

White House Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117701
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	295407
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barry Dibnah
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Garnett
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
School address	Saltshouse Road Hull HU8 9HJ
Telephone number	01482 701334
Fax number	01482 786919

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small unit for pupils who have either been permanently excluded from previous schools or who need extra support to prevent this from happening. Attainment on entry is nearly always low. About half of pupils attend part time, spending the rest of the time in their home schools. Through outreach work, staff also support many other pupils in their mainstream schools. Most pupils are in Key Stage 2, and nearly all pupils are White British. The unit serves the whole of the local authority and most pupils come from an area with a very high degree of social and economic disadvantage. Two pupils have statements of special educational need reflecting their delayed speech and communication difficulties. A further six are in the process of having their learning difficulties and/or disabilities formally assessed. At its previous inspection, the unit was issued with a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory pupil referral unit. Under new leadership and management it has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection and is suitably placed to keep improving because it recognises its strengths and weaknesses. The White House Unit gives satisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Surveys conducted by the unit, and confirmed by the inspection, show that pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a high degree of satisfaction amongst parents who show a high level of confidence in the work of the unit. Schools locally recognise the positive contribution made by the unit in reducing exclusions in the local authority. The unit has a growing status and credibility within the authority, greatly influenced by the good leadership of the headteacher. Most pupils are well behind in their learning when they are admitted. They make satisfactory progress and most return successfully to school within a year of their admission. A few are found more appropriate placements in special schools. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the National Curriculum and use assessment well to make sure that pupils are set appropriately varied work. Behaviour is generally satisfactory, often good in the playground. Misbehaviour is usually naughtiness rather than nastiness, but there are a few occasions when the misbehaviour of a few pupils in lessons is allowed to escalate to the point where other pupils join in. Pupils attend well, reflecting the fact that they enjoy the many interesting activities and learning opportunities that the good curriculum provides. Pupils exercise wholeheartedly at playtimes and during popular physical activities. They learn the importance of avoiding bad habits. The unit has recently earned National Healthy Schools Status.

Unit staff work closely with many other schools, agencies and professionals to help pupils to stay safe. This makes a good contribution to the care, guidance and support of pupils and this contributes to their future economic well-being. Thorough procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable adults are appointed and that pupils are well protected. However, occasionally, impulsive pupil behaviour leads to them running out of the unit beyond the supervision of staff and this puts them at risk. The unit is dealing with such incidents successfully and improved prevention strategies are leading to a reduction in such incidents.

The progress pupils make in improving their speaking and listening skills makes an effective contribution to their ability to contribute to the community of the unit. It helps them to express views, which are carefully listened to by staff. They further contribute by taking pride in their learning environment, demonstrated by the fact that non-accidental damage is very rare.

The outreach services, through which the unit supports local schools, are satisfactory with some good features. There is a rapid response to referrals and the service has been instrumental in helping the local authority to significantly reduce exclusions from mainstream schools. Unit leaders and managers recognise the desirability of getting involved earlier, providing a greater variety of intervention strategies and offering more training to teaching assistants to bring economies and flexibility without compromising the quality of service.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the behaviour management skills of staff.
- Extend the good work with individual pupils and their parents to minimise the risk of pupils inappropriately leaving the site.
- Develop outreach work through staff training and by extending the range of support on offer.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Low attainment on entry and greater than average behavioural and learning difficulties mean that pupils rarely reach nationally expected standards. There is often a pattern of rapid progress following admission, where pupils benefit from small class groups and more support than in school. This helps them to close the gap between what they have previously achieved and what they could achieve. In the most successful cases, helped by good achievement in speaking and listening, this helps pave the way for a quick return to school. It is frequently the case that, over longer periods, progress slows somewhat after this initial burst. During the inspection, pupils were observed making satisfactory progress in most lessons. An analysis of reading progress showed that, last term, pupils made an average gain of just over 4 months, more or less exactly as should be expected, but in excess of the target set by the local authority. Progress in writing is slightly slower but, following the effective implementation of new approaches, it nevertheless shows a big improvement on a year ago. Pupils are achieving more, especially in their ability to write at greater length and with more detail. Progress in mathematics is slightly better than in English. The good use of new computers helped to generate a surge in reading, writing and numeracy improvement in the autumn term; this surge is now levelling off during a period of consolidation. Numbers of pupils are too small to make secure judgements on any difference in achievement by boys, girls, looked after children or pupils of different ages but the evidence of inspection suggests there is no difference. Pupils with additional learning difficulties are well supported to help them make similar progress to others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The unit has been successful in reducing the incidence of exclusion and radically boosting attendance to the point where it approaches the national average for all schools. This represents good achievement.

However, some pupils abscond on occasions and put themselves in danger on the main road adjoining the unit. The implementation of good systems and approaches has reduced the number of pupils who do this, following a rise in the autumn term. The unit is working well to reduce such incidents further. Pupils usually return of their own volition because they actually enjoy attending the unit.

