by the end of the lesson, they became quite accurate in distinguishing adjectives from other words. Later they used these describing words effectively to enliven their poems about Halloween and fireworks. Progress in Key Stage 3 lessons is satisfactory overall. However, in mathematics progress is good because of lively, expert teaching. In one lesson pupils quickly grasped new ideas such as the principles of calculating using powers of 10. By the end of the lesson pupils confidently applied their new knowledge to solve challenging problems. However, in English there is not the same enthusiasm in the teaching and pupils' progress is not as good.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their time at the PRU largely because of the good relationships they build with staff and each other. These relationships and the support provided for pupils have a positive impact on pupil's behaviour and attitudes. This is reflected in their good attendance, their willingness to contribute in lessons and their keenness to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The themes pursued in daily assemblies effectively help pupils to focus their thoughts on the things that make life good for them and help them stay safe. As a result, spiritual, moral and social development is good. The curriculum offered is sufficient to ensure pupils learn satisfactorily about their own culture and develop an appreciation of other cultures. They are willing learners and enjoy many of the activities in lessons and out of school. When teaching is lively and the topic is interesting, pupils are all the more enthusiastic, take part in lessons and work together well. It is only when lessons do not succeed in capturing their interest that pupils occasionally slip back into old habits, causing distractions and disrupting work. However, in the main pupils are friendly, helpful and polite.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The importance of identifying precise learning objectives has been recognised by teachers, but there is greater clarity and better use of them in some lessons than others. For example, consistently good statements about what pupils should learn are defined in science but in other subjects objectives sometimes describe activities rather than specifying precisely what pupils should learn.

The rapport between adults and pupils is good. When teaching and subject matter is engaging, the effort and interest of pupils is good. This is typically the case in Key Stage 2. However, in Key Stage 3 pupils are not so well motivated and as a result some pupils occasionally lose interest and their behaviour disrupts learning.

Assessment is satisfactory overall, although there are gaps in procedures for regularly checking what pupils have learned in lessons. An overview of each pupil's attainment in key subjects is used to show progress over time. While the PRUs' policy is put into practice successfully at Key Stage 2 records are not so well kept and complete at Key Stage 3. Consequently assessment procedures are not sufficiently refined to provide a detailed view of pupils' progress or where they might be having specific difficulties.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

A good knowledge of Key Stage 2 curriculum requirements and a sound understanding of approaches which successfully engage pupils have been used well to select and plan topics for younger pupils. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is planned reasonably well but the choice of topics and the approaches used to teach them has not been given as much consideration as in Key Stage 2. The range of approaches used to promote learning is sometimes too narrow. For example, too much time is often spent talking to pupils rather than actively engaging them in practical activities and helping them to use their initiative so that they can take some responsibility for their own learning. While the potential of using drama as an approach to facilitating learning is recognised by staff, it is new to many of them. Therefore the use made of it is fairly tentative and as a result opportunities to promote learning effectively through drama are missed. However, other opportunities provided each week at Key Stage 3 in physical education, art and cookery are used effectively to increase pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils enjoy these lessons.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The PRU is effective in promoting pupils' personal development through its strong emphasis on supporting pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. The provision for doing this is good and the skills of staff are

particularly strong. Target sheets are used well to help pupils focus on improving specific aspects of their behaviour so that small but significant gains are made each week. Targets are agreed with each pupil and they are very regularly monitored by staff in lessons. The gains made are evaluated at the end of each day and again at the end of each week. Importantly, pupils view their targets positively seeing them as an effective tool for achieving better behaviour and success at school. This means that they accept feedback and understand why that have or have not met their targets. Pupils also value the rewards they can gain, not least of which is the praise from staff.

The limitations in the school's assessment procedures mean that the support for academic progress is not as comprehensive as it should be. However, the impact of this is not as significant as it might be because of the short amount of time pupils spend in the PRU. A strength of the PRU is the support for pupils when they are ready to return to school. This is handled expertly by the behaviour support assistants and the good relationships developed with pupils play a crucial part in giving them the confidence to make a success of going back to school. The majority of pupils make this transition and the PRU's success rate is high.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Results from the monitoring and evaluation of the PRU's work carried out by its senior staff and the local authority show that leadership and management are becoming increasingly effective in bringing about improvements. This is illustrated by the several well established strengths and its outstanding outreach work in particular. Close attention to professional development and building a cohesive team has led to a positive ethos and practice which is having the desired effect on pupils' willingness to attend and achieve success. These features and their benefit to pupils are greatly appreciated by partner schools and by parents.

Through a sound evaluation of its work, the PRU knows the next steps it has to take in its development and there are things working in its favour. It is well staffed with an experienced and committed team of people and building work is almost finished. Appropriate emphasis has been placed on bringing about improvements to the PRU's performance since it opened. The exception is in relation to developing robust assessment procedures. While assessment has been identified as an area for development attention has been focused on other issues so that this has not moved forward at a fast enough pace.

The management committee discharges its responsibilities satisfactorily and provides considerable support for those working in the PRU. For example, committee members have contributed significantly to the work done to secure improvements to the building. However, the lack of rigour which the committee applies to asking questions about standards and educational provision limits it in its ability to act as a critical friend, especially to the headteacher and the senior team.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

2 November 2006

Dear Pupils

St Christopher's PRU, Renfrew Street, Ipswich, IP2 3HG

Many thanks for all your contributions to the inspection; especially to those of you I had the opportunity to speak with. All of you made the two days I spent in St Christopher's pleasant and enjoyable thanks to your friendliness.

I was impressed by the fact that most of you behave well and work hard all of the time. Even though a couple of pupils misbehaved in some lessons, your behaviour is good, overall.

The staff are doing a good job of helping you to behave well and also in preparing you to return successfully to school. I was pleased to see so many of you determined to work hard and get back to school quickly. You certainly showed that you are prepared to make good efforts with your work in most lessons; keeping this up is going to help you get back to school.

There has been a lot of work on improving St Christopher's, such as the new accommodation that has been added recently. The headteacher with the help of staff is finding ways of improving your lessons. I think more should be done to make all of your work and activities in Key Stage 3 as interesting and challenging as it can be. You can help by offering your ideas of what could be improved.

I have asked your headteacher to speed up the steps he is taking to improve how the progress you make in lessons is measured. I think this will help you and your teachers to see how much you are learning at St Christopher's and work out whether it is good enough. It is also important that your headteacher, staff and the PRU's management committee carefully follow up the changes they are making to check that the improvements are benefiting you as much as intended.

Once more many thanks.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector