

Secondary Federated Pupil Referral Service (individual learning centre).

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131535
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	315825
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascal

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	119
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Shaun Whittingham
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Wayne Way Leicester LE5 4PP
Telephone number	01162 2766268
Fax number	01162 2764882

Age group	11-16
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2008
Inspection number	315825

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a new pupil referral unit (PRU) which has been established since April 2006. It replaced an existing PRU. It consists of three main sites: The Individual Learning Centre (ILC) which caters for students who have been permanently excluded; Millgate Lodge which supports students mainly from the ILC, providing programmes that support their pastoral and behavioural needs; and the Short Stay School caters for students who are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream settings.

A number of students attend an independent provider (the STRIDE project) which offers vocational courses.

The majority of students have emotional and behavioural difficulties although a number have additional learning needs such as attention deficit and hyperactive disorders. A very small proportion of students have statements of special educational need. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The majority are White British.

The PRU has had considerable problems in recruiting staff and at present there are no subject leaders for English and mathematics.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and assessment, achievement and students' attendance.

The PRU does not provide an effective education for its students. The senior leadership team has worked hard to raise the standard of education from a very low baseline to one that now has some strengths even though there are still significant weaknesses. There has been a good focus on improving the care and welfare of students which is now effective. It is well supported by good links with mainstream schools and outside agencies. Very good attention has been paid to ensuring that students are safe.

The development of an effective reward system is having an impact on enabling students to improve their behaviour. Students value the rewards and talk proudly of 'being on gold'. Students comment on how much they like parts of the provision and much work has been done to improve the curriculum which is now satisfactory overall. The large numbers of students on the roll across the various locations of the PRU prevent it from offering all students the full 25 hours curriculum time to which they are entitled. The curriculum's strengths lie in the support it provides for students' social and behavioural development and this contributes to their satisfactory progress in personal development. Those students attending STRIDE value the opportunities it provides and it is a particularly successful aspect of the curriculum, preparing students well for college and the world of work. The role of the Short Stay School in working with students at risk of exclusion is also effective and enables nearly all students to return successfully to mainstream.

Those students who attend regularly speak positively about the PRU and the impact it is having on enabling them to learn. This is not the case though for many and overall attendance is poor, particularly at the ILC. This has had a negative impact on students' achievements and overall they make unsatisfactory progress. The lack of effective assessment procedures and challenge in lessons hinders students from making better progress. Work is rarely matched to students' wide ranging needs because teachers do not have a clear understanding of students' capabilities. The senior leadership team has eradicated a good proportion of unsatisfactory teaching through vigilant monitoring and support and, whilst teaching is still not good enough, it now has strengths. These include more detailed planning of work and a better focus on what students will learn in lessons.

The senior leadership team has taken effective action to bring about improvements. It is a determined group and members work well together. They are under no illusion of what still needs to be done and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The recent changes to the management group including the increased involvement of local headteachers and providers have resulted in clearer planning for how the PRU will be more involved in reducing exclusions across the local authority. This is enabling senior leaders to have a better understanding of what is required from them and is making it easier for them to plan and develop provision more effectively. They have, for example, recognised the need to make more effective use of all the information about students' progress so that they can set sufficiently challenging targets to ensure that all make the best possible progress.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Improve assessment procedures so that teachers can better match work to students' abilities.
- Evaluate the causes of poor attendance and take effective action to address these.
- Ensure that all students receive the full education provision to which they are entitled.
- Make better use of information on students' progress to set more challenging targets so that the best possible progress can be made.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The standards students attain compared to those nationally are well-below those expected because of the nature of their learning difficulties. Although several students do achieve passes in GCSEs and entry level qualifications, few achieve as well as they should and overall students' achievements are unsatisfactory. Students' often good attendance on vocational courses at STRIDE and Millgate Lodge enables them to gain passes in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Level 1 and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) bronze and silver levels. However, students do not have the same commitment to attending the ILC and this prevents them from making the progress they should in their learning. For many, their basic skills are not well developed and this limits their opportunities to do well in the workplace and at college. Students are not making adequate progress in English and this is reflected in the particularly poor results of students in the national tests. The lack of a full-time teacher has had an impact on students' progress in this subject. In some subjects, including science, students are beginning to make better progress because of specialist teaching.

