

Young People's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131582
Local Authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	315837
Inspection date	23 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Bennetts

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	56
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Chris Saye
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Western School Cambridge Road Grimsby DN34 5TD
Telephone number	01472 323484
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Age group	5–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This pupil referral unit comprises three facilities. The Young People's Centre (YPC) opened in September 2006. It provides exclusively for pregnant schoolgirls, teenage mothers and other pupils with medical and psychological needs. Almost all students at the YPC are aged 15–16; there are currently 22 on roll. The YPC was inspected in November 2006 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. In September 2008 Western Study Plus (WSP) opened as an annex to the YPC. It is in self-contained premises about 100 metres from the YPC. Its remit is to support disengaged Key Stage 4 students who are capable of achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE. It has 20 students. In addition, 14 students are receiving tuition at home for a variety of medical reasons. A privately run crèche is located within the YPC; it currently takes care of four babies. The referral unit is managed by the head of Education Other Than At School service (EOTAS); there is a head of centre at the YPC and at the WSP. The head of centre at the YPC manages the home tuition facility. A large proportion of the students have a statement of special educational need. A substantial number are known to be eligible for free school meals. A few are looked after by the local authority. The great majority of students are of White British background. The YPC and the WSP occupy recently refurbished premises, which are attractive though not extensive. The adjacent premises of a former secondary school (including sports facilities) are not generally available to the unit.

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 and rapidly improving pupil referral unit. Some of its work is outstanding. Its provision has been improved since the last inspection and has recently been extended to cater for many more students. Its success is due to the excellent leadership and management of senior staff and the dedication and commitment of staff at all levels. Outstanding care for students' welfare has brought about enormous improvement in attitude for many students, based on increasing self-respect and pride in achievement. Parents are delighted that the students are happy and that their personal development and education are flourishing. They are full of appreciation for the staff; one says: 'I cannot speak highly enough of them – a phenomenal team.'

Behaviour is excellent and students enjoy their education greatly. Those at the two centres, the YPC and the WSP, are very positive about the lifestyle and relationships there. A home tuition student spoke of her enthusiasm for learning and of the tremendous support she feels she has had from staff in encouraging her to succeed. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are keen to take care of their health and safety. In view of their medical and other difficulties, attendance is good and it is managed effectively. Students like to have a say in how things are going. They are well placed to continue their education or training. The resurgence in many students' attitudes and commitment to learning is stimulated by their recognition of the genuine care and concern that staff have for their well-being.

Though students' levels of attainment vary widely, standards are average overall. Detailed records and the progress apparent in lessons show that students' achievement is good. There are many success stories of recent leavers who have done well, surpassing expectations. Some current students seem amazed at their own success. Parents attest to the great strides that students have made in their achievement.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships. Subject material is often exceptionally well prepared and presented with authoritative subject knowledge. However, in some lessons, the style involves too much presentation by the teacher and not enough to draw out and develop students' ideas. Occasionally, as they work independently, students do not always receive quite enough timely intervention to put things right.

The curriculum is good. The unit makes every effort to enable students to cover an essential core curriculum, to continue with courses they have already started, and to meet their interests and aspirations. However, students would welcome better access to physical education (PE) facilities, the chance to learn how to cook, a little more that is 'creative' – and better facilities to socialise and 'unwind'.

The unit is led with clarity of purpose and a firm resolve for improvement. The painstaking daily management, and the facilitation of every aspect of care for students' welfare, have enabled the unit to make a vast improvement in young peoples' outlook and life chances. The unit has very strong capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve learning by increasing opportunities for students to express themselves in lessons, in order to develop their ideas and deal with any misunderstandings.
- Improve access to PE facilities and make better provision for creativity, learning how to cook, and for social relaxation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards that students reach by age 16 vary greatly. For some students, standards are limited by their medical difficulties or disruption to their education over many years. Some students have had GCSE passes at the highest grade, A*. Some are working on courses at Entry Level. Overall, across the unit's three facilities, standards are average.

