

Whitmore Park Annexe

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103636
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	308368
Inspection date	3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	13–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	6
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	AL Walker
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2003
School address	Rylston Avenue Coventry CV6 2HD
Telephone number	02476 337734
Fax number	02476334863

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the extent of good progress and achievement for pupils of all age and ability groups, the quality of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils and the impact of leaders and managers on improving the unit. Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, parents, staff and managers, visiting a lesson and looking at documents and pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Whitmore Park is a small unit for pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers who are dual registered with their original mainstream schools. Pupils attend for an average of one year, usually in Year 11, although attendance varies from one term to two years. Most pupils are in Years 10 and 11. Pupils from Year 9 attend very occasionally but there were none at the time of inspection. There is a crèche on site for the babies of the pupils. Whitmore Park shares the same leadership team, teachers and management committee with the Coventry Hospital Education Services, which includes the local authority home tuition service, which is an outreach service for teenage mothers and hospital education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whitmore Park is a good and effective unit which helps pupils to make good progress in their academic studies and in their personal development. Many pupils who enter the unit have been out of school for some considerable time and so attainment on entry is below average. By the time they leave, pupils' standards are broadly in line with national averages and the majority go on to successful placements in further education or training. This good achievement is largely due to the good quality specialist subject teaching by staff. They are experienced in motivating and supporting their pupils and in helping them achieve and progress as well as they can. Well-structured, highly practical lessons foster very positive relationships between pupils and with staff, which in turn helps to boost pupils' confidence in their abilities. This good personal and academic achievement is also supported by a long-standing and highly experienced leadership team. They manage the unit well and foster beneficial links with a host of other organisations to ensure that pupils are well cared for. The proximity of the crèche, where the babies are well looked after, is a crucial factor in pupils' ability to continue in education.

Pupils of all age and ability groups usually meet or exceed their targets, which are based upon teachers' thorough and accurate assessments. The good care, guidance and support ensure that everyone's progress is checked regularly and extra support is given to anyone falling behind. Most pupils typically leave with an average of about seven GCSEs in addition to entry level qualifications, although some achieve more with many A* to C grades. Art and child development are the most successful subjects. Parents are very positive about the benefits to their children of attending the unit. A very small minority of pupils do not do as well as they should. This is mainly because their progress is affected by poor attendance. However, the majority of pupils enjoy their time at the unit and many improve their attendance from when they were in mainstream schools. Pupils comment on just how much they have gained from the small groups and high level of personal attention with their studies. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good, with improved attitudes to learning and evident pride in their achievements. It was a pleasure to watch a group of pupils prepare food for a fundraising morning and so gain considerable confidence in their own skills. It is through growing and cooking food that many of them increase their understanding of how to lead healthy lives. For many, time spent at the unit is transformational and helps them re-engage with education, considerably improving the prospects for their future economic well-being.

The curriculum includes an outstanding array of GCSE options and entry-level courses, as well as good opportunities for learning about personal, social and health education. There is, however, little opportunity for regular exercise, which means that support for healthy living is no better than satisfactory. In addition, work-related learning and vocational education are at an early stage of development and there is little work experience for those who need it. The trips and rich variety of activities organised ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed. The curriculum places a good emphasis on how to act safely and keep safe. The unit is seeking to provide an extended day to provide more opportunities for exercise and other extension activities to help broaden pupils' experiences further. Pupils contribute well to the unit and wider community. They are very supportive to one another, regularly raise charitable funds and represent the unit at events such as the local Lone Parent forum. They express their views regularly, but they do not have a formal voice in shaping the way the unit is run and do not always feel that their views are considered sufficiently. Unit staff act on pupils' suggestions, but recognise that a more regular forum is desirable.

The leadership team have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. As a result, they set the right priorities for improvement and this has enabled them to sustain the good progress being achieved by pupils over many years. There was, for example, a good improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding their targets between 2006 and 2007, when challenging targets were set for the first time. The capacity to improve is therefore good. Senior leadership recognise that further improvement needs to be underpinned by more robust systems for improving attendance and the curriculum.

The steering group has a limited remit; it is committed and provides satisfactory support, but it has not done enough to hold the unit to account for outcomes. This is recognised and the role of this group in supporting improvement more thoroughly is being revised.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop more robust systems for securing further improvement in attendance so that even more pupils meet and exceed their targets each year
- increase opportunities for work-related learning and physical education.

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Whitmore Park Annexe, Coventry, CV6 2HD

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your unit. I enjoyed meeting you very much and looking at your work.

I found the Whitmore Park Annexe to be successful, well run and caring. It is a good place, just as you told me. It helps all of you to make good progress in your lessons, and in your social and personal skills. Your head of service and senior staff do a good job in seeing that you all do well. Your teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at helping you to do your best and they teach you well. You help in this by being hard-working and well behaved. The way you work together and care for one another is good and you seem to enjoy coming to the Centre and being able to have your babies near you. I think that this, alongside your good skills in so many subjects and courses, will stand you in good stead for your next move and future lives. Your curriculum is satisfactory. It offers an excellent range of GCSE courses, but the opportunities for vocational education, physical exercise and work experience are too limited. It gives you a sound understanding of how to keep healthy and a good knowledge of keeping safe. We have asked senior managers to look at ways they can improve the curriculum. Maybe you can discuss your ideas about this with them.

The mature way that you take on responsibilities and help whenever you can is pleasing. It is good, for example, to see that you take part in charitable events. The coffee morning I attended was really enjoyable, especially the delicious food that you made. The staff are good at looking after you and at helping you to become mature well-rounded people. They also guide you well to do your best so that your prospects for the future are good. I have asked them to find ways of further improving attendance so that even more of you achieve well. I am sure that you can play your part in this.

We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely Lead inspector

Annex B

4 October 2007

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We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely



Lead inspector