

New Summerseat House

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131506
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	315816
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Arif Hussain

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	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Wilfred Davison
Headteacher	Mrs Lorain Oates
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2004
School address	Summerseat Lane Ramsbottom Bury Lancashire BL0 9UD
Telephone number	01204 885275
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

New Summerseat House caters for students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools because of their poor behaviour. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is part of the local authority's alternative education provision which is designated a 'Pupil Learning Centre' (PLC). A small number of students are from minority ethnic groups but none has English as an additional language. The students have significant barriers to their learning. Around half of the students receive free school meals. Most have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many have emotional problems. Approximately a quarter have a statement 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: 2

The overall effectiveness of the PRU is good. Representative views from parents include: 'I like the care and attention that the school provides and this makes sure that my son is well motivated to work hard and achieve as much as he can'. Students start at the PRU with generally low levels of attainment because of their poor engagement in education in the past. Most lack confidence in a school setting and have missed much time at previous schools. Students make good progress in their academic achievement and personal development, especially their self-confidence and self-esteem. As a result, the PRU is successful in enabling students to think positively about themselves again and enjoy their learning. Partnerships with the local cluster of secondary schools and other agencies are a strong feature and help the students to get back on track with their studies.

Strong care, guidance and support underpin the students' achievement and personal development. Students make good progress in lessons because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers present the work in a stimulating way and students are interested and well involved in their learning. Lesson observations reveal that students learn most effectively through practical experiences. Discussions with students confirm that this is their preferred learning style, and they say that they would like even more 'hands on' work in lessons. The PRU acknowledges that lesson plans do not always set appropriate specific objectives for individual students to ensure that they always achieve as well as possible. The curriculum is good because it meets the students' needs and interests well. Students take advantage of the residential, work experience and vocational training on offer. A good number of students are successful in gaining accreditation in several subjects. These factors ensure that students are well prepared for the future.

Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Students say that bullying is not a problem. Students develop positive attitudes towards leading healthy lifestyles. They know it is important to eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise. Students' contribution to the community is good. The school council has made many good suggestions leading to school improvement and students were keen to establish the breakfast club. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Most students make good improvements in their attendance as compared to their former schools, but it remains a problem for a small number of students and this seriously impacts on their progress.

Leadership and management are good. The PRU's manager has forged a cohesive senior management team and a common sense of purpose across the PRU. Close working with the head of the PLC ensures that the PRU meets the needs of students. Managers at all levels make an effective contribution to the PRU's success. The PRU knows its strengths and areas for development well and is clearly focused on raising achievement to higher levels. The management committee is outstanding. It includes a wealth of educational and financial expertise, which supports the PRU very well. For instance, the committee has ensured that good practice in other parts of the PLC is brought into the PRU and also that any spending proposals are evaluated in terms of the impact on students' learning. Several positive developments since the last inspection, for instance, to the curriculum and accommodation demonstrate that the PRU has a good capacity to continue to improve. Resources are used effectively and efficiently. The PRU provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more attention is given to setting specific objectives for students.
- Ensure that more lessons include practical work opportunities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Staff are successful in helping the students overcome significant barriers to learning. All groups of students make equally good progress including those students with emotional difficulties and those with statements of special educational need. The great majority of students on roll join the PRU in Years 8, 9 and 10. Last year there were no students in Year 11, and similarly none this year. Even though students in Years 9 and 10 had only been at the PRU for an average of less than two terms, overall they achieved well in their literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The PRU trialed one year foundation GCSE courses for Year 10 in 2007. This decision was based on previous experience which indicated that the majority of students became disaffected by the beginning of Y11 and, as a result did not complete their course of study at the PRU. The results are positive with some students in Year 10 obtaining good passes in subjects such as English, mathematics and science in relation to their capabilities. Generally, the standards students reach are below levels expected for their age, though one or two are in line. The current Years 9 and 10 are making good progress in most areas of learning. PRU records also suggest that results in science will be an improvement on 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school has embraced the 'Every Child Matters' agenda very positively. Students mature into respectful young citizens as a result of good personal, social, health and citizenship education. Students develop very good relationships with their peers and also adults at the PRU. They develop strong values about care, co-operation and consideration for others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In a discussion about religious symbols, students gave very thoughtful views. They talked about Muslim women who wear a veil, saying 'that this is their choice' and as with any religious symbol, 'they should be allowed to wear it so long as it does not affect others in a negative way.' There are many good chances for students to learn about different cultures in society. This has resulted in students developing good attitudes towards diversity and race relations. However, although many students improve their attendance well during their time at the PRU, the attendance of a small minority remains low. The PRU does all it can to raise the attendance of these students.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good features of teaching include the emphasis on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy, effective use of learning resources, presentation that captures students' interest and a brisk pace in lessons. Teachers manage behaviour well and students respond positively to praise and reward for good work. Consequently, students are engaged well in learning and achieve well. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the success of lessons

through skilful support. A good Year 10 science lesson included all these features. Students were practicing improving their answers in GCSE coursework. They especially enjoyed the practical opportunities to reinforce their understanding, for instance, as they learned about what happens to light when it is reflected. Discussions with students confirm that they enjoy learning through practical experiences and they say they want more. Assessment is good. However, lesson plans occasionally lack specific individual learning targets for students and so they do not always achieve as well as they can.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good balance between developing academic skills and promoting students' personal development. There is good provision in numeracy and literacy and this helps students to gain essential and basic skills. Provision to gain basic ICT skills is also good. However, the PRU has yet to capitalize on students' enjoyment of using computers by promoting use across the curriculum. Enrichment of the curriculum is provided through special events, educational visits and residential opportunities. These activities are much enjoyed and include business enterprise, the army, multi-cultural and healthy eating. Participation in sporting activities is good and this makes a significant contribution to improving health and fitness. The curriculum includes many chances to learn about further education and jobs. The PRU has developed a good range of vocational and work-related experiences for students in partnership with training providers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are highly committed to ensuring the progress and well-being of all students. There is a strong family feel about the PRU. Representative views from students include 'teachers are both funny and friendly. They are very patient and don't mind if you cannot understand something straight away, they just keep explaining until the penny drops.' Academic guidance and support are generally strong. However, more attention to individual target setting is necessary in lessons and in workbooks so that students can always achieve as well as they can. All adults are good role models for the students and help them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Links with welfare agencies are effective in supporting students. Careers guidance is good. Arrangements for safeguarding and ensuring the health and safety of students are in place and reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior staff at all levels set a clear direction for the PRU. They ensure that students receive a good quality of care and a good education. The PRU manager has been instrumental in establishing very purposeful relationships within the PRU and with outside agencies. Leaders are successful in maintaining a common sense of purpose across the PRU. Members of the management committee rigorously check the PRU's examination results and hold managers to account very effectively. This ensures that the PRU continues to improve. Students' personal development and academic performance are checked closely and any problems are quickly identified and support put in place. The PRU has had much success in improving attendance and behaviour. However, leaders are not sitting back and continue to do all they can to improve

further in these areas. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good and this ensures that the strong learning ethos is maintained. Although senior staff regularly check the quality of teaching and learning, they do not check that all teachers set specific individual objectives for students. Inclusion is strong and this enables all students to take advantage of the good curriculum. Resources are well used by the PRU, for instance, ICT for financial management. The PRU runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis to provide a stable learning environment for students who have usually had poor experiences in school settings.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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	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?	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	1
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

Thank you for all your help during the inspection of your unit. I enjoyed talking with you and learning about your work. Your unit is effective and the great majority of you make good progress.

The curriculum is strong because there are many different opportunities for you to learn. Teaching and learning are good. Many of you told me how much you enjoy learning through practical experiences in lessons. I agree that you would benefit from more practical opportunities. You receive good care, support and guidance. I was impressed by the suggestions made by the school council to improve things. I was also pleased to see the good contribution you make to the community through taking up responsibilities. Your personal development is good. I can see that you are well prepared for the future through the accreditations you achieve and the work-related experiences you take part in. You show good attitudes to learning and behave well. Although many of you have improved your attendance compared to your previous schools, a small number of you have not. Leadership and management of your unit are good. The management committee, unit manager and staff are working hard to make sure you carry on doing well.

In order to improve, your unit should:

- provide more chances for you to learn through practical experiences
- ensure that you all have specific learning targets in your lessons.