In each of the three facilities, achievement is good. A parent of a WSP student writes: 'She had no confidence...and now she is on target for all her GCSEs'. Another says that her daughter, 'has made immense progress and now enjoys attending school; her grades have gone up profoundly'. In the WSP there is often palpable progress as students engage avidly with tasks. Their target grades are realistic and are far better than their estimated grades on arrival. A parent of a student who is benefiting from home tuition says that her daughter is 'achieving on a level I would never have thought possible'. Detailed records at the YPC show that students had generally made little progress, or regressed, in Key Stage 3 prior to transfer to the centre. Their GCSE results have been in all cases at least as good as those predicted from Key Stage 3 by a national data system, generally one grade better, and sometimes three grades better. Occasionally, a few students could make a little more progress in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All aspects of students' personal development are good. The strongly positive attitudes and enhanced self-respect developed in all three facilities, through the devoted care that the staff provide, are the key factors in facilitating good achievement. A headteacher who has students attending the school expresses appreciation of their improvement and writes: 'Since the three students moved to WSP their attendance has improved significantly and I have been delighted with their progress.' For some students, spiritual development is strong: having studied 'Of Mice and Men' a student reflected sensitively on the compassionate killing of Lenny by his best friend. Other students were thoughtful in considering social responsibility and the moral issues underpinning their study of the play 'An Inspector Calls'. Social development is good, though students would welcome opportunity to socialise somewhere other than in classrooms in their free time – some are eager to have a pool table. Students have trips to museums and learn of a staff member's ongoing work in Africa, but the unit's cultural experience especially in music is less well developed.

Students are articulate about keeping fit and eating sensibly. They would like better access to PE facilities and want to learn how to cook. The unit is a safe environment; students are mindful of their own and others' safety – they appreciate how easy it is, unwittingly, to give others a hard time by a careless word. Students are enthusiastic. One arrived half an hour early and found ways to be helpful. They are very attentive and behaviour is impeccable. The WSP often has nearly full attendance. At the YPC, typically a third of students are unable to attend due to medical appointments, maternity leave and other unavoidable reasons. The unit has robust systems to celebrate good attendance and follow up on any unconvincingly explained absence. There are opportunities each day for students to have a say on how things have gone and how they might be improved. Students have given lively consideration to uniform issues. They have a clear view on further education and other alternatives. They are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning in each of the three facilities are good. A parent writes: 'The teaching staff go to great lengths to explain and encourage, making her feel valued and want to learn more.' Another says that the home tuition staff are, 'an absolutely incredible team of dedicated professionals'. Lessons are thoroughly prepared, with well crafted resources. They often fit into a coherent series of learning opportunities. Home tutors have themselves been on courses to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to provide tuition on new syllabuses. Many lessons have authoritative teaching and students greatly value teachers' subject knowledge and careful preparation. Home tutors are creative in finding appropriate methods that match students' individual needs and experiences.

Relationships are excellent. In an outstanding individual tuition session, a gifted student was encouraged by the teacher's subject knowledge and frank discussion to race ahead with cogent analysis of a poem about raging jealousy. However, in some lessons, teachers talk too much, move too rapidly over material, or make limited intervention as students work independently. There is sometimes insufficient opportunity for students to express themselves in order to develop their thinking or to bring their misunderstandings to light.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The unit offers a good curriculum in each of the three facilities. The last inspection of the YPC said that 'the curriculum has been suitably broadened to make it relevant and appealing...most National Curriculum subjects are covered, along with child development, media studies and a variety of certificated leisure pursuits'. Curriculum development has continued. For example, science is taught by a science specialist and offered as Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) or Entry level, with provision for those already embarked on GCSE courses; for students educated at home and with very limited mobility, creative arrangements established with the examination board facilitate practical work and its assessment. All students at the WSP follow the BTEC programme in public services. Provision for information and communication technology is good and some students follow certificated courses. There is provision for GCSE citizenship. A number of students have work experience placements and some take courses at the further education college. Home tutors are diligent in adapting to requests for subjects or syllabuses that are new to them – for instance, the philosophy and ethics modules for GCSE religious studies. By use of part time staff, and staff from other schools, the unit provides a good curriculum range in relation to the funding available. There is proper prioritisation of the core subjects, including the certification of Key Skills. The WSP offers a homework club, with many ready attenders.

There is embellishment of the curriculum with, for example, some PE, some food hygiene and educational visits; some of this is certificated, for instance through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). However, access to facilities and planning do not always give students enough opportunity for PE and the more creative aspects of the curriculum. A young mother who says, 'all I know how to cook is toast' would welcome more cookery; some young mothers say they want the use of a gym 'to get back in trim', meanwhile boys want a place to keep fit and kick a ball about. Some would like 'something creative'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The unit provides outstanding care, guidance and support in each of its three facilities. A parent of a girl educated at home writes: 'The tutor is very sensitive, caring and very understanding towards my daughter and she has the highest respect...'. The parent of a boy in the YPC says, 'My son has finally found a place where he feels comfortable, respected and supported.' Discussions with students, with parents, and a home tuition student indicated that there is enormous gratitude for the painstaking care and support that staff give. They say that nothing is too much trouble, that everything possible is done to adapt things to meet individual needs, and that liaison with homes and other services is excellent.

There is close involvement of mental health services and some students have frequent access to independent counsellors to seek advice and intervention with anxieties and problems in their personal lives. Personal, social and health education takes a variety of forms and students say that it is candid and very helpful. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are secure. Young mothers greatly value the crèche and opportunities to be with their babies during the day. Students have realistic and well informed aspirations for further education or training. Record keeping is meticulous. The unit can show detailed records on the progress of past and current students. Realistic targets are set. There are sensible decisions about tiers of entry for GCSE and about the appropriateness of continuous assessment and final assessment syllabuses. Students have a very good understanding of the current standard of their work and what needs to be improved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The unit is led with vision and determination. Day-to-day management is meticulous in ensuring that all aspects of the unit's work are accomplished smoothly and efficiently, and that issues that arise are addressed pragmatically. There is unstinting attention to the welfare of each student. The last inspection of the YPC, soon after its inception, found it to be making rapid headway in establishing itself. It has since gone from strength to strength in consolidating its provision and extending its work to a wider community. Areas for improvement have been tackled firmly. The unit's work is monitored and evaluated closely. Teaching quality is checked and action is taken to bring about improvement. Students' progress is tracked much more closely, and secure data on progress are used effectively to promote achievement. The school's self-evaluation is candid, accurate and a very helpful basis for further improvement. There is an excellent team spirit amongst staff at the YPC and the WSP; home tutors would welcome more opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of ideas.

The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory overall. It does everything possible to engender cohesion and celebration of diversity amongst its own students. No matter what their background, circumstances, or ability, all are treated with respect and get a fair deal. Strong links are cultivated with students' families. Coursework for GCSE childcare involves links with a neighbouring infant school, and there are links with a secondary school to enable staff to extend their skills in catering for special educational needs. There is some attention to cultural diversity, and students contribute to charities. The school is keen to move ahead with wider initiatives, but rightly recognises that its agenda for cohesion within its own community is of paramount importance.

The strong leadership of senior staff has been well supported and encouraged by the board of managers. With a tight budget and good outcomes, the unit offers excellent value for money, reflecting the shrewd deployment of resources. The unit is very well placed to make further improvement.

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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	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

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

24 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Young People's Centre, North East Lincolnshire, DN34 5TD

I greatly enjoyed my visit to the Young People's Centre (YPC) and the Western Study Plus (WSP), and talking to people about the home tuition service. I was impressed by how well you are all doing and the progress you are making with your learning.

You told me that you like it at the YPC and the WSP. Parents said the same – many parents are delighted by how well you are getting on. The same is true of the home tuition. It is clear from records that have been kept and from the lessons I went into, that you are achieving well. Teaching and learning are good, and teachers prepare their lessons really thoroughly. The staff do their best to provide the courses you need and that you want. They look after you exceptionally well – and this has enabled you to look more on the bright side of things and take a pride in yourselves and in your success. The way the unit is run is excellent; senior staff are determined to do their best for you.

The YPC, the WSP and the home tuition service provide a good education and they are rapidly improving. I have asked staff to make two particular improvements. Though lessons go well, sometimes it would be helpful if you had more chance to say what you think about what you are learning, or to talk problems through with staff when you are not quite sure how to do things. The YPC and WSP offer a good range of subjects and other activities. However, you told me that you would like better access to PE facilities, some cookery, a little more 'creative' work and better facilities to socialise. I agree that these would be worthwhile improvements, and I have asked senior staff to see what can be done.

Your positive attitudes, your willingness to do your best and to help one another are crucial to the success of all this. Many of you have achieved a lot in the last few terms. Keep it up.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

Inspector