

Harbour

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134762
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328974
Inspection date	8 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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	7–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	18
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr P Baverstock
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2006
School address	School Road Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 9NB
Telephone number	01502 539755
Fax number	01502 539708

Age group	7–14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the pupil referral unit (PRU) and investigated the following issues:

- whether the tracking of pupils' progress is embedded and the PRU has a secure measure of achievement
- if assessment in lessons is sufficient for teachers to