



# Educational Diversity

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 131772  
**Local Authority** Blackpool  
**Inspection number** 294649  
**Inspection dates** 14–15 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Noreen Buckingham

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit	<b>School address</b>	278a Whitegate Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Blackpool, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–16		FY3 9JW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 476660
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	240	<b>Fax number</b>	01253 476665
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Kathryn Boulton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005		

<b>Age group</b> 7–16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14–15 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 294649
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Educational Diversity is a complex pupil referral unit for pupils from Blackpool. It operates on seven sites and all pupils have experienced considerable difficulties in maintaining regular attendance at school due to exclusion, medical or mental health problems, communication difficulties or because they are schoolgirl mothers. A small proportion are dual registered. About three quarters of pupils are in Years 10 and 11 and all are of White British origin. Most pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds and attainment on entry is low or very low. There are 26 pupils with statements of special educational need.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Educational Diversity is a satisfactory and improving pupil referral unit (PRU) with some good features. Much of the improvement is down to the good leadership and management of the head of service and the way the new management structure is working. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The head of service, ably supported by the core management team, provides a clear vision for future development. There are strong foundations on which to build and move on. Newly appointed curriculum leaders are ready to take on their new responsibilities. However, due to the short time they have been in post, their impact on raising standards is not yet felt. The management committee is very supportive of the PRU, meeting regularly and questioning decisions, but this stops short of undertaking any focused visits to see it in action. The PRU has successfully addressed the issues highlighted in the last inspection. The capacity for continued improvement is good. This is reflected in the good self-evaluation systems and the accuracy of the evaluations of the centres' provision and pupils' achievement. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Though pupils' standards on entry are sometimes very low due to erratic attendance and disrupted learning previously, achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils' achievement in relation to individual targets also points to satisfactory progress. However, some individual pupils make good and, occasionally, very good progress. One reason for this is that the curriculum has been developed to give them more opportunities for a wider range of external examinations suited to their individual needs. Nevertheless, there is still room to develop more partnerships with high schools, colleges and training providers to further enrich the curriculum and prepare pupils better for leaving.

Whilst teaching and learning are typically satisfactory, there is some good teaching that motivates pupils and re-engages them in learning. A highlight of the inspection was observing French and German being taught successfully to different pupils during the same lesson. Weaker teaching fails to motivate pupils and they sometimes switch off. The sharing of the good practice observed on a number of fronts across the centres would serve as an incentive for staff development and also improve pupils' opportunities to achieve. Behaviour in most lessons is good but attitudes were variable dependent on the level of interest in the task and how well the work was tailored to individual needs. This is because the available data are not always used to match work accurately to pupils' varying needs.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but shows signs of improving as they get older. Pupils feel safe and secure and most feel that there is always someone they can talk to about their worries. Care and support provided by the centres are good. This is because, as well as using its own expertise, the PRU enlists support from a wide range of external agencies. This is especially helpful for the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Support is often crucial in getting some pupils across the doorstep of a centre so that they can see how beneficial and worthwhile it can be for them in

the long run. Although attendance levels are typical of a PRU, many pupils say they enjoy coming to the centres and have good relationships with staff. Absences are followed up promptly but the transient nature of the population makes this difficult. The friendly, but respectful, relationships that most older pupils enjoy with staff have a positive spin-off in the classroom and subsequently, in their learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Analyse data more rigorously and use it to raise achievement for all groups of pupils by matching work more accurately to their varying needs.
- Share good practice across the centres by more regular communication between all staff.
- Ensure that the newly appointed curriculum leaders develop their middle management role and support the raising of pupils' achievement.
- Develop more partnerships with other schools, colleges and training providers so that pupils are well prepared for leaving school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' standards on entry to the PRU are low and sometimes very low because of their poor attendance and disjointed educational experience. Their achievement as they move through the centres is satisfactory, with some pupils making good and occasionally very good progress. The increasing number of courses offered to older pupils, means that they have more opportunities to achieve well. For example, the PRU is currently piloting GCSE in science, physical education and geography. Due consideration is given to the relevance of courses, for example, the provision of childcare and positive parenting courses.

Most leavers gain some externally accredited awards. The grades that pupils achieve range from A\* to F. These include GCSE English, mathematics, art, information and communication technology (ICT); ESB awards; LAMDA; COPE and key skills units. Some of the youngest pupils achieve well, giving them better chances of reintegrating into mainstream school. This is a result of better attendance, some good teaching and an improved curriculum.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Most pupils meet their personal and behaviour targets and many improve their attendance because they are beginning to enjoy learning and see the point of it. Pupils are generally well behaved and receptive to good teaching. Creating a calm learning atmosphere in which pupils can achieve and work together helps build positive attitudes so that many pupils do enjoy learning and are proud of their achievements. They are encouraged to work collaboratively and most understand how their behaviour affects the feelings of others.

