

Kirk Hallam Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131632
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	315843
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Trevor Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Lucas
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Raynor
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Windsor Crescent Kirk Hallam Ilkeston Derbyshire DE7 4HD
Telephone number	01159 326445
Fax number	01159 307980

Age group	7–14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small 'dual registration' referral unit for pupils who are at risk of being excluded permanently from mainstream education because of their behavioural or emotional difficulties. Some have already been excluded, or are waiting for a placement in a special school. Pupils come from all over Derbyshire and all are White British. More than half are entitled to free school meals and two-thirds have learning difficulties or disabilities. More than a third have statements of special educational need. Pupils are admitted for a planned period of two terms, staying on the roll of their own school. They spend half of each day in the unit and half at their own school, during their stay. The unit's aim is to return pupils successfully to mainstream education, or a suitable special school placement, by the end of that time.

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 school with some outstanding features and no major weaknesses. It is very successful in achieving its main aim - returning pupils to mainstream education with a very good chance of re-settling to a positive educational experience. Parents who responded to the questionnaire unanimously praised the school's success with their children, using words such as 'fantastic' and 'wonderful'.

Pupils come into the school with personal skills that are well below general expectations for their age, and most are at imminent risk of being excluded permanently because of their poor attitudes and behaviour. Their behaviour and poor attendance in mainstream schools mean that their academic learning is also far behind their classmates. However, once in the PRU, pupils are helped very well to settle. They learn to get on well together, to work in teams and to control their own anger and behaviour. They develop more confidence and believe in themselves to a much greater extent. Pupils begin to take an interest in their lessons and become more and more motivated to learn. As a result of their good personal development, their academic progress also speeds up and pupils are soon making good progress. Although their academic skills and knowledge have not reached the same level as others of their age when they return to mainstream schools, they have progressed at a much better rate than they were doing previously and are much more prepared to learn.

Pupils improve so well because of the great encouragement they receive from teachers and other classroom support staff, and from the outstanding quality and range of support from other organisations. These include sporting links, community police, behaviour support staff and, most importantly, the 'partner' schools which pupils are expected to return to, or go to as a fresh start. Links with these are very positive and mutually supportive and contribute greatly to the school's success.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess pupils' social skills thoroughly on entry to the school. With support staff, they set clear personal targets for pupils, especially for their behaviour. These are discussed several times a day, with much praise for success and some sanctions for not doing as well as expected. The key to success lies in the consistency with which staff always apply the same rules to everyone and constantly reinforce what is expected. This results in behaviour that is outstandingly good and a 90% attendance rate that is good for a referral unit. Staff assess pupils' academic levels in English, mathematics and science. The amount and accuracy of this assessment information has improved over the past year. Teachers are beginning to use the information to plan their lessons to suit the academic needs of all pupils. Some lessons lack structure and pace, such as in literacy for Key Stage 2 pupils. In these, pupils work at their own pace, with little reference to personal or academic targets at the start or end of the lesson.

The curriculum is a good motivating force for pupils, with good coverage of basic skills and also a range of other subjects that adds a practical dimension to pupils' learning. Pupils are looked after well; they say they feel safe and learn how to be healthy and active.

Overall, leadership and management are good. The school's success rests on the headteacher's great commitment and clear view of how to achieve improvements. This is allied with her ability to build a strong staff team which has both good management skills as well as good skills with pupils. The management committee is supportive and fulfils its role soundly. The improvements

recommended at the time of the last inspection have all been achieved and the school has good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring more structure into some literacy lessons, with clear aims and achievements being communicated to pupils.
- Make more use of the academic assessment information that is available when planning pupils' work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter with skills that are on average two national curriculum levels below their expected level. They may have a reading age of four or five years below their actual age. Considering their previous achievements, pupils make good progress in English, science, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), as well as in personal, social and health education (PSHE). In reading, spelling and mathematics, almost all pupils improve by at least one national curriculum sub-level (a third of a full level) during their two terms in the unit. About a third of pupils improve by two sub-levels. This is a great improvement on their previous rate of progress and it matches or exceeds the progress made by pupils in mainstream schools. They do not fall further behind. Pupils also learn valuable practical skills in cookery, creative skills in art, and much about the world in geography and history. Although pupils do not catch up with others of their age, they develop a much more positive attitude to learning. They have greater self-esteem and can continue their learning successfully in a mainstream classroom. School records show that 100% of pupils return to mainstream or special education after two terms. In the past year, all but one were still managing successfully in their new school setting, when monitored after six months.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop greatly in their time at the unit. They build up a good sense of right and wrong through discussions and lessons. They learn to work alongside classmates in pairs and teams without any of the major disruptions they used to have. Pupils learn about cultures across the world, from India to North America, and learn satisfactorily about spiritual matters. Pupils develop a good awareness of how to live healthily through what they eat, what they avoid and how they exercise. They know how to be safe, and say that they would be comfortable in talking to staff, especially their key worker, if they have any personal difficulties. They enjoy school, particularly in practical lessons such as cookery lessons, or in active ones such as a game of basketball. Often in class they are enthused and interested, but sometimes they are quiet and work at a slow, uninspired pace. Their attendance improves tremendously in their time here. Often, their attendance has been poor in their mainstream schools, but in the unit it averages almost 90% for Key Stage 3 pupils and over 90% for Key Stage 2. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Although they can occasionally have a major setback, such things are rare. Generally, pupils are polite, attentive and hardworking. They help each other and younger pupils in lessons, assist with making toast and drinks at break and all pupils are active members of the school council. Outside the school community, pupils have also helped with litter-picking in the local neighbourhood. Their future economic well-being is given an outstanding boost through their learning of basic English, computing and mathematics skills. This is supplemented

by their rapidly developing awareness of the importance of teamwork, sticking to rules and observing good personal hygiene. They gain a positive view of what the future can hold for them, as well as the skills to make it possible.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching and learning ensure lessons are almost always purposeful and calm. Often, lessons start and end with reminders and checks about pupils' personal and behavioural targets. Generally, lessons are challenging and run at a good pace, with pupils being well motivated and willing to join in, answer questions and make sensible suggestions. Teachers make good use of a variety of equipment, including electronic white boards, to enliven their teaching. Teachers and support staff are confident with their pupils; they have friendly and positive relationships, but are always firm in insisting that pupils behave correctly. Pupils enjoy the atmosphere of lessons. They find security in the consistency of expectations and in the praise and support they are given. Although pupils work harder than they did in their previous schools, most admit they could try harder now as well. Sometimes, teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information in their planning. Some literacy lessons are simply a continuation lesson with pupils doing their own work at their own pace: there is no introductory activity or final review to provide context or reinforce what they have learned.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it focuses primarily on the school's aim, to prepare pupils for a successful return to mainstream education. With this in mind, the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are prioritised. They go hand in hand with personal and social development. For balance, the curriculum also includes a good range of other subjects that are practical, creative and active, such as art, cookery, physical education and geography. Many subjects are very well enriched by trips out of school and by staff of other organisations coming into school, from fire officers and community police to sports coaches and the behaviour support service. There are good opportunities for counselling and play therapy in school, particularly using a 'sound and light' room. Teachers are particularly good at adapting the curriculum to the needs of all of its pupils regardless of their interests, gender, age or learning ability. This can be for individuals, or can vary from term to term as the nature of different groups changes. There are no opportunities for out-of-hours clubs and activities because of the transport situation and the half-day sessions that pupils attend.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are strong and up to date. Pupils have a good induction to the school and are exceptionally well prepared for their return to mainstream education when the time comes. Pupils' personal development is assessed very well when they are admitted to the school and throughout their time here. Much time and effort goes into monitoring and ensuring pupils' well-being and their readiness to go back to mainstream schools. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is very well assessed and often used as a guide in teachers' planning, but this is not done sufficiently frequently or consistently in other subjects. Pupils

are supported very well in their learning and behaviour by teachers and support assistants who give much individual help to pupils. They are greatly helped by many outside agencies such as education support, health and social services.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head teacher leads extremely well. She has created a very committed staff team who manage their responsibilities well. Good improvements have been made in all the areas noted in the previous inspection, including the teaching of ICT and mathematics and the deployment of support staff. Accurate self evaluation is a central part of school development, with rigorous and self-challenging analysis of data and other information. Clear targets are set for improvements. Well-supported initiatives, such as staff training, new computers and accurate assessment systems, are put into place to ensure their success. The aim of including all pupils in all activities is a living, daily reality, and is a key factor in the very high proportion of successful re-admissions to mainstream schools. The outstanding range and quality of partnerships with other schools and agencies contributes greatly to the school's success. The local authority fulfils its responsibilities well: officers assist in the self evaluation process; many links with other schools are well supported; and the unit's finances are well managed. As part of the behaviour support service, the unit benefits from clear advice and support from the local authority. The management committee is supportive and fulfils its role in having overview of the school soundly.

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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	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	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	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?	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	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	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

22 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirk Hallam PRU, Derbyshire DE7 4HD

I expect you remember when I visited your school recently. Thank you for talking with me and showing me your work.

I found that you go to a good school where you are making good progress in lessons, are learning valuable personal and social skills, and are learning to believe in yourselves. You behave extremely well nearly all the time, and work well together. Some of you told me that you really want to do well here, and are finding that you will be able to return to your mainstream schools, or to new ones, without trouble. Mostly, you attend well and enjoy your lessons, especially the ones where you are active, such as P.E., or that are practical, like cookery and ICT. The school has organised a good selection of subjects for you. Many different people come into school to help, and you can go on trips to interesting places.

You get on well with your teachers and their assistants. They prepare lessons that are often very well suited to your needs, and give you a great deal of help when you are struggling with your work. In most lessons you are enthusiastic and work well, although sometimes you are allowed to work at your own, quite slow, pace. In the same way that teachers discuss your personal targets, I am asking them to talk with you at the start of lessons about the aims in that particular subject, and what you have learned at the end. When they are planning their lessons, I would like your teachers to make more use of the information they gather about your progress.

Mrs Raynor and the other staff are very good at organising many things to help you to get back to mainstream schools successfully.

With my best wishes for the future

Trevor Watts

Lead inspector