

Parkwood

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133571
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	316153
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	21
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Ms Sarah Irving
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Sulby Avenue Pallister Park Middlesbrough TS3 8RD
Telephone number	01642 513 180
Fax number	01642 513 188

Age group	11-14
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Inspection number	316153

© 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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Parkwood is one of four pupil referral units, under the direction of the Complementary Education Service, serving Middlesbrough. It caters for students in Years 7 to 9 who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Students enter the unit throughout the year. The majority of students do not return to mainstream education. There are more boys than girls, by a ratio of about four to one, and all are White British. The unit moved into purpose-built premises in September 2006, when a new headteacher was also appointed. The unit holds the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Parkwood is a satisfactory and improving pupil referral unit (PRU). The PRU helps to turn around the lives of many students by making them more confident of their own abilities, and by giving them the opportunity to achieve success. There are good links with parents and other partners, that contribute to the individual care provided for students.

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are well below average because of the difficulties students have had with learning over a long period of time, coupled with below average attendance. The range of students' capabilities is wide and their history of learning in each subject is varied.

The curriculum is satisfactory. However, planning work to match students' needs is not as effective as it should be because there is too little information about their previous learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers are knowledgeable and have good relationships with their students. The good teaching captures the students' interest by providing challenging practical work which lets students learn for themselves. Other lessons do not give them enough opportunity to explore and develop their curiosity. A common weakness is for teachers to talk too much, which reduces opportunities for students to become involved in lessons. The initiative to give more emphasis to developing students' literacy skills is showing promise, but its influence on their achievement is not yet measurable.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff know students well and quickly gain their confidence. The individual care and personal support given to students is very effective, and helps most students to develop into responsible and calm young people. Students behave well. They understand that their improved attitudes to learning and the better self-control are important in improving their life chances. Students' personal development is satisfactory and they feel safe at the unit. A majority show they enjoy being there by attending regularly. However, attendance is below the national average because too many students do not attend regularly enough. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Students' progress is tracked and targets are set for them, but this information is not used routinely enough to make sure that all students are given work that challenges and extends their learning.

Leadership and management, including the work of the management board, are satisfactory. Leaders have a good understanding of the unit's strengths and areas for improvement. They have introduced satisfactory systems that ensure that the unit runs efficiently. They are well founded - for example, assessment systems are accurate and reliable - but the unit is not making full use of their potential for boosting achievement. In addition, leaders do not monitor closely enough the impact of initiatives on students' learning. Areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been largely addressed, and the unit has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of information about the students' previous learning so that planning effectively meets the needs of all students.
- Strengthen the procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of new initiatives on students' learning.
- Improve attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards on entry are well below average, because students have had significant difficulties with previous learning. Work seen in lessons, confirmed in the unit's records and in students' books, shows that most students make satisfactory progress. Students often make good progress in mathematics, art, information and communication technology (ICT) and in personal, social, health and citizenship education. However, for a minority their progress is held back because they do not attend frequently enough. Results in the national tests in Year 9 in 2007 were well below average in science and mathematics, and low in English. Progress for these students was satisfactory when considering their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students make satisfactory progress in their personal development, including in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspector agrees with students who say that behaviour is good at the unit because they learn to have better self-control. The students say they are more confident as learners and more mature because the unit helps them to deal more easily with the pressures and expectations of school life. One statement typifies the views of many students, 'this place helps us cope with rules and that sort of stuff'. Consistently good relationships between staff and students help students to be at ease with themselves and with those around them. They make good progress in accepting responsibility for their own actions, choices, and behaviour. With the exception of the significant minority who do not attend regularly, many take big strides towards taking control of their lives. They know of the need to make the right decisions to stay safe, and of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, but not all students always make suitable choices. Specific help is available in dealing with damaging habits and, over their time at the unit, most students develop healthier lifestyles. The change in their attitude towards learning makes a significant contribution to the satisfactory preparation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Adults establish strong and positive relationships in the classroom and their management of students is good. Consequently, behaviour in the classroom is good and most students work hard. The increasing attention to developing basic skills is appropriate, and so students make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. Students especially like doing practical work. For instance, students made good quality meals in life skills lessons, where they enjoyed combining different ingredients. Good marking tells students clearly what they need to do to improve. Some lessons are not as brisk as they could be because students are not given sufficient opportunities to work and learn independently. In other lessons, work is not always matched well enough to students' needs.

This is often because teachers make insufficient use of information on students' prior learning. Consequently, the students are not always challenged enough in their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There are satisfactory opportunities to develop students' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is developing well. For instance, more opportunities are being created to learn about personal budgeting and enterprise and, therefore, students' independence is improving. An increasing amount of learning is based on practical cross-curricular themes. For example, students work well linking art, ICT and descriptive writing to demonstrate how they feel about the iniquities of the slave trade. This helps raise students' awareness of the cultures, beliefs and ceremonies of people from different ethnic groups. A good range of extra-curricular activities and visits supports learning well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The unit takes its responsibilities for safeguarding students very seriously. All the necessary requirements are in place. Because the staff know their students well, the support they give is well directed to where it is most needed. This helps the unit successfully raise students' confidence and self-esteem. Students feel well supported and say that relationships with staff are good. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to learning because they know students' needs well. Good links with local authority specialists are helping the unit to meet the additional needs of students well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Systems for assessing how well students are making progress are accurate. However, the information they provide is not used to best effect in planning teaching to meet the needs of all students.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. There is recognition of the need to raise standards and improve achievement. Leaders are working to improve the quality provision and benefit greatly from strong teamwork amongst staff. In the four terms the unit has been open, a caring and supportive learning environment has been established, underpinned by valuing every student. The unit gives satisfactory value for money. The teacher in charge has a good understanding of the strengths of the unit and what needs to be done to improve provision. A major strength of the PRU is the ability of the staff to manage students' behaviour and counsel them accordingly. The ability to focus on issues relating to teaching and learning is less secure. The monitoring of teaching, though accurate, does not take place with enough regularity to lead to improvements in the quality of learning. In addition, leaders do not monitor closely enough the impact of initiatives on students' learning. The unit's development plan is well organised but lacks sharpness in the detail of how things will be achieved. The management board gives good support and is increasingly offering effective challenge to the work of the unit.

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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

16 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Parkwood, Middlesbrough, TS3 8QU

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your PRU recently. I enjoyed my short time with you and learned a great deal about the PRU.

I found that Parkwood is a satisfactory and improving PRU, and it is helping you to make satisfactory progress in your education. Here are some of the more important things I noted.

- Most of you make good progress in improving your personal development and your behaviour. I was particularly impressed with your obvious pride in the building, and in your work displayed so prominently for all to appreciate.
- The care and personal support you receive from all staff are good. You get on well with them, and appreciate the help they give you.
- The links between the unit, your parents or carers, and workers from other organisations are strong. They are helping you to become more confident.
- Teaching is satisfactory and some of your lessons are good, especially when the work is practical and when the teachers encourage you to think, and to be responsible, for yourselves.

There are also some things which could be improved.

- For some of you, attendance at the PRU is not good enough. If you do not attend, you will not learn, despite the good things that the PRU is already doing.
- Some teaching does not build closely enough on what you already know and can do, or challenge you strongly enough to work independently.
- The PRU's leaders do not keep a close enough check how effectively the unit is helping you to make progress.

Thank you once again for your welcome. I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector