

Wodensborough Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135254
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	319623
Inspection date	17 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Charles Hackett

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	19
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Graham Angell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hydes Road West Midlands Wednesbury WS10 0DR
Telephone number	01215 024611
Fax number	01215 560134

Age group	11-14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wodensborough pupil referral unit (PRU) is part of a collaboration that includes the six secondary schools in the north of the authority. The PRU is co-located on a site with one of these secondary schools. It opened in September 2007 and has therefore only been operating for just over two terms at the time of the inspection. The PRU takes pupils full time who have been permanently excluded from a school and on a part-time basis pupils who are at risk of exclusion. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, many of which have high levels of disadvantage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wodensborough has quickly become a good PRU and an important provision for the local authority in supporting pupils at risk of failing to access secondary education. The PRU is very clear about its purpose and has set up an effective organisation to achieve this. This has resulted in almost all pupils admitted after being permanently excluded from a mainstream setting being able to return to a new secondary school. In addition, those pupils who attend on a part-time basis are being well supported to help them keep their school places. To have achieved the success it has in its first year is testament to good leadership and management. The headteacher has been at the forefront of this in establishing a staff team with a shared vision for the PRU to be effective. The management committee has only recently been established but has a full understanding of the need to develop its role in supporting and monitoring the work of the PRU.

Staff have a shared vision for the PRU's development and this means that as soon as pupils start at the PRU they know that staff want them to achieve and be able to return to a mainstream setting. Good links with other agencies contribute to the success of this, although the PRU recognises it could be even more effective if it had opportunities to continue to work with pupils while they settle into their new schools.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is characterised by high expectations for pupils to work and behave well in lessons. Aspirations for achievement are high; this is linked to good assessment, and monitoring arrangements to ensure staff are aware of the progress pupils are making. The curriculum is good, not just because it covers all the subjects expected of a PRU, but because there is a clear emphasis on providing pupils with opportunities to learn how to get on with each other and be better prepared to cope with the demands placed upon them by a mainstream setting.

Good care, support and guidance are giving pupils increased confidence and bringing about improvements to their achievements both academically and in relation to their personal development. Excellent displays of pupils' work throughout the unit further enhance pupils' improved self-esteem. Weekly monitoring of pupils' performance means that interventions, when required, are promptly initiated. All of this results in pupils' achievement and their personal development being good.

Understandably, the PRU has yet to formally evaluate its effectiveness over time, although it has collated good data on individual pupils' achievements, attendance and behaviour. This, in turn, has been well used to set pupils individual challenging targets. This means it is now in a position to set challenging whole-school targets for its second year and onwards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement plans to develop the role of the management committee to monitor the work of the PRU.
- Formally evaluate performance during the first year to inform future planning and the process of setting targets.
- Seek to provide opportunities for PRU staff to continue to support pupils when they return to a mainstream setting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Because of previous difficulties pupils have had accessing education, understandably, standards are below average. Achievement, though, is good. Their good progress is demonstrated by almost all making good improvement in their reading. Monitoring records also show that most pupils make good progress in numeracy and information and communication technology. This good progress is demonstrated by the ability of pupils to return or remain in a secondary school, which is a significant achievement, given their previous difficulties. Pupils' achievements are recorded to show their progress and challenging individual targets are a strong motivating factor.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the increased awareness pupils have of the world around them. The ability of many to cope with their first ever visit to a theatre and the participation of pupils in the many activities off site are examples of this.

