

# Oldham Pupil Referral Unit

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134759
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	328971
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Emerson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Nikki Shaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Dean Street Failsworth Oldham M35 0DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 770 3185
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 770 3186

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Oldham Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is made up of the Pupil Support Centre (PSC) and the Specialist Learning Centre (SLC). It serves the whole of the local authority. It is based on two main sites, with vocational and personal development activities taking place on several other sites. The PSC offers flexible provision for up to 180 pupils in Years 7 to 11 who are either permanently excluded, at risk of exclusion or have a statement of special educational need for social, emotional and behaviour difficulties (SEBD). Forty-two pupils have statements. The SLC is for vulnerable pupils in Years 7 to 11. These pupils include girls who are pregnant, young mothers and pupils with mental health problems. There is a registered nursery on site to enable the young mothers to continue with their education. The nursery is inspected separately and the last inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website. The SLC also supports Traveller pupils in mainstream schools and on Traveller sites, provides home education for pupils from Reception Class to Year 11 who are too ill to attend school, and gives advice and support to families who have chosen to educate their children at home. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a minority of pupils of mixed race or Asian heritage. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Girls make up around a third of the population. A significant number of pupils come from economically disadvantaged areas in the borough. A high number of pupils are young offenders. Some pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The local authority looks after 19 pupils. When they are admitted to the provision, many pupils have a history of very poor school attendance and a negative attitude towards education. Attainment on entry is generally very low. The local authority is planning to build a new school under the 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) programme for the group of pupils with statements for SEBD. The PRU holds a number of awards. These include the Healthy Schools, Sportsmark and Heartbeat awards. It is an Investor in People and a National Support School.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding PRU which meets the needs of all the pupils exceptionally well. This is because each pupil is offered a highly individualised programme which is tailored exactly to address their particular needs. As a consequence, the curriculum is exemplary. Staff are expert at working with vulnerable and disaffected young people and relationships in the PRU are excellent. An atmosphere of mutual respect and a desire by pupils and staff to 'aim high' is evident at all times. As a result, pupils in the PSC, many of whom have long histories of behavioural difficulties and negative attitudes towards education, make excellent progress in improving their attitudes and behaviour. They re-engage fully with learning and the vast majority move on very successfully to mainstream schools, further education or the workplace. The PRU provides an outstanding quality of care, support and guidance as a result of excellent links with a wide range of agencies such as the borough's Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) team. Consequently, particularly vulnerable pupils in the SLC, such as young mothers and pupils with mental health problems, make enormous strides in their personal and social development and become confident young people. Pupils are exceptionally positive about the way in which the PRU transforms their lives. Representative views from pupils include, 'The adults at this school have given us great chances to sort ourselves out, they have made such a difference by treating us like adults and people with individual needs'. A very high number of parents and carers comment on the excellent progress which their children have made. They also praise the PRU highly for the outstanding support which it provides for families.

Pupils' huge enjoyment is reflected in the overall good rates of attendance. Many pupils make remarkable improvement in comparison to their attendance at previous schools. However, there are a very small number of pupils who fail to respond to the PRU's sterling work to raise their attendance. Pupils adopt healthy and safe practices extremely well and say that bullying is not a problem. They enjoy taking part in a good number of physical activities. Pupils make a very strong contribution both within the PRU and to the local community. For example, through links with 'Groundworks' many of the pupils have been involved in projects to improve the environment such as litter pickups, park refurbishment, garden clear ups and small building projects. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. The PRU implements its equality and diversity policy extremely well and the cultural heritage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is valued and celebrated. An example of this was a project where a fairground artist and pupils of Traveller heritage worked with other pupils to improve their understanding of the Traveller community. Projects such as this ensure that the PRU makes a strong contribution to community cohesion.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. It is underpinned by excellent assessment which enables teachers to pinpoint exactly how well pupils are doing. As a consequence, pupils make exceptionally good progress and most pupils achieve or surpass the challenging targets set for them. Although standards of work are generally very low when pupils are admitted to the PRU, they rise rapidly to levels that are generally below average on leaving, although a good number achieve within the low average range. Pupils in all parts of the provision, the smaller number of girls and pupils from minority ethnic groups make equally strong progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond extremely well to the focused literacy and numeracy programmes. They make excellent progress which is recognised through success in gaining qualifications such as the Adult Literacy and Numeracy awards. GCSE results are improving significantly year on year and are exceptionally good for a PRU. In 2008, pupils were

entered for up to eight GCSEs. A substantial number of pupils achieved three or more passes, with 52% of passes at grades A to C.

