

# Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124528
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	314950
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Smith

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Siddall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	London Road Ipswich Suffolk IP1 2HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 251329
<b>Fax number</b>	01473 251329

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The unit caters for young people who have been excluded from school and who have a range of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). Students come from a socially diverse and predominately White British background and around 30% of students have statements of special education need. There are nearly four times as many boys as girls. A small number of students are looked after by the local authority. An outreach support service is offered to local secondary schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The unit provides a good education for all students and there are a number of outstanding features that contribute to their good academic progress and outstanding personal development. Good leadership and management promote high quality care and education, and student achievement is at the heart of all decision making. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very effectively together and have a clear strategic vision for improvement. There are clear roles and responsibilities, and consistent practices support the smooth running of the unit. This enables all students to make the very best of their learning opportunities. Monitoring and evaluation is well focused on planning to ensure that it is geared towards improving students' performance. However, the monitoring and support for improving teaching and learning is not sufficiently robust to ensure that the best teaching and learning is consistently shared and built upon. All staff are committed to improving the life chances for all students and this is clearly recognized by the students themselves. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote: 'The unit has worked closely with us to give a very troubled teenager some positive prospects'. The outreach support offered to mainstream schools is very highly thought of by users. A mainstream headteacher reported that the number of school exclusions had significantly reduced because of the support provided by the unit.

Students' attainment on entry is usually below the national average as a result of poor attendance and their specific barriers to learning. By the time they leave the unit they attain broadly average standards. Many students do very well in their GCSE examinations and other accredited courses. Given their low starting points, the achievement and progress of the students are good. Students develop confidence through their successes, appreciate being valued by staff and, in turn, begin to value themselves. This helps to support their social and emotional development, and encourages them to manage their own behaviour and learning. Students' good progress and positive attitudes are due to the excellent relationships, teamwork, effective teaching and outstanding care, support and guidance they receive for their individual needs. Students are thoroughly assessed on entry to identify their learning and behavioural needs. In this way, students' needs are planned for and appropriate strategies ensure they make good progress. However, teachers do not sufficiently analyse and review these strategies often enough to ensure they are motivating and supporting the best possible progress.

The curriculum is outstanding. It offers flexible, interesting and relevant learning opportunities for all students. This ensures they can make the very best of their time at the unit. There is an emphasis on supporting academic skills as well as their personal development. Community visits and visiting specialists offer excellent support for students' learning. Well-planned opportunities for work-related training and work experience greatly enhance their personal skills and confidence and effectively prepare them for life after the unit. Close partnerships with mainstream schools enable some students to follow subjects not available at the unit. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are encouraged to have positive attitudes and empathy towards others and they learn to take control of their learning and behaviour. Attitudes to learning are good and most students engage enthusiastically in all activities.

Overall attendance is satisfactory although many students make good and outstanding improvements, which are encouraged and rewarded. One student said: 'I never used to go to school much, but I like it here, teachers understand me and I am learning more than before'. Since the last inspection, the unit has continued to improve in all areas. Curriculum provision

has improved and students are using and reinforcing their numeracy, information, and communication technology (ICT) skills. The well-established management committee has a clear view of the work of the unit and is fully involved in monitoring and strategic management. The capacity to improve further is good.

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

- Analyse the strategies used to support students' progress more rigorously to ensure they continue to get the best results.
- Ensure the monitoring of teaching and learning clearly identifies the best practice and gives clear guidance to teachers as to how they may improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All students make good gains in English, mathematics, science, art and in their social and personal skills. Parents are very happy with the academic progress their children make and in the outstanding improvements in their personal development. A parent said: 'Since starting at the unit my son has enjoyed his learning and is making better progress than ever before. He actually enjoys learning now'. Each student has challenging targets for improvement, which most successfully achieve. They are given clear advice and support about what they need to do to improve. All students have the opportunity to achieve a range of relevant accreditation by the time they leave the unit and are well prepared to take on the challenges of further education or the world of work. Procedures for assessing and tracking students' progress enable the unit to produce detailed reports and make confident judgements about levels of attainment and predicted results in examinations. Many students are determined to succeed and make the most of this second chance. One student remarked, 'I am going to pass my GCSEs and I would not be able to if I did not come here'.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Excellent relationships and mutual respect between staff and students are clearly evident and result in a very positive and supportive environment. Students have positive attitudes in lessons and appreciate the individual support they receive. One student said, 'Teachers treat you like an adult and do not shout'. Students have contact with a wide range of community professionals enabling them to reflect on the lives of others and consider their own place in society. Students demonstrate empathy and support for each other and enjoy taking responsibility whenever they are able, for example, being a school council member. Some students make good and sometimes excellent improvements to their attendance, which is suitably celebrated. Students understand their rights and responsibilities and increasingly understand the importance of managing their own learning and behaviour. As they mature students are able to consider their own resolutions to difficulties.

