

Ipsley Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130987
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	328540
Inspection date	13 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Jeffery Plumb

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	7–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	8
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Wendy Williams
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2006
School address	Longdon Close Woodrow South Woodrow Redditch B98 7UZ
Telephone number	01527 514068
Fax number	01527 529820

Age group	7–12
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the progress pupils make in literacy and numeracy; the use of assessment data to track pupils' progress and set targets to raise their academic achievement; the success of raising pupils' spiritual awareness; the centre's strategy to promote community cohesion; and whether or not there has been sufficient improvement since the last inspection. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and documents. Other aspects of the centre's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the centre'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 pupil referral unit (PRU) caters for pupils in Years 1 to 6 excluded from their first, primary and middle schools in the north eastern region of Worcestershire, including the towns of Redditch and Bromsgrove, and those at risk of exclusion. At the time of the inspection, all the pupils were boys and all were White British. Three at risk of exclusion pupils are dual registered. These pupils spend part of their week in the centre and part of their week in their other schools. Five pupils are permanently excluded and spend all of their time in the centre until they are gradually reintegrated to mainstream schools or are placed in other suitable provision. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs and are waiting to be placed in suitable provision to best meet their needs. Occasionally, the centre supports pupils on home tuition. Most of the pupils are successfully reintegrated to mainstream schools within a 6 to 12 week period, but a few remain for a longer period and go on to the local authority's Key Stage 3 PRU or to special schools both within and outside the county.

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 centre. Pupils enter it with significant gaps in their education. Often they are switched off from learning. Good assessment during their induction week shapes good individual plans for them. These plans are used effectively to equip the vast majority of pupils with the skills required to be quickly reintegrated back into mainstream schools and be successful. Effective therapeutic programmes support pupils in overcoming their emotional barriers to learning. Alongside these, tailored academic programmes, based on pupils' identified literacy and numeracy needs, accelerate their learning.

Most pupils who had poor attendance in their previous schools attend regularly, because they enjoy learning for the first time. Their behaviour improves very significantly as they learn to manage their outbursts of anger. Parents are overwhelmingly delighted with what the centre achieves for their children. One parent said, 'Ipsley PRU has become a beacon of hope in a sea of despair for our family. It provided immense support and understanding when my child was excluded from school.' Overall, attendance and behaviour are good and some pupils achieve 100% attendance. On rare occasions, pupils with statements for very complex emotional and behavioural needs are placed in the centre whilst the local authority seeks suitable provision for them. Occasionally, despite the good work of the centre, the attendance of these pupils deteriorates because of their severe and worsening emotional and mental health needs and this has an adverse impact on their achievement. Since the last inspection, the management committee has persistently raised this issue with the local authority and its action has contributed to a review of the provision in the county for primary aged children with very complex emotional, behavioural and mental health needs. The outcome of this review is imminent.

Academic achievement is good for the majority of pupils. All short-stay pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). However, their attainment overall remains below average, because of the significant gaps they have in their learning on entry to the centre. Good teaching and learning contribute to the good progress the majority of pupils make. Relationships are excellent and a learning culture exists where pupils feel emotionally safe to take risks and are not embarrassed when they make mistakes. They soak up learning like a sponge through challenging and fun activities matched well to their needs. They benefit from the one-to-one attention they receive in lessons. In a mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress in naming shapes and identifying their properties. The pupils' confidence in these mathematical skills improves as a result of the encouragement and support they receive. Assessment on entry is used effectively to set pupils clear behavioural targets and these are regularly and frequently reviewed over time. Pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills are also meticulously assessed on entry and information from this exercise is used well to set them catch-up programmes implemented daily at the end of their journal time and this contributes to their good gains in literacy and numeracy. However, there is no robust system to track pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics over time and pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting and reviewing their academic targets. For example, a pupil who, some weeks after being in the centre, says, 'I need to be better with my three-times table', does not have specific targets to support him with this.