Attendance was often an issue for many pupils prior to joining the PRU. Records for almost all pupils show that this is no longer the situation and attendance is now good. They say that they are enjoying being in the PRU and feel safe. Pupils' improved behaviour has a positive impact on their learning and therefore on their chances of being successful back in a mainstream setting. Their future economic well-being is enhanced well by the improvements they make in literacy and numeracy and their increased ability to access the support of other agencies, such as the youth offending team and Connexions. Pupils state that they enjoy opportunities to make their views known through joining panels, such as one recently set up to plan the application for a Healthy Schools award. Pupils display a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and participate enthusiastically in physical education activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The PRU has quickly established a positive learning environment where pupils know they are expected to work and behave appropriately in lessons. Classrooms are purposeful with excellent displays of pupils' work. Typically, lessons are well planned with a focus on pupils staying on task and recognising the progress they are making. Work undertaken is based on the knowledge staff have gained on pupils through assessments made when they first join the PRU. Support is positive even if it means highlighting to a pupil that they have not achieved as well as they should. A written comment in a pupil's book, 'Disappointing because I know you can do better', is an example of this approach. Teachers and support staff are developing their working practices to ensure that support staff are always fully aware of how they can best support each pupil.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been well thought out to ensure that pupils are well prepared to return to mainstream. Learning opportunities are available in all the subjects expected in a PRU and a

good emphasis is placed on helping pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through participation in physical education and work in personal, social and health education. Good links are being developed with each secondary school to balance the work part-time pupils do in the PRU with lessons back in mainstream. Providing intensive support to help improve pupils' reading has been a key focus in this first year and, whilst this has resulted in almost all pupils making good progress, more work is planned to improve this further.

A key feature of the activities each day is the opportunities created for pupils to learn to relate appropriately with each other. For example, at breaks, staff successfully support pupils to join in board games and, as a result, they develop a good understanding of taking turns and accepting defeat, as well as success.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils are safe both at the PRU and on activities off site. Good relationships have been established with the partnership secondary schools and the local authority recognises that this is having a very positive impact on the ability of many pupils to remain in education. However, once a pupil has returned to a secondary school, the PRU is not in a position to consolidate its work by continuing to support the pupil settle back into the routines of a mainstream setting.

Guidance for both academic and personal development is regular and effective. A weekly check on each pupil's performance is supported by a regularly updated colour-coded list of pupils' progress. This shows those in the green who are becoming ready to return full time to mainstream and those in the red where further intervention is needed to get them back on track. Weekly challenging individual targets are set and displayed and all staff work well with pupils in their efforts to achieve these. A good range of specialist staff, including a mentor and counsellor, provide pupils with additional support to deal with personal issues that may arise.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Undoubtedly, the headteacher has played a key role in the rapid development of the PRU's effectiveness. This rapid development demonstrates the PRU's good capacity to improve further. His vision for the role of the PRU has helped it achieve its aim of being a vital part of the local authority's provision for pupils in danger of failing to access education. His high quality leadership has created a strong team ethos within the unit, which is ensuring consistency in working practices, which, in turn, is bringing about the many positive outcomes there are for pupils. It is obviously early days for the PRU to have fully in place a clear process to formally evaluate its effectiveness over time. Nevertheless, self-evaluation has developed well within a very short time period, with key priorities identified and acted upon, including establishing close links with partner schools. A good start has been made in the collation and analysis of data on pupils' achievements and in the introduction of weekly targets for each pupil.

An appropriate management committee has been established with good representation from the partnership schools. Plans have been made for the committee to monitor the PRU and these need to be implemented to ensure that the committee fully meets its expected brief.

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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	NA
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	3
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	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	1
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	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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited the PRU recently. I enjoyed meeting so many of you, even if I did lose at dominoes when I played with some of you at break!

I think your PRU is good because it is helping so many of you successfully go back to a secondary school full time. You are making good progress with your work, especially with your reading. You are also learning how to behave appropriately, which means that you will be able to better cope with the demands of being in a secondary school environment. The quality of the work that staff do is good. There is a strong sense of purpose amongst all of them to do the best they can for you. They have high expectations for you to achieve and you can do your bit by making sure you keep accepting their support. The staff are very well led by the headteacher, who is ensuring that the PRU is able to play an important role in supporting so many of you.

The PRU is ambitious to be even more effective and to achieve this it should:

- implement plans to develop the role of the management committee to monitor its work
- look at how well it has done in its first year to help plan for the future
- seek to provide opportunities for the staff to continue to support you when you return to a secondary school.

I hope this is helpful to you and that you all keep on working hard and are successful in returning full time to a secondary school.



18 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wodensborough PRU, Wednesbury, WS10 0DR

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Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett
Lead inspector