They know how to keep themselves healthy and safe, and understand the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. Students learn very useful skills through their training opportunities off-site, fund-raising events and taking part in community, work-related and work experience placements. By learning self-discipline and achieving good GCSEs many students have created a much more optimistic future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Students enjoy their learning and they are keen to do well. The very positive learning environment is a result of the excellent relationships between staff and students. Students gain confidence and trust and are able to do their best. The effective support for students' individual needs promotes improved independence and a belief that they can make personal progress. Staff know students very well and use this knowledge wisely to effectively manage their behaviour and attitudes in and out of the classroom. However, some teachers' evaluation of what strategies are most effective in getting the best out of students is better than others. Teaching and learning are monitored, but not rigorously enough to ensure that the best practice is effectively shared and developed further. Adult teamwork effectively helps students learn and supports their progress and achievement. Resources, including ICT, effectively support learning, as do practical activities. Students' effort and achievement are encouraged and celebrated at every opportunity.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

After an initial assessment of students' needs an individual curriculum package is agreed between the student and the unit. In this way the student has the best possible chance of making good progress in their learning and personal development. The curriculum is constantly under review to ensure it is meeting students' ever-changing needs. Activities encourage students to become more responsible for managing their own learning and behaviour. Practical activities provide a motivating context for the development of useful skills and there is an appropriate emphasis on the importance of keeping healthy and taking exercise. Students have opportunities to cook and they achieve high standards. Students particularly enjoy their training opportunities at off-site specialist workshops where they learn useful life skills such as brick laying, painting and hairdressing and how to get on with people in different situations. The personal, health, social and citizenship curriculum is very effective in developing students' life skills and their understanding of their place in the community. Work-related learning and work experience opportunities very effectively help prepare students for future life.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The combination of efficient procedures and consistent practice keep students safe and secure while helping them to acquire the skills of self-management. There are clear measures for safeguarding students, which are understood by all staff.

Very effective teamwork ensures students' needs are recognised, supported and personal respect and trust is emphasised at all times. Students receive very effective individual guidance that ensures that they make good progress with their personal and academic development. There are outstanding partnerships with support agencies, which ensure that the specific needs of students are well met. Students involved in outreach support projects are very well supported and helped to avoid exclusion from their school. The unit maintains very effective links with students' homes, which parents greatly appreciate. A parent wrote: 'I do not know what I would have done without the unit. My son has changed beyond recognition and is doing so well'.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are effectively improving provision and the headteacher and senior leadership team provide encouragement to students and staff. All staff are fully committed to fulfilling their responsibilities and together they ensure the smooth and positive running of the unit. The impact of everyone's work is clearly reflected in the outstanding care, guidance and support for students, which enables their good academic and outstanding personal development. A parent summed up the feelings of many when she said: 'I would like the opportunity to thank the unit for saving my son's life and giving him an education'.

The work of all staff is clearly valued and morale is high. In turn, staff have high expectations of students, and mutual respect and trust is noticeably evident. Through wide consultation and self-evaluation, improvement areas are logically identified resulting in appropriate development planning. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not robust enough therefore what exactly works in terms of the strategies for ensuring students progress is not always clear.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### 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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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	2
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

8 February 2008

Dear Students

Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit, Ipswich IP1 2HE

Thank you for welcoming me into your centre; I really enjoyed my time with you and I particularly liked the bacon muffins a student cooked for morning break time. A special thanks to the members of the school council who told me all about the unit and how it has supported their progress. I agree with you and your parents: your unit is good with some areas that are excellent. It supports your needs and ensures that you make the best possible progress in your learning and personal development. The unit knows how it can improve further and you can help by keeping a close eye on your personal targets and continuing to work hard.

These are some of the strengths.

- All staff ensure the smooth running of the unit and your care and support is central to all decisions and planning.
- All staff care, guide and support you exceptionally well.
- You are treated with respect and you show respect back in return.
- You have positive attitudes and learn to improve your behaviour.
- You enjoy your lessons and make good progress in your learning.
- You learn useful skills that will help you when you leave the centre.
- The unit has very good links with mainstream schools and works extremely well with other people to help support your needs.
- The unit provides effective support to students in mainstream schools.
- The curriculum very effectively meets your needs and you particularly enjoy your training opportunities
- The unit is always thinking how they can improve further to help you make even better progress.

I have asked the unit to consider the following areas for improvement.

- Look closely at the strategies used to support your progress to ensure you continue to get the best results in your learning and personal development.
- Identify the best teaching and give clear guidance to teachers how they may improve their practice.

It was a delight seeing such a good unit and I wish you all every future success.

Yours faithfully

Mike Smith

Lead inspector