

St Matthias Park Pupil Referral Service

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	133160
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	328685
Inspection date	12 January 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	31
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Valerie Neal
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2006
School address	Stafford Road St Werburghs Bristol BS2 9UR
Telephone number	0117 9031320
Fax number	0117 9031321

Age group	11–16
Inspection date	12 January 2009
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Matthias's Park is one of four pupil referral units (PRUs) in the City of Bristol. The PRU is housed within a converted Victorian school building near to the city centre and works with pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Due to the gaps pupils have in their education as a result of truancy from lessons and frequent absence when on roll in their mainstream schools, attainment on entry for the majority is well below average. Numbers vary considerably during the academic year and at the time of the inspection there were 58 pupils on roll. The ethnic and gender mix varies at different times during the year as does the number of pupils in public care. No pupils were at an early stage of learning to speak English when the inspection was carried out. At the time of the inspection girls outnumbered boys.

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 PRU. The vast majority of pupils are switched off by learning and hate school when they enter. The hard working staff team, who 'think outside of the box', have put in place a relevant curriculum which encourages the vast majority of pupils to want to learn and succeed. The senior leadership team works ceaselessly to remove the barriers pupils have to learning. Pupils say, 'We want to learn because our teachers are interested in us and this place gives us a structure in our lives.' The majority of pupils improve their behaviour and attendance and as a consequence achieve well, but there is a small number whose attendance remains poor. This poor attendance adversely affects their achievement.

Those pupils who attend regularly gain in self-esteem and confidence and take off with their learning. Many make rapid gains in reading, writing and in their development of mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Achievement in skills such as budget management and preparing and cooking a nutritious meal is also good. Every opportunity possible is taken to equip pupils to cope as independent and responsible young people. They are supported well in managing their outbursts of anger. They are taken to Ikea as part of an interesting project on designing an imaginary flat they would like to live in when they are older. Teaching is good. Teachers have a good grasp of what makes the pupils tick and plan activities which challenge them and extend their learning. However, teachers do not consistently encourage pupils to assess their own work and think carefully enough for themselves about exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Innovative and creative strategies promote their health, fitness and safety outstandingly well. Excellent use is made of the outdoors to support pupils in working collaboratively and in developing the skills and attitudes required to become responsible citizens. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well supported with any sexual-health or drugs issues they have. Within the community they access a relevant range of exciting courses such as construction and mixing music in a studio. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is a role model to her dedicated and hard working staff team. Self-evaluation is a strong feature and planning for improvement is effective. Careful thought has gone into what is meant by community cohesion in the context of this setting and a policy to promote it is in place. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, as is the capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance in order to accelerate learning and raise achievement for all pupils.
- Increase the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work and in suggesting ways in which they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Those pupils who attend regularly make good progress in English, mathematics and science, but standards remain below the national average because of the significant gaps the majority of pupils have in their education on entry. Pupils make rapid gains in reading and this removes barriers to learning for them. In 2008 the majority of Year 11 pupils who attended regularly over a sixth-month period gained very creditable GCSE passes, including C grades in mathematics and science. The majority also received accreditation for important

life skills and competencies such as budget management. However, a small hard core of students underachieve because of their poor attendance. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Minority ethnic students achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say, 'We enjoy learning because our lessons are interesting.' The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to learning. This is reflected in their significantly improved attendance compared to their previous schools. Attendance is satisfactory, but there is still a small hard core of pupils with poor attendance. Behaviour is good and pupils say, 'There is no rubbish like racists or bullying here.' This is reflected in the very significant decline of serious instances of poor behaviour over the past year and the falling exclusion rate. The pupils voice their views and contribute to bringing about improvements. For example, the school council representatives persuaded Bristol City Council that it would be efficient and wise for nutritious dinners to be cooked on the premises for pupils. Pupils are actively involved in organising fund raising events for charities to support those less fortunate than themselves. The PRU very successfully promotes pupils' interest in and commitment to adopting a healthy and safe lifestyle. There is a good balance between developing pupils' physical fitness through an exciting programme of outdoor activities and their emotional health through counselling. They learn to manage a budget, and how to open a bank account. Through a relevant project, they plan and furnish a flat. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching sparkles because teachers have an enthusiasm for the subjects they teach and enable the pupils to access learning through activities which focus on their individual learning styles. Work is matched to the needs of each pupil in the class and so accelerates pupils' learning. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, pupils' engagement with problem-solving activities was excellent. Each pupil focused on a different problem to enhance their learning and so all in the class made good progress in the mathematical concepts they needed to grasp. Skilful behaviour management and effective teamwork between learning support assistants and teachers keep pupils on task. However, not all teachers consistently involve pupils in assessing their own performance and gathering thoughts from the pupils themselves as to how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Flexibly planned and relevant, the curriculum is tailored to pupils' needs. It motivates them to learn and raises their achievement. There is a strong focus on developing competencies such as preparing to live independently on a tight budget alongside providing a wide range of GCSE course opportunities. The emphasis on literacy and numeracy removes the barriers to learning many pupils have on entry. As they succeed with reading and mathematical skills the majority of pupils become enthusiastic learners. Very good use is made of the outdoor environment for exciting activities such as rock climbing and mountain biking. These activities successfully build pupils' collaborative team-working skills and promote their physical fitness. The provision for

personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. Meaningful vocational courses engage pupils' interest, as evidenced by photographs of their project at a local fire station. However, opportunities for work experience placements in the local community are limited and this restricts the development of pupils' work-related skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures meet government guidelines. Risk assessments, including of pupil behaviours, are detailed. Pupils say, 'We feel safe and have an adult we can trust.' Induction procedures are excellent. Before entry each pupil is visited at home with their carers/parents and they are encouraged to explain what went wrong for them in their previous schools. This information is used very effectively to plan to re-engage them again with learning. The development of exit plans for all pupils on their point of entry to the PRU, so that they are swiftly re-integrated back into mainstream schools, is at an early stage of development, but it is a key improvement priority on the development plan. Links with a wide range of external agencies benefit the pupils' learning and help them improve their behaviour. One external agency gives good support in building self-esteem and confidence in the context of a girls' only group. Excellent support is given to support pupils who misuse drugs. Careers guidance is good. The tracking of pupils' academic progress over time is very good and teachers set challenging targets to raise pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, effectively supported by the rest of the senior leadership team, provides excellent leadership and gives a clear sense of direction which successfully focuses on raising pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation of performance within the PRU is outstanding. Planning for improvement is very effective. This planning has impacted positively as seen in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum since the last inspection. Subject leaders are empowered to take responsibility to develop their subjects in innovative ways to best engage pupils with learning. However, there is insufficient analysis of exclusion data to plan to reduce exclusions further. A good start has been made in developing a strategy for community cohesion and a clear policy is in place. The management committee supports and challenges the headteacher effectively. Support for the headteacher from the local authority is good.

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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?	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/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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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**

13 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Matthias's Park Pupil Referral Unit, Bristol, BS2 9UR

I greatly enjoyed visiting your PRU and finding out about all of the interesting and exciting work that you do. Your good behaviour and maturity on the day of my visit made a marked impression on me. I enjoyed talking with you and discovering that you are so keen to succeed and achieve well.

I think your PRU is good. Your headteacher and dedicated staff team work hard to help you improve your behaviour and attendance and to achieve well. The vast majority of you do achieve well in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The teaching and curriculum at your PRU are good. The PRU enables you to access interesting and helpful vocational courses which enable you to get good accreditation and equip those of you in Key Stage 4 to go on to college courses when you leave. Opportunities given to you to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles are outstanding and you respond well to them. Congratulations to you on persuading Bristol City Council to allow you to have tasty and nutritious dinners freshly prepared and cooked for you on site. Your headteacher and other senior leaders provide inspirational leadership and work ceaselessly to ensure you have the best quality education and opportunities to do well in life.

I have asked your headteacher to improve a few things so that your PRU becomes even better. I have asked her to do everything possible to ensure that the few pupils who do not attend the PRU regularly come in and so improve their achievement. I ask all of you to support your headteacher in bringing about an improvement in attendance. In addition, I have asked her to ensure that your teachers consistently involve you in assessing how well you are doing in your work and involve you more in working out for yourselves exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

Thank you for making me such a welcome visitor. Please support your dedicated team of teachers and support staff in making your PRU an even better place for you to be educated in.

Yours sincerely

Jeffery Plumb Lead inspector