

Longview Adolescent Psychiatric Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134260
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	328869
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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	11–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	10
Sixth form	1
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
School address	216 Turner Road Colchester Essex CO4 5JR
Telephone number	01206 287626
Fax number	01206 287627

Age group	11–17
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Longview is a pupil referral unit that provides for students from 11 to 17 who have mental health difficulties. Some stay for a short time during which they are assessed for an educational placement. Most are placed for a few months for medical treatment and this takes precedence over education. The unit aims to return students to schools so that they can continue their education. Prior to admission, many have had a fractured experience of education and a few have not attended school for lengthy periods. Almost all students are White British; very few have a dual heritage. There are very small numbers with a statement of special educational needs or who are in public care. Since the last inspection the unit has been awarded Healthy Schools status. Its management committee was disbanded as part of re-organisation of services in the local authority but has now been re-instated. Student places have been increased from 12 to 15. There are 13 beds on wards and two day places. It continues to work with a leading edge school to support staff in developing provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Longview pupil referral unit provides a good quality of education and it is well led and managed. It is particularly successful at improving students' sense of well-being and developing their personal skills and qualities because it provides an outstanding quality of care, guidance and support. Past students say that the unit got them 'back on track', rekindled their interest in and enjoyment of education and even enabled some to exceed their own expectations. One of the key ingredients in the unit's recipe for success is the commitment of staff. They have a well-developed understanding of mental health issues, so they build most constructive relationships with the students who feel exceptionally well cared for and secure. Another important factor is the outstanding quality of partnerships with parents, schools or colleges and external agencies. The headteacher leads on this and does an outstanding job. One representative from a local school described Longview as 'the cement that holds the whole thing together'. Parents and schools speak highly of the excellent communication, which keeps them very effectively informed and involved in 'joining up' the support for students as well as making decisions and planning for the future.

Standards in the unit are average, reflecting the spread of ability amongst students. Students make good progress towards their targets because they know what these are and are given regular reminders of what they are striving for. However, the unit does not make use of students' success in meeting their personal targets as a way of evaluating progress. The teaching is good and lessons are generally well attended and purposeful, so students make good progress. However, learning objectives are not always precise enough to be useful in evaluating progress. Students make good progress in obtaining qualifications or completing coursework towards these.

Students' personal development is outstanding. They make significant gains in social and emotional adjustment, self-esteem and confidence. A strong focus on developing healthy and safe lifestyles means that students make excellent improvements in the personal choices that they make. They contribute well to the unit and wider community and the gains that they make in basic skills, knowledge of the world of work and enterprise, mean that they are well prepared for the return to their schools or colleges and for their future lives. An after-care service helps them to make a successful transition to mainstream education and follow-up surveys by the unit four weeks later shows that a high proportion successfully maintain their placement.

The unit's self-evaluation is accurate and takes good account of stakeholder's views, which are systematically and regularly collected and analysed. However, some opportunities to measure successes are missed, particularly in relation to students' progress. There is no shared understanding of what constitutes good or better progress for different groups of students. The performance of different groups, such as boys and girls, or those with different medical conditions, is not analysed. Nonetheless, the unit successfully identifies areas for improvement and plans well for these. As a result there has been good improvement since the last inspection and there is a good capacity to improve further. Some areas in need of improvement are outside the unit's control, as it does not hold its own budget. It has identified a need for further teaching and administrative staff since student numbers have increased, and the management committee is pursuing this with the local authority. The new management committee has made a reasonable start, although they do not have a full complement of members yet. They recognise that the next step is to agree procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the unit. The chairperson has strong expertise in mental health matters and is well placed to liaise with the

health trust on matters such as improving the accommodation. Statutory requirements for equality are not met fully as the unit does not have a disability equality scheme.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The provision for students over 16 is not discrete. At the time of the inspection there was a very small number of students resident at the unit but being educated at their own school. Teaching could not therefore be seen. In the past year there have been seven students in Year 12 who have attended for periods of time ranging from four days to a year. All have made good progress, significantly improving their attitudes to education, their attendance and self-belief. They have achieved a range of qualifications, including GCSEs, and returned successfully to their schools where they have achieved the examination grades predicted. Some have moved from their family homes into supported lodgings over the period of their admission. The flexibility of staff and excellent relationships with other education providers means that students' needs are met well. For instance, college lecturers collaborate with unit staff to ensure that students have access to the software they need to pursue vocational courses at the unit. Students benefit greatly from the excellent care, guidance and support provided at the unit, particularly in making the transition back into their places of education. Staff work closely with a partner school to make sure that they are familiar with course requirements, although the accommodation limits what is possible for some courses, particularly science subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

Strengthen self-evaluation by:

- setting precise learning objectives and using these to measure progress in lessons
- agreeing what constitutes good and outstanding progress for students at the unit
- making use of all the available assessment information to measure, analyse and evaluate progress of different groups of pupils

Ensure that the management committee:

- recruits a full complement of members
- meets all statutory requirements
- develops its procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the unit
- liaises with the local authority to improve staffing to reflect the increase in student places