Staff present good examples of polite and courteous behaviour and encourage pupils to follow similar behaviour patterns, which many do. Good opportunities are in place at the newly amalgamated Grange centre for social interactions between pupils and staff. This leads to pupils developing trusting and supportive relationships.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory. Links with local church communities enhance their spiritual awareness. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are keen to help others. For example, several charities benefit from the students fund raising activities. However, pupils do not learn enough about life in our culturally diverse society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory with some that is good. Teaching for most older pupils is good, particularly when teachers have secure subject knowledge and have the confidence to take risks in challenging pupils to their limit.

Good relationships are a positive feature of most lessons and teachers have a sound understanding of pupils' individual needs following the development of assessment systems. These systems are satisfactory and are beginning to be used effectively to track the progress of all pupils. However, insufficient analysis of data means that staff are not always aware of the strengths and weaknesses in learning of different groups of pupils. Satisfactory marking helps pupils understand how they can improve and they are encouraged to assess their own learning, giving them further insight into how they can do better. In most instances, behaviour is well managed but occasionally pupils decide to disrupt, can be confrontational and do not want to learn. This slows the rate at which they make progress. Teaching assistants are usually skilled at persuading pupils to return to work and provide good support in the classroom. Weaker teaching allows pupils to choose how much work they do in lessons and as result they do not achieve as well as they should because they do as little as possible.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. It is more interesting, varied and meets pupils' individual needs more effectively. The majority of older pupils have the opportunity to gain external qualifications, such as GCSE, in a range of subjects. Drama and modern foreign languages enrich the curriculum, alongside visits linked to current topics. Work placements can be hard to find and work related learning is not fully developed. Partnerships with local high schools, colleges and training agencies are improving and older pupils were particularly enthusiastic about their science lessons in a local high school. The arrangements for reintegrating pupils back into mainstream provision are developing with improved

collaboration with other schools. Space for physical exercise is variable around the centres and the PRU makes good use of local sports facilities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff work hard to establish a caring community within each centre and the care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. The personal, social and health education programme is interwoven into the whole curriculum, especially for younger pupils. Staff are very aware of the vulnerability of some of their pupils and take great care to promote their health and safety. They are aware of the many dangers to which the pupils may be exposed, particularly health issues, as they grow older. Specialists from various agencies augment the skills of the teachers, especially for drug education and health issues with older pupils. The new system for tracking pupils' progress is developing well and giving staff more information about academic progress as well as personal and behavioural improvements.

All statutory requirements regarding the safety of pupils are in place. Pupils looked after by the local authority are well cared for. Pupils state that they have very little knowledge of bullying or racism and if there are any issues, these are dealt with quickly by staff. Parents and pupils are encouraged to approach any member of staff if they have particular concerns and, overwhelmingly, parents are pleased with what the centres do for them and their children.

### **Leadership and management Grade: 3**

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. However, the manager of the service provides good leadership and strategic direction for the unit. The core leadership team, supported by an experienced deputy head, manage the seven centres well on a day-to-day basis. The manager has worked extremely hard since the PRU was given a Notice to Improve to ensure that the identified weaknesses have been addressed. This has been successful and she has the determination and skill to provide the best possible education for these pupils. The new management structure provides a firm base from which the PRU can move forward.

Self-evaluation is accurate and a carefully targeted business plan guides future development well. Performance indicators set clear targets for improvement. Performance management for all staff is well established and has a positive influence on improving the quality of teaching. The newly appointed curriculum leaders have yet to have an impact on raising achievement but monitoring by the PRU's leaders is well established and leads to improvements. Sharing the good practice existing in individual centres is another step to support raising pupils' achievement on a number of fronts. The relocation and amalgamation of two Key Stage 4 centres has been very successful and has good potential for further development.

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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?	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

### 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	2
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

Educational Diversity

278a Whitegate Drive

Blackpool

Lancashire

FY3 9JW

14 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Mrs Taylor and I enjoyed our visit to your centres. Thank you for helping us with our work and talking with us. I am sorry we weren't able to see everybody but we just didn't have enough time. However, we were able to find out a great deal about what you were doing. We think you are getting a satisfactory education and one which is improving all the time.

We were pleased to see how many of you were taking examinations because this is especially important for your future. All staff want you to do well and your parents think that you are well cared for and generally happy where you are. The curriculum is improving all the time; giving you many opportunities to show what you can do. We enjoyed watching drama classes and were also pleased to see that some of you are learning foreign languages. Most of you behave well, and this is very positive. Most of you are making an effort to achieve well but you would probably do even better if you attended more often.

We have suggested that your work is looked at more closely to see if there are ways you can improve and also asked to see if more school and college courses can be set up. We have also suggested that staff get together more often to share with each other the good things they do with you so that you all benefit.

I hope that you will all continue to behave well and work hard and make your centre a place to be proud of.

Yours sincerely

Noreen Buckingham

Lead inspector