

Westfields Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107596
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309443
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dennis Shields
Headteacher	Mr Martin Ridge
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	The Field Hill Centre Batley Field Hill Batley West Yorkshire WF17 0BQ
Telephone number	01924 326393
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The unit is for pupils who have been excluded, or who are in danger of being excluded, from mainstream secondary and middle schools. It is part of Kirklees' provision for pupils out of school and serves the whole of the authority. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 (Key Stage 3) attend for six to eight weeks before returning to their home school. Those in Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4) usually spend the last two years of their education in the unit. Staff support a further 60 pupils in mainstream schools as part of the initiative to prevent exclusion. All pupils at the unit have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with nine having a statement to meet their special educational needs. The high majority of pupils are of White British background. A very small number are in the care of the local authority. Attainment on entry to the unit is below average because many students have spent long periods out of school and most have negative attitudes to education.

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 a good unit, which provides good value for money. It is particularly successful in enabling pupils at Key Stage 3 to make considerable improvement in their behaviour, attitude and attendance, so that within a very short time they return to their home school. Furthermore, the very close links with, and weekly support provided for, mainstream schools have helped these schools retain other pupils in danger of being excluded. Mainstream secondary and middle school staff report how well training provided by the unit's staff has improved their practice. They praise particularly the high quality training DVDs made by the headteacher, which have given them strategies and confidence to deal with pupils who exhibit poor behaviour. Though good overall, the unit is not quite so successful in its provision for pupils at Key Stage 4. Improvements have been made here since the last inspection, but more still needs to be done. Nevertheless, because of changed attitudes, better behaviour and growing confidence, almost all Key Stage 4 pupils go on to further education or employment, which is good.

While standards are below average, pupils' achievements are good overall. The gains made at Key Stage 3 are very good. Similarly, pupils with low reading ages, at both Key Stage 3 and 4, make very good progress because they are identified early and given good support. At Key Stage 4, almost all pupils achieve nationally recognised awards, although award courses do not cover as many subjects as they might.

A real strength of the unit is relationships between staff and pupils. Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evidenced in pupils' good personal development. Pupils respond well to the expectation of good behaviour. The majority accept responsibility for their actions, demonstrate tolerance and control their temper, thus creating a good atmosphere for learning. Learning is good because of overall good teaching. It is very effective at Key 3. However, in a few lessons, particularly at Key Stage 4, work is not always pitched at the correct level either for higher attaining pupils or, on occasions, lower attaining pupils. A few teachers skilled at working with Key Stage 3 pupils are not so comfortable with those in Key Stage 4.

The curriculum is good overall. It is very good in Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the rate of improvement is gathering pace. Staff endeavour to ensure the curriculum is relevant to pupils' needs, for example, in the lessons on personal safety with the resident Safer School Partnership police officer. Personalised learning plans mostly match the needs and interests of pupils at Key Stage 4. Pupils receive good care, support and guidance. Close links with a broad and extremely effective range of professionals enable staff to provide well for all pupils, including the most vulnerable.

