

Hospital and Outreach Education

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133717
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	328732
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Frank Price

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	68
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lalith Chandrakantha
Headteacher	Lynn Mayer
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cromwell Centre Cromwell Street Northampton NN1 2TE
Telephone number	01604 239730
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Age group	3–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, discussions with pupils, staff and the management committee, scrutiny of school documentation and assessment information. This inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following.

- How well the Hospital and Outreach Education Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) measures pupils' progress and what use it makes of challenging targets.
- How well pupils achieve in a range of accredited and vocational courses.
- How effectively the management committee holds the pupil referral unit to account.

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

Description of the school

The Hospital and Outreach Education PRU caters for children and young people with diagnosed medical conditions, including mental health conditions, which prevent them from attending school. Standards on entry are well below average for the majority of pupils, due to gaps in their learning through disrupted schooling because of ill-health and associated medical conditions. The PRU covers the whole of Northamptonshire and is spread over six separate sites. Teaching takes place in a wide range of settings, in hospitals, homes and in the different sites. Recently the PRU has taken on responsibility for teaching some primary excluded pupils. Pupils range in age from 3 to 16 and most are dual registered with their own mainstream or special school. The majority of pupils are in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils remain in the PRU for varying lengths of time. Pupil numbers in the hospital settings change daily, meaning that the pupil population is transient. Pupils usually leave when they are well enough to attend school for more than approximately 50% of a full timetable. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Hospital and Outreach PRU is good. It has some outstanding features. It is improving well and is on the cusp of being outstanding in all aspects. Its strength is in the excellent positive and supportive relationships staff establish with pupils and this helps to reinvigorate their self-confidence. Their improved self-esteem and confidence enables them to return successfully to school or college. Parents and carers regard the work of the PRU very highly. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'my son has changed so much, he's more independent... his confidence has improved...he's interested in subjects especially maths, which he used to hate.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Younger children access the Early Years Foundation Stage usually for short periods of time. During their brief stay, their needs are well met so that they can continue their learning and development, enabling them to return successfully to school. Progress for older pupils is also good. They find stability and gain confidence and, as a result, start to blossom. Pupils are assessed in core subjects on entry to the PRU, but it recognises that baseline assessment to measure pupils' progress in a wider range of subjects is not yet fully established. Although standards remain well below average, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. They achieve well in meeting their individual targets, GCSE qualifications and in a wide range of alternative accredited courses and vocational qualifications. These are significant achievements, given the severe medical conditions of many. The vast majority of pupils go on to positive destinations such as sixth form, employment or further training. All pupils of different backgrounds, gender, needs and ethnicity achieve equally well.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are central to the work of the PRU. Pupils make outstanding progress in their moral and social development and make good gains in their understanding of cultural and spiritual dimensions through the daily 'thought for the day'. Pupils feel safe and greatly improve their self-esteem through their superb relationships with staff. They know what to do if they have a concern and are confident they will be listened to. Pupils really enjoy attending lessons because learning is made interesting and relevant to them and they receive a great deal of personal and specialised attention. This undoubtedly improves their confidence and supports them very well in developing the skills necessary for their future lives. One pupil reflected, 'This is definitely better than any other school. I had loads of anxiety before, but now I have got a lot more self-belief.' Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils respond well to the clear expectations, which are consistently applied in a positive way. Pupils are polite and courteous and there is a calm atmosphere in lessons and around the buildings. They respond enthusiastically to the opportunities for physical exercise. They develop a strong understanding of healthy lifestyles which is promoted very well through the curriculum and links with other agencies. Attendance is good and actions taken to improve attendance are successful. Pupils are regularly encouraged to take on responsibility and express their views. They support the local and wider community, for example by taking part in charitable events. Pupils' economic well-being is outstanding as they are prepared exceptionally well for their next phase of education, which enables them to re-integrate successfully.

A major factor in the good progress pupils make is the good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching they receive. Staff work exceptionally hard to establish excellent relationships with pupils and this does much to promote their confidence. Teachers are skilled at engaging pupils' interest in lessons, for example through the effective use of information and communication technology. They have a good understanding, through effective continuing professional

development, of how medical conditions impact upon pupils' learning, for example how brain injuries may affect memory and how strategies such as the use of symbols or mnemonics can be used to help pupils to overcome this difficulty. They make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking. Targets are set for pupils on a six-weekly basis, but these targets are not always sharp enough and are not used routinely in lessons to guide pupils' learning. Pupils are well served by an outstanding curriculum. It promotes community cohesion well by involvement in the community through environmental projects and develops their understanding of different cultures and faiths. There are excellent opportunities for them to gain a wide range of nationally recognised vocational and academic qualifications. The strength of the curriculum is the flexibility to meet individual academic and medical needs, in the hospital, home, or in other settings. This enables pupils to be well equipped to return to mainstream education wherever possible.

Staff are highly committed to promoting pupils' health, safety and well-being. The PRU caters outstandingly well for pupils' medical and mental health through a flexible and tailored approach to meeting individual needs. This is supported very effectively by the excellent partnerships with a large number of other services and agencies. Pupils are extremely well prepared for returning to mainstream school, college, training or employment as appropriate. The procedures for safeguarding pupils are very comprehensive and regularly reviewed. Academic and pastoral guidance are very strong. Pupils are very well supported in setting their own targets and assessing their progress in preparation for their review meetings, through the recently introduced mentoring system. One pupil commented on the effectiveness of this process, 'I was initially a little nervous, but I am fine now and I set my goals there.'

The PRU is a complex and diverse organisation, which is well led and managed. A measure of the confidence the local authority has in the headteacher is demonstrated by the recently established primary exclusion pupil base that has been successfully implemented. There is a clearly understood shared vision and commitment to move the PRU forward and there have been good improvements since the last inspection. Improvement planning is thorough and identifies appropriate priorities for further improvement. Links with numerous stakeholders, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, health professionals and schools are exceptionally strong and good support is given to pupils and their families. Performance management of staff is good and staff are given good opportunities to extend their understanding in both curricular and medical knowledge, to benefit pupils' learning. The management committee is very supportive and committed. They are beginning to provide a good level of challenge and monitor the work of the PRU well.

The PRU makes effective use of whole-school challenging targets, but acknowledges the limitations of current procedures. It recognises that the target setting and review process needs to be further refined to take greater account of its unique setting and increasing complexity of its work, to fully measure all aspects of its effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good education for children and as a result they achieve well. Children are taught at the hospital or at home. They have wide-ranging levels of ability on entry and access the provision for variable lengths of time. Children make outstanding progress in their personal development and well-being, due to the very good liaison with home and the supportive relationships that are quickly established. Planning is comprehensive and teaching is good. It is delivered by well-trained staff who understand the impact of particular

medical conditions on children's learning. A strong child-led approach is taken which is highly flexible and adaptable to individual needs. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning. Activities, including the opportunity for outdoor learning, encompass as wide a range of experiences as possible, within the limitations of the children's medical conditions and available resources. The promotion of the children's welfare is outstanding. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that the often complex needs of the children are fully met. This is helped by very good working with other professionals, parents and carers. Leadership and management is good and ensures that the provision is well organised and that pupils can return to school as quickly as possible.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of relevant whole-school challenging targets to fully measure all aspects of the PRU.
- Sharpen pupils' learning targets and use them routinely in lessons.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	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	1
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?	2
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?	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	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**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hospital and Outreach, Northampton NN4 8EN

I enjoyed meeting and talking with you on my visit to your school. You are making outstanding progress in your personal development. You are developing into thoughtful, self-confident and mature young people. Your behaviour, politeness and welcoming attitude are a credit to the PRU. One of the reasons that you make such good progress is that you are looked after by the staff exceptionally well. They know you well and know how to get the best out of you.

You make good progress in your academic and vocational courses. Those of you who take examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 achieve well in a range of subjects. This is important as you are able to go on to your next phase of education or training with confidence. You are taught well. Lessons are made interesting and work is pitched at the right level for you. You are able to follow an excellent range of courses that are extremely well suited to your needs.

The PRU is led and managed well. There is a very positive and supportive working environment, which is beneficial to you. Staff work together well as a team and they also work in very close partnership with your families and other agencies so that you get the best possible care and support.

To make the PRU even better, I have asked the headteacher to make the following changes:

- develop the use of relevant whole-school challenging targets, so that the work of the PRU can be measured more easily
- make your learning targets more specific and make better use of them in your lessons, to help you more.

You can play your part in helping to the PRU to become better by continuing to work hard and enjoying your lessons. I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Frank Price

Lead inspector