There are a very small number of students with statements of special educational need. Although new initiatives have been started the PRU is aware that it is not meeting the needs of these students and that their achievements are unsatisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

A number of students respond to the support they are given particularly in terms of improving their behaviour. They like the rewards system and many are developing their skills in assessing how well they are doing in terms of their behaviour. This is not the case for all and some struggle to come to terms with the consequences of their behaviour. As a result the number of short-term exclusions is high. Whilst not all students, particularly in the ILC, are making sufficient progress in managing their behaviour, others who attend STRIDE and Millgate Lodge value the trust staff place in them, act responsibly and clearly enjoy the tasks they do. Students say bullying is not an issue at the PRU and say they feel safe. They show a satisfactory commitment to healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the opportunities to play sport and have responded well to the PRU's no smoking policy.

Those who attend regularly show good commitment to doing well and work hard in lessons. This, however, is not the case for all and only about 60% of students attend regularly. Too many, therefore, display negative attitudes and a lack of enthusiasm for their education. In discussions with students it becomes clear that travelling issues contribute to this and where attendance is very good – nearly 100% at STRIDE – students point out that the centre is near where they live and easier to get to. Much of the poor attendance is at the ILC, which for many

is a long distance to travel. Those students who attend STRIDE develop a good understanding of the world of work and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Overall the spiritual, moral and social development of students is satisfactory. They show respect for visitors and are friendly, polite and keen to show what they are doing. Those students attending the Short Stay School develop their personal and social skills well and are well prepared for returning to their mainstream school. Students enjoy opportunities to be involved in the community and develop an understanding of life in a multicultural society. They participate in outings such as to the theatre and the Caribbean festival held in Leicester, taking part in tasting all the different foods.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Improved planning of lessons means that there is a more consistent approach so that students know the structure of the lessons. Most teachers, for example, make sure students are aware of the work they are to do in the lesson. However, although lessons have a clear structure, planning does not sufficiently reflect the different abilities of the students. In much of the teaching all students get the same work and as a result, many students either struggle to complete tasks or finish them quickly. This in turn leads to inappropriate behaviour because of students' frustration. The quality of relationships between staff and students is often good and is used well to encourage students to stay on task and to settle. However, the management of behaviour is not consistent. At times teachers do not make clear the consequences of students' actions or take quick enough action when they see a pupil is becoming disruptive. Some lessons are varied and interesting and provide a satisfactory range of activities. This was evident, for example, in science where good preparation of resources enables the teacher to hold students attention well. Equally, in a personal, social and health education lesson praise was used well to encourage students to be involved in a discussion about the difference between criminal and civil law.

Students' work is marked regularly and positive comments made but marking rarely encourages students to consider how to improve their work or give them an indication of how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has a number of strengths, in particular in supporting students' personal development well. The focus on enabling students to take responsibility for their behaviour is particularly effective at the Short Stay School. The range of activities develops students' social skills and encourages them to think about their actions. As a result, they are well prepared for returning to mainstream. Staff are in the process of developing these approaches further so that they can have a greater impact on supporting students' academic learning whilst they attend the Short Stay School. Millgate Lodge also has a clear focus on encouraging students to work together and provides them with good opportunities to cook and design and build things.

The PRU acknowledges that the curriculum at ILC does not fully meet the needs of students and is in the process of reviewing provision. The concentration on enabling students to take

up to eight GCSEs or entry level qualifications, whilst commendable, has not proved effective. Staff are now looking at developing other courses and accreditation that would be more suitable for the differing range of needs of students. Plans to look at key skills accreditation and more vocational courses are appropriate. The ILC is full to capacity and whilst good use is made of other provisions the service is struggling to provide students there with the full 25 hours to which they are entitled.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care and welfare of students are seen as priorities and robust systems are in place that ensure students are safe. Procedures for child protection and the vetting of staff are very thorough and there is a good level of training to ensure staff are kept up to date. There are good links with other agencies, which are being developed further, especially in providing support to students with mental health issues. Parents' views of the PRU vary. Most recognise that their children are well looked after but a few have concerns about whether the needs of their child are being met.