Pupils make considerable progress in improving their behaviour but, for some, it remains a barrier to better progress in their learning and this occasionally has an unsettling effect on the whole unit. The rash actions of a few pupils do not detract from improvements in the ethos of the unit over the past year. The good ethos created is reflected in the pride shown by pupils in the work of the unit and their growing involvement in developing a good communal spirit,

which is reflected in the unit's growing status within the local authority. Good work is done to impress on pupils the importance of healthy living. They enjoy physical exercise and relish healthy food options at mealtimes. The progress pupils make helps most to return successfully to school and leads to better prospects of them achieving brighter futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and prepare lessons well. They have a good understanding of each individual in their class and how they learn best. Work is varied skilfully to ensure that all pupils can achieve success at their own level, often with good support from classroom assistants. Computers are used well to help promote learning and to help pupils to present work of which they are proud. Good support is given to pupils with greater than average speech and communication difficulties. This helps them to overcome their disadvantage. Good opportunities are created for all pupils to express what they have learned and remembered during lessons. What weakens teaching is that some teachers do not exude the confidence and authority that commands the respect and attention of pupils who find misbehaviour an alternative attraction. When this happens, increasing numbers of pupils are drawn into the temptation of being uncooperative and learning slows down.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good curriculum. The timetable is well balanced to ensure that enough time is given to important subjects such as mathematics, English and information and communication technology (ICT), whilst also ensuring that pupils still get good opportunities to learn about things that add interest and enjoyment to their lives. The curriculum is different enough from the one that many have rejected in previous schools, yet sufficiently similar to help them to return successfully to mainstream education without disadvantage. Personal, social and health education, with good promotion of social and emotional literacy, is a fundamental part of the curriculum, being incorporated into all lessons. Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of activities outside the classroom. There are occasional visits to places of interest and pupils have contributed to the community through the establishment of a school gardening project and involvement in environmental work in the locality. Outreach support makes a good contribution to helping many pupils from the unit to maintain full access to the National Curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Many elements, such as ensuring that only suitable adults come in contact with pupils and that child protection procedures are correctly followed, are well developed. The assessment of pupils' progress is also good and helps teachers to set work well matched to individual needs. It also contributes well to the quick identification of personal and learning difficulties and the directing of good support to where it is most needed. Unit staff play an important role in the statutory assessment of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They respond quickly and work closely with many other professionals and parents to ensure that each pupil's needs are best met. Good procedures to

promote attendance have been very successfully implemented. Initiatives to promote better behaviour are weakened because not all staff use them consistently. Good strategies are reducing the numbers of pupils inappropriately leaving the site. However, the care and support of pupils is compromised at times when a duty of care cannot be extended to them because they have taken themselves away from the supportive environment of the unit and put themselves at risk. The unit is working very closely with the support of parents to improve this and to reduce the number of pupils absconding even further. There is also a health and safety issue over the inadequate surfacing of the playground.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good, perceptive and influential leadership of the headteacher is clearly evident in the many improvements made since the previous inspection. A solid foundation for further improvement has been established through good curriculum development and extensive leadership and management training for many staff. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly but evaluations tend to lack focus on specific points for development linked to the unit improvement plan. The evidence of inspection suggests that the evaluation of teaching is occasionally over-generous and does not lead sufficiently to clearly targeted training needs, such as the enhancement of teachers' behaviour management skills. The inclusion of all learners is given a very high priority and all pupils share equal opportunities because of the support they receive. There is a good focus, through outreach, on preventing the need for exclusion. Morale is high, staff enjoy working at the White House Unit, pupils are keen to attend and parents express considerable confidence in its leadership and management. A management group has oversight of all pupil referral units in the local authority. It has no statutory requirements to fulfil but it does support the unit adequately.

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Annex A

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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
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	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

24 April 2006

Inspection of White House Unit, Hull, HU8 9HJ

Dear Pupils,

I visited you the other day to see how you were getting on and to look at how well your Unit was working. Most of you were very keen to show me what you were doing and I enjoyed my visit. This letter sums up what I was writing about.

Your Unit is satisfactory. You are making satisfactory progress and your work is improving. I liked your classrooms and the way many of you work hard. It is good to see that most of you are likely to get back to school sometime in the future. The work you are doing suggests that, when you do go back into school, you will not be as far behind as you were when you first came to the White House.

Some of you were not always well behaved during my visit and I have suggested that your teachers help you to behave better. Those of you who didn't join in are doing the right thing. That is the correct way forward. Nearly all of you deserve congratulating for attending whenever you can. It must be because your days are filled with a good variety of enjoyable activities. I feel that some of you can do better and, by leaving the site, are putting yourselves at risk. I have asked the school to continue to make sure that you do not leave the site and be placed at risk.

Please keep trying hard to improve your work and behaviour.

Good luck for the future.

Alastair Younger

(Lead inspector)