The curriculum strikes a good balance between meeting pupils' emotional needs and raising their academic achievement. Art therapy using the sand tray gives pupils good opportunities to open up about their feelings and, as they do so, a burden for many of them is lifted and they gain confidence in themselves and their learning accelerates. The partnership between

school staff and the Child Adolescent and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is outstanding and results in pupils receiving consistent therapy support which greatly benefits them. Good use is made of off-site resources to promote pupils' physical fitness and pupils greatly enjoy their regular swimming sessions. They are encouraged to eat healthy snacks and do so willingly because they recognise they are good for their fitness. Throughout all planned activities there is a focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and they learn to manage money through enjoyable play activities.

The care, guidance and support the centre provides are good, as is pupils' personal development. The centre successfully tackles the deep-rooted unhappiness many pupils experience and builds them up to take responsibility for their actions and learning. Child protection procedures meet government guidelines and risk assessments, including that of pupils' challenging behaviours, are thorough and detailed. Pupils feel emotionally and physically safe. They have many opportunities to express how they feel and make a valuable contribution to effect change which benefits their educational provision. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Through development of advocacy skills and learning the significance of the principles of equal opportunities, pupils begin to make a valuable contribution to support others through challenging discrimination, abuses and injustice. Alongside claiming their own human rights they begin to recognise that they have responsibilities for others. Their awareness of cultural diversity is a strong feature.

Senior leaders and all staff share a clear vision which focuses on putting young and vulnerable pupils back on the rails by engaging them with learning and convincing them that they can succeed in life. Self-evaluation is thorough and detailed and used effectively to inform action planning to raise achievement. Systems are in place for monitoring the centre's performance, but they are at too early a stage of implementation to fully evaluate their impact. Due to significant staff turbulence since the last inspection, particularly of the leadership of the centre, some improvements have been slowed. There is, though, evidence that certain actions are having a positive impact. For example, the planning to improve ICT has significantly benefited the pupils. In addition the increased involvement of the management committee in questioning the need to improve the referral process has contributed to the local authority conducting a review of the provision for young pupils with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. The leadership has thought imaginatively about what community cohesion means in the context of the provision it offers. It is largely successful in enabling disaffected and unhappy pupils to blossom and join in activities with their peers in mainstream settings. A significant strength is the centre's outreach work in training and supporting mainstream teachers to become more skilful in managing challenging behaviour and reducing the number of exclusions throughout the north eastern part of the county. Improvements since the last inspection, in difficult circumstances, are good as is the capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress in English and mathematics and engage pupils directly in the setting of their academic targets to raise their achievement.
- Work in partnership with the local authority to improve the attendance of all pupils, particularly the attendance of pupils with statements for complex emotional and behavioural difficulties, in order to raise their achievement.

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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	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	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 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

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	3
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?	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	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

16 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ipsley Pupil Referral Unit, Redditch B98 7UZ

Thank you for the welcome you gave me as a visitor to your centre. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you. Your interest in the activities you were doing on the day of my visit and your enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning impressed me. Your behaviour is good and the majority of you achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and development of mathematical skills. You make good gains in confidence and self-esteem while in the centre because of the high quality therapy and support you receive. Your behaviour is good and it is very good to know that some of you are almost ready to return to mainstream schools full time and that you are determined to succeed in those schools.

Your centre is good. You are taught well and helped to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle. You showed me that you take responsibility to control your own outbursts of anger and have a responsible and caring attitude towards each other. Your head of centre and staff lead and manage your centre well.

I have asked your staff to make sure that the improvements you make in English and mathematics are carefully measured while you are supported by the centre and that you are more involved in setting your targets to raise your academic achievement. I have also asked your staff to improve the attendance of the few of you who do not attend as regularly as you ought so that you improve in confidence, engage with learning, and do much better in your work.

Thank you so much for showing me just how sensible, mature and caring you are and I ask you to help your dedicated and hard working staff to help make your centre an even better place for you to attend.

Yours faithfully

Jeffery Plumb Lead inspector