Leadership and management of the unit are good. Alongside the management committee and the local authority, the leadership team is moving the service forward. They are clear about their strengths and areas for improvement. They are in the process of ensuring the monitoring of classroom practice is strengthened further. The unit is responding well to the changing needs of pupils within the authority and has good capacity to continue to do so.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in a broader range of accredited courses at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure teachers, particularly at Key Stage 4, provide work that is matched consistently to pupils' abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement at Key Stage 3 is very good because teachers have very high expectations of standards and behaviour. Programmes of work match closely those taught in mainstream schools. As a result, over the past three years, a high number of pupils have returned to mainstream education. Although standards remain below average, the improvement in their work and confidence means that most go on to complete their education successfully back in the mainstream. Pupils who have low reading ages and those who lack confidence in their work are identified soon after admission to the unit. As a result, pupils make considerable gains in a short time, both in recognising new words, in their understanding of text and in numeracy. In addition to improving standards in English and mathematics, improvements in their reading skills enable them to grasp text in other subjects. Expectations are not quite so high at Key Stage 4 where, in 2007, the number of pupils leaving the unit with awards in literacy, numeracy and science was not quite as high as it could have been. However, good achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and information and communication technology, along with qualifications in childcare and building, prepared them well for life after school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand the need to live a healthy lifestyle and be safe, although they are less successful in putting their learning into practice, for example, when it comes to stopping smoking. Although they are supportive of each other in the unit, their contribution to the community beyond the school is more limited. Nevertheless, pupils are very successful in turning their behaviour around. They begin to enjoy their work, commenting how, for example, topics discussed in current affairs make them think about their lives. Pupils respond well to the unit's strategies for managing their behaviour and say the report cards completed at the end of each lesson help them improve. Remarks such as, 'My mum was pleased as anything when she found out how well I was doing,' demonstrate the pride pupils feel when they have done well. In their time at the unit, pupils' attendance improves well, to being satisfactory overall from a generally low level on arrival.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are very effective at Key Stage 3 where, overall, they plan and deliver lessons that are pitched at the right level for pupils of all abilities. Learning and progress in a small number of lessons in Key Stage 4, however, are affected by a lack of confidence and subject knowledge in a few teachers. Also, lessons are not, on occasions, pitched as consistently as they might be for pupils of different abilities. Generally, assessment of pupils' work is undertaken conscientiously, although, on occasions, a small number of staff record only the topic that has been covered rather than the knowledge and skills pupils have acquired. This is not helpful in planning for pupils' next steps in learning. Behaviour support workers make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, both in the unit and in their smooth return to mainstream education.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The focus on literacy and numeracy and the resulting achievement gives pupils in Key Stage 3 confidence and success in their work: it aids very successfully their return to mainstream school. In addition, the weekly outdoor education sessions foster relationships between pupils and with adults and encourage pupils to show perseverance, initiative and face personal challenges. The range of awards taught in Key Stage 4 has increased since the last inspection, but is still not as broad as it could be. However, plans are well advanced to accredit outdoor education along with PSHCE. With the introduction of GCSE, higher attaining pupils are now stretched and are gaining awards commensurate with their abilities. Pupils benefit considerably from the work related learning programme, with the majority attending their work placements conscientiously.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults are very aware of their pupils' needs and personal circumstances and, alongside staff from other agencies, do all they can to support them. Systems for health and safety are mostly meticulous, although a couple of minor hazards identified in the latest health and safety audit have yet to be remedied. Staff provide suitable advice to pupils on how to develop a safe and healthy lifestyle. Pupils' educational and personal needs are identified soon after admission to the unit. A well-thought out programme and skilled support enable these pupils to make considerable gains in a short time, particularly in their basic skills and confidence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior teachers are fervent about the pupils in their care and determined to provide the best they can. They are very successful also in supporting staff in mainstream schools with training and ideas for lowering the number of pupils excluded. All staff in the unit are valued, consulted and involved in drawing up the unit's improvement plan and in setting targets for their professional development. This works well. The Key Stage 4 coordinator is relatively new to post and has the drive, enthusiasm and knowledge of what needs to be done. Ably supported by the newly appointed work related learning coordinator, much has been achieved in the past few months, although the unit recognises there is more to do.

The management committee comprises highly skilled professionals providing very good links to agencies such as the Youth Offending Team and the Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Service, which are of great benefit to pupils. However, during the past year, much of the time at meetings has been taken up discussing the new national legal requirements for management committees. Members recognise that more could have been done in supporting and monitoring the unit's development.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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?	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, Mrs Mothersdale and I met a number of you during the recent inspection of the unit. Thank you for talking to us, especially as it was your lunch break, and for helping us in our work.

What we liked most about the unit

- You make good improvement in your attitude, behaviour and attendance.
- Staff work really hard to help Key Stage 3 pupils make a very successful return to their home school.
- Work with other professionals, such as education welfare officers, the Connexions advisor, Youth Opportunities Team staff and support from the Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Service, make a significant contribution to your well-being.
- Work related learning in Key Stage 4 prepares you well for life after school.
- The very good outdoor education and personal, social, health and citizenship education programmes contribute very well to your improved social skills.

What we have asked your teachers and the management committee to do now

- Improve the range of accredited courses on offer at Key Stage 4, so that your chances of achieving very well are just as good as they are at Key Stage 3.
- Make sure the work provided, particularly at Key Stage 4, is always pitched at the right level and not too easy or too hard.

We enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.