Procedures have been introduced to check students' abilities when they start at the PRU although they are not yet being used to best effect. Whilst students have targets not all know what these are. Staff are not consistently using the information they have to set targets that will enable students to build upon their skills in a systematic way.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team has developed over the last two years, and is demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to improve. Through their commitment and hard work they have brought about a number of improvements. Not least of these are the improvements to teaching. Two years ago analysis showed that there was very little satisfactory or good teaching. Now there is clear evidence of a more consistent approach amongst staff. Good monitoring of the quality of provision has enabled senior staff to act quickly to provide support and bring about change. For example, the recent appointment of a senior member of staff to oversee the provision for special educational needs reflects the PRU's recognition that it is not meeting the needs of these students.

The PRU has been very clear about what it needs to do to improve but has not always had a clear understanding of its role within the local authority. The establishment of an Education Improvement Partnership between local headteachers and this group's active involvement in the management committee has ensured a clear direction for the development of the PRU. Information is now gathered about students' progress and the PRU is beginning to use this to bring about change and set itself challenging targets.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
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?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	4
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. We especially enjoyed the discussions we had with you during the day and visiting all the different settings you work in.

At the moment the PRU is not providing you with a satisfactory education. The senior staff though are committed to making it better and have the support of the management committee and local authority to achieve this. However, we have given it a Notice to Improve which means that someone will come to check on how well you are doing within the next year.

Although several of you gain passes in GCSEs - and entry level qualifications - many of you do not. This is because many of you choose not to attend the ILC and this affects how well you can do. Those of you who go to STRIDE, attend well and you gain NVQ qualifications. Teaching is improving but is not as good as it should be. The work is not always matched to your abilities and is either too hard or too easy for you. This is because the systems for assessing the progress you make are not effective and are not helping teachers to set you challenging targets. Although you like the fact you can attend all the different centres not all of you are getting the full amount of curriculum time you are entitled to.

In STRIDE, Millgate Lodge and Short Stay School your behaviour improves. For those at the Short Stay School this means you can return to mainstream successfully. The PRU has worked hard to make sure that the systems for keeping you safe are good and as a result you told us the PRU was a safe place to be. The senior leaders are working hard to make improvements and know what they need to do to bring these about. To help them we have asked them to do the following: ?Improve assessment procedures so that teachers can better match work to your abilities. ?Find out why attendance is poor and take effective action to address this. ?Ensure that you all receive the number of hours of education to which you are entitled. ?Make better use of information about how well you are doing to set you more challenging targets, so that you can make the best possible progress.

We hope that more of you make more of an effort to attend the PRU and help teachers by working as hard as you can. We wish you well for the future.

6 March 2008

Dear Students



Inspection of Secondary Federated Pupil Referral Service (PRU)

Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. We especially enjoyed the discussions we had with you during the day and visiting all the different settings you work in.

At the moment the PRU is not providing you with a satisfactory education. The senior staff though are committed to making it better and have the support of the management committee and local authority to achieve this. However, we have given it a Notice to Improve which means that someone will come to check on how well you are doing within the next year.

Although several of you gain passes in GCSEs - and entry level qualifications - many of you do not. This is because many of you choose not to attend the ILC and this affects how well you can do. Those of you who go to STRIDE, attend well and you gain NVQ qualifications. Teaching is improving but is not as good as it should be. The work is not always matched to your abilities and is either too hard or too easy for you. This is because the systems for assessing the progress you make are not effective and are not helping teachers to set you challenging targets. Although you like the fact you can attend all the different centres not all of you are getting the full amount of curriculum time you are entitled to.

In STRIDE, Millgate Lodge and Short Stay School your behaviour improves. For those at the Short Stay School this means you can return to mainstream successfully. The PRU has worked hard to make sure that the systems for keeping you safe are good and as a result you told us the PRU was a safe place to be. The senior leaders are working hard to make improvements and know what they need to do to bring these about. To help them we have asked them to do the following:

- Improve assessment procedures so that teachers can better match work to your abilities.
- Find out why attendance is poor and take effective action to address this.
- Ensure that you all receive the number of hours of education to which you are entitled.
- Make better use of information about how well you are doing to set you more challenging targets, so that you can make the best possible progress.

We hope that more of you make more of an effort to attend the PRU and help teachers by working as hard as you can. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall (Lead inspector)