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards rise whilst students are at the unit, they remain average as students stay for relatively short periods. When they arrive, most have predicted GCSE grades below those considered likely when they entered secondary school. Almost all leave having caught up for lost ground and occasionally they exceed predictions. They are successful in obtaining nationally recognised qualifications in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), science, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and art. Physical activities are a particular hit and students amass a number of nationally recognised certificates showing their physical achievements in activities such as trampolining and swimming. Staff miss some opportunities to demonstrate students' good progress, though. For instance they do not measure and analyse how well short-stay students progress towards their personal targets. Although

there is no evidence to suggest that some groups do better than others, the unit cannot be sure that this is the case as it does not analyse performance by groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Because they are valued and their achievements are celebrated every day, their self-esteem and confidence grows rapidly. Their enjoyment of education is reflected in considerable improvements in attendance whilst they are at the unit. Attendance is above average. Students appreciate being with others who experience similar difficulties and are most tolerant of differences. There is no bullying or racism. They learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle, make increasingly healthy choices and all have an opportunity to acquire a qualification in food hygiene. They contribute well to life in the unit by planning menus and cooking meals for the rest of the group. They also develop a good understanding of themselves as global citizens, when they write letters to Amnesty International or learn about the Fairtrade movement for instance. The unit plans further opportunities for them to contribute to the local community. An excellent programme of PSHE provides a strong awareness of how to maintain their personal safety and they increasingly adopt safer practices. Behaviour is good and students have a well developed set of values. All learn about a variety of customs and cultures, and what life is like in other countries. Students raise funds for both local and national charities. They acquire enterprise skills, such as when they make and sell jewellery of good quality. Their life chances improve dramatically as a result of their time at the unit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Students like the key teacher system and the small number of different teachers they encounter. They also appreciate the way that they can quickly have their questions answered in class. Because staff have a thorough understanding of mental health matters, they are skilled at managing students and gauging their mood and potential on each day. Nonetheless, they have high expectations, and encourage and negotiate effectively so that students continue with suitable work. Lessons are calm and purposeful, and students are engaged productively throughout. Improved arrangements for collecting assessment information from schools on each student admitted ensure that staff know accurate starting points and they use this information well to plan challenging tasks. Lessons are well prepared, although planning is not always precise enough about expected outcomes. A programme of workshops, provided by partner schools and services, keeps teachers up-to-date with subject developments and course requirements in mainstream provision. Teachers work well as a team during lessons, monitoring individuals carefully and intervening to support. They give the right sort of help, encouraging students to work independently and also to help each another, so that they can learn from one another.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students appreciate the way that their work is tailored to suit their situation and what they see as being most important. They enjoy the good range of learning experiences that the unit

provides and find that education helps to take their minds off their problems. Since the last inspection, the unit has strengthened the PSHE provision with the addition of topics that are of particular interest to students, and the strong programme contributes effectively to students' excellent personal development. Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is good, with accredited courses available for students of all abilities. However, the lack of a technician for ICT does occasionally lead to a temporary loss of access to computers. A broad programme of physical activities, including outdoor and adventurous elements, is very popular. A link with Project Trident provides work experience for those who are ready for this. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors, themed days and events, such as the students' Christmas performance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Exceptional commitment by staff is reflected in their willingness to come in to provide therapy during the holidays and to organise trips out. Students value this and feel well listened to as they have a voice through their forum. Risk assessments are robust and effective in minimising dangers to students and staff, who are well trained in matters of welfare and safety. The excellent arrangements to support students whilst they are at the unit include partnerships with a wide range of external agencies who provide support and guidance, including Connexions. The high quality of support for transition is evident in students' successful return to their schools or colleges. Before students leave, staff ensure that they know where to locate sources of support in the community, such as advocacy services.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher secures effective teamwork within the unit, very good liaison with health staff and strong partnerships with others outside the unit. Communication at all levels is very good. Daily meetings of teaching staff ensure that all are aware of relevant matters and community meetings between students, mental health and education staff provide a forum in which all participate in celebrating students' achievements. There are good arrangements for the professional development of staff. Whilst there is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and the unit has suitable policies to underpin its work in this area, there is no disability equality scheme, because of a lack of awareness of this requirement. Staff have conducted a thoughtful audit of the way in which the unit promotes community cohesion. Arrangements for this are good, and ways of strengthening this further have been identified. For instance, the unit would like to extend its outreach role but is limited by current staffing levels. The extent to which the management committee fulfils its duties is satisfactory.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	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.

²IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	IE ²
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	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
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	IE ²
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2
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	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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**

14 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Longview Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, Colchester, CO4 5JR

I was pleased to be able to visit Longview recently and thank you all for making me welcome. A special thanks to those of you who gave up part of your lunch break to talk to me about your experiences.

I agree with you and the staff that Longview is a good unit. There are some aspects of its work that are outstanding. It was pleasing to hear that you recognise how well the staff care for and support you. Staff at the unit work exceptionally well with your parents, staff on the wards, teachers from your schools and other agencies that help and support you, such as social workers. The past students who came in to speak to me had nothing but praise for the unit and described how much it had improved their self-confidence and helped them to get back on track with their education. It is clear from lessons that you are taught well and that you are making good progress. Those who leave the unit are most often on track to get the GCSE grades that were predicted for them in Year 7, even though they were not on course for this when they came to Longview. Whilst at the unit you are developing very well as young people. The excellent opportunities that exist to encourage you to develop healthier and safer lifestyles are leading you to make better personal choices about these. You told me how much you enjoy the range of physical activities, and it is good that you learn skills in hygienic food preparation.

I have asked the staff to improve the way that they measure your progress in lessons and to use all the information that they have to analyse the progress made by different groups, such as girls and boys, so that they can see if there are any differences. They are also going to give some thought to what 'good progress' is at the unit. The management committee, who oversees the work of the unit, is going to recruit more members, work out exactly how they are going to check on the work of the unit and ensure that they have a scheme showing how they will make sure that disabled people are not disadvantaged. You can help with the latter by contributing your views and ideas.

I wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs S. Aldridge

Lead inspector