

The Wycombe Grange Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 110205 |
| Local Authority | Buckinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 325108 |
| Inspection date | 10 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | William Geoffrey Robson |

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 (total) | 93 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Mr George Lloyd |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 October 2005 |
| School address | 56 Amersham Hill High Wycombe HP13 6PQ |
| Telephone number | 01494 445 815 |
| Fax number | 01494 465 860 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 11–16 |
| Inspection date | 10 November 2008 |
| Inspection number | 325108 |

© 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.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the pupil referral unit (PRU) and investigated the following issues: how well students achieve; students' personal development and well-being, as shown by their attendance, behaviour, attitudes and success in reintegrating into mainstream education; and the rigour of the PRU's procedures for monitoring and self-evaluation.

Inspectors visited lessons, examined the school's documentation, talked to staff, students, parents and the chair of the management committee. They also considered questionnaire returns from parents.

Other aspects of the PRU's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the PRU's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The Wycombe Grange is a complex pupil referral unit on two main sites. The Wycombe Grange provides for students aged 14-16 with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and Chess Valley Grange in Chesham provides for those aged 11-14. Some of these students have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools, but the majority have part time placements to reduce the risk of exclusion. In addition, the Wycombe Hospital Schoolroom provides educational support for children who have been admitted to hospital or attend as day patients. A home tuition service provides home tuition for students who are unable to attend school because of medical needs. The PRU also provides an outreach service that helps schools to avoid excluding students and supports students as they return from the PRU to mainstream schools. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and about two thirds are boys.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Wycombe Grange PRU provides an outstanding education for its students and excellent support for mainstream schools in the region. This is rightly recognised by parents and carers, and by teachers in local schools. One headteacher wrote, 'The PRU's outreach support is of the highest quality.' Another commented, 'The PRU makes a huge difference to the lives of some of the most challenging pupils in the area.'

This success stems from the clear sense of purpose and commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders, backed up by an equally dedicated team of teachers and support staff. Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the last inspection the staff have not been complacent. They have responded very effectively to an increasing number of requests for support from secondary schools in the county. Despite a substantial increase in student numbers, the PRU has maintained the high quality of its support. The outreach service is particularly effective in helping students to move from one school to another when they have been excluded because of unacceptable behaviour. Nearly all such moves lead to the successful reintegration of students, because of the sensitive support that outreach staff provide. Similarly, the PRU's data shows that the risk of students being excluded from mainstream schools is substantially reduced once outreach staff have supported them. The PRU has also expanded its curriculum since the last inspection, especially for students aged 14 to 16, by establishing excellent links with a wider range of training providers. Senior staff monitor the standard of this provision carefully. As a result, students enjoy improved opportunities for work-related learning, although the PRU still maintains an appropriate emphasis on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills. Students therefore develop the skills they need for their future economic well-being extremely well. The links with local colleges and training providers also ensure that the large majority of Year 11 students move from the PRU to further education, employment or training. This track record of well-planned developments is a sign that the PRU has excellent capacity for further improvement. Self-evaluation is good, although criteria for evaluating the success of new initiatives lack precision. The PRU has ample data. However, it does not analyse this as rigorously as it could, to identify ways in which it might improve its work even further.

Teachers on all sites establish excellent relationships with students. They understand individual students' needs and difficulties extremely well, as they discuss their progress in detail at the end of each day. Students clearly trust their teachers and feel safe. One student explained that, 'There's no bullying and we all get on with each other.' As a result, they quickly grow in confidence. Students recognise that teachers and staff are working with them, to help them to be more successful. Those with more severe difficulties benefit from the PRU's access to an exceptionally wide range of external support agencies. All staff work closely together, to enable students to gain an insight into their difficulties and begin to deal with them. They involve students fully in the process. For example, students at Chess Valley Grange are helped to assess their own behaviour, attitudes, ability to work with others and self-control. They can then recognise the progress they are making. One parent paid tribute to the unit's success and wrote, 'The school has successfully rebuilt our daughter's self-confidence and enthusiasm; she has found her sense of direction for the future.' Teachers have high expectations of students, both as regards their work and behaviour. Along with close supervision at all times, this results in impressive improvements in the behaviour of students who are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. On the day of the inspection, behaviour was exemplary at both Wycombe Grange and Chess Valley Grange. In lessons, students listen attentively and contribute to

discussion with increasing confidence. They appreciate the fact that they are rarely distracted from their work by unruly behaviour. Breakfast, breaks and lunchtimes are civilised occasions, when staff and students enjoy healthy meals and snacks together. Students develop healthy lifestyles and many follow a health and fitness programme in the PRU. Their renewed enjoyment of education is shown by their greatly improved attendance, as well as their willing participation in lessons.

Students' greatly improved attitudes, attendance and behaviour soon lead to significant improvements in their work. They also benefit from outstanding teaching. A key reason for this lies in teachers' use of assessment to pitch work at the right level. Teachers set challenging work and share learning and behaviour objectives with students. Occasionally, the learning objectives lack precision, but generally students are well aware of what they need to achieve and how well they are doing. Close monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff has correctly identified other strengths, such as teachers' excellent subject knowledge and questioning skills. Teachers plan lessons extremely well, to provide a range of activities that maintain students interest and pace of learning, even during individual tuition. Students who attend the PRU because of behavioural, social or emotional difficulties have experienced disruption to their education in mainstream schools. Many therefore enter with well below average standards. Younger students at Chess Valley Grange make very good progress with literacy and numeracy skills during the comparatively short time that they attend before returning to mainstream schools. At Wycombe Grange, most students who enter from the end of Year 10 onwards continue at the PRU to the end of Year 11. The large majority improve by the equivalent of at least one National Curriculum level in English and mathematics. Many improve by three levels. As a result, all students who attend regularly gain at least one GCSE pass. In 2008, over a third of GCSE examination entries resulted in grades A* to C. This represents outstanding achievement for students who initially appear unlikely to gain any nationally recognised qualifications. Students with medical needs, who receive home tuition, also make excellent progress. Those who are taught in the hospital schoolroom because of more severe illness keep up with school work and maintain progress, despite their stay in hospital.

The Wycombe Grange may be a complex PRU in the sense that it provides a wide range of support for students with differing needs in different settings. However, all staff have a clear, shared vision – students, parents and professionals working in partnership. The result is outstanding provision, leading to outstanding personal development and achievement for students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use available data to evaluate more rigorously the success of the PRU's work.

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? | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

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? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 1 |
| 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**

20 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Wycombe Grange Pupil Referral Unit, High Wycombe, HP13 6PQ

I really enjoyed visiting your PRU recently and would like to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. I enjoyed seeing you working hard in lessons and was impressed with your positive attitudes to work. You obviously enjoy your time in the PRU. You told me that you get on extremely well with your teachers and I could see that during lessons and break times. My main finding is that the PRU provides you with an outstanding quality of education.

Staff really care for you. They provide excellent support that helps many of you to return successfully to your mainstream schools. They provide lots of interesting activities for you and the teaching is outstanding. As a result, you become much more confident and improve your attendance and behaviour a lot. Those of you who are going through a difficult time in your lives make great progress in overcoming your difficulties. You also begin to make excellent progress with your work. For older students, your teachers help you to get much better qualifications than you expected before you came to the PRU. You also have an excellent headteacher and deputy headteachers, who are really good leaders and managers.

To make the PRU even better I have made the following suggestion.

- Staff should use all of the information that they have to work out exactly how well the PRU is doing and see if it can do even better.

You can also help the PRU to keep up its outstanding work by continuing to work hard, behave well and make the most of the excellent opportunities that the PRU provides for you.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

William Robson

Lead Inspector