The exceptional quality of provision offered by the PRU is driven by the outstanding leadership and vision of the headteacher which has been recognised through her developing role as a National Leader of Education. The leadership team and the management committee work extremely well together to monitor and evaluate the work of the PRU. As a consequence, the improvement made since the previous inspection and the capacity to improve further are both excellent.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the attendance of the very small number of pupils who are reluctant to attend regularly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils in both the PSC and SLC, and those who are taught at home or in other settings, respond extremely well to the very carefully planned individual programmes and excellent support which they are given. Consequently, they make excellent progress and reach standards that are overall below average: this represents outstanding achievement from their starting points. The detailed assessment which is carried out on entry to the centres is used to set challenging targets and to plan pupils' individual programmes. The targets are reviewed regularly with pupils and parents and demonstrate very clearly the excellent progress which pupils make. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve extremely well in developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement is also particularly strong in practical subjects such as art and design and technology. Given their history of disrupted education and other difficulties, Year 11 pupils achieve an exceptional number of GCSEs, which include a rapidly improving number of passes at higher grades. Their excellent achievement in personal development and vocational skills is recognised through vocational awards and successful work experience which has led to employment. The number of pupils entering further education has risen dramatically since the previous inspection.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding and underpins pupils' excellent learning. Pupils develop very good levels of self-discipline at each of the sites operated by the PRU. They demonstrate very strong values of respect, cooperation and consideration for others. Parents confirm that their children are managed especially well and that behaviour is outstanding. There has been a very impressive decline in the number of exclusions. Pupils' written work reveals a remarkable level of thought about diversity and equality. For example, older pupils have written very poignant poetry about matters such as people from different ethnic backgrounds settling in Britain and integrating without losing their cultural identity. Although the vast majority of pupils improve their rates of attendance exceptionally well, a few pupils remain more reluctant to attend regularly. Pupils respond extremely well to the PRU's emphasis on healthy lifestyles, adopt a healthier diet and try very hard to give up unhealthy practices such as smoking.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Pupils learn exceptionally well because teachers and support staff give them very good and sensitive support in all lessons and other activities. Staff use the two main sites and the class groupings flexibly, with pupils moving between groups and sites so that they access specialist subject teachers and are taught in each subject at exactly the right level. Lessons are very lively and proceed at a very rapid pace. Teachers make extremely good use of the good quality resources, including very effective use of the interactive whiteboards. Consequently, pupils enjoy lessons a great deal and are highly motivated to learn. Work is extremely well matched to individual pupils' learning levels and teachers are skilled at asking questions to check that pupils understand exactly what they have been taught. This ensures that all pupils are fully involved in lessons and make excellent progress. Teachers and support staff are particularly skilled at using every opportunity to promote pupils' personal and social development. An example of this was in an outstanding physical education lesson where pupils were encouraged to evaluate each other's routines on the trampoline. As a result of excellent support and guidance, pupils behaved in an extremely mature manner and made very noticeable progress in learning to give, and accept, constructive criticism.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The PRU offers an extremely broad curriculum that is exceptionally well adapted for individual pupils. All curriculum planning places an exceptionally strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social and life skills. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are given the opportunity to study for a very wide range of GCSE and vocational courses. This has been extended again this year to offer 10 different GCSE options as well as the opportunity to attend courses in mainstream schools. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of activities, including residential visits, and through contributions from external specialists such as the school nurse. Staff work exceptionally hard to ensure that pupils benefit from these experiences. For example, a pupil who is looked after by the local authority is given support to access sporting activities in the evening. Pupils benefit from the high quality accommodation with access to specialist resources. This enables the PRU to deliver a wide range of practical subjects such as science and design and technology at GCSE level.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Day-to-day pastoral support and academic guidance are outstanding. The school has developed very effective strategies to promote good attendance and excellent behaviour. For example, postcards are sent home to celebrate improvements in attendance and prizes for outstanding achievement are highly sought after by pupils. As a consequence, for the vast majority of pupils, improvements in attendance and behaviour are remarkable. Vulnerable pupils, boys, girls and pupils from minority ethnic groups receive excellent support to ensure that they achieve as well as everyone else. Outstanding links with many external agencies ensure that pupils are extremely well cared for. Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and well-being of students are outstanding. Current government safeguarding requirements are fully met. In this very safe and supportive environment, the vast majority of pupils achieve very challenging targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides an excellent role model and very effectively promotes a culture of 'aiming high'. As a consequence, this large and complex PRU functions as an extremely successful integrated unit where pupils flourish and make excellent progress in improving their attainments and behaviour. Monitoring of individual pupils' progress is very strong. Development planning is extremely thorough and very accurately identifies what the PRU needs to do to improve further. As a consequence, improvement since the previous inspection has been outstanding, as is the capacity to improve further. The PRU implements its equality and diversity policy extremely well and as a result all pupils feel safe, confident and valued. The management committee are experienced and bring with them a very good range of relevant expertise. They are highly supportive and fulfil their role of critical friend extremely well. They ensure the PRU promotes first rate community cohesion which shows, for example, in the way pupils from a broad range of different backgrounds come to understand and share common values of achieving to the best of their ability while contributing very strongly to the extremely friendly and caring ethos. Pupils are developing an excellent understanding of citizenship both within the PRU and beyond. In the light of the excellent outcomes for pupils, the PRU provides outstanding value for money.

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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?	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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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	1
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**

Inspection of Oldham Pupil Referral Unit, Failsworth, M35 0DQ

Thank you for welcoming us to the Oldham PRU. We enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was very useful to know what you think about the different centres that make up the PRU. We were extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. We judged that staff provide you with an outstanding education. Here are just a few of the things that are exceptionally good at Oldham PRU.

- The very carefully planned individual programmes of work which each of you follow.
- The extremely good links the PRU has with your parents/carers and other agencies which support you exceptionally well.
- The excellent individual support you are given in lessons and other activities which enables you to make excellent progress.
- The outstanding improvements which you make to your attitudes and behaviour so that you achieve extremely well.
- The success you experience in getting jobs, moving on to college or returning to mainstream schools.
- The excellent leadership provided by your headteacher which makes all of this possible.

I have asked your teachers to improve one thing. Perhaps those of you who attend well could help with this.

- To help the very small number of you who take more time off than you should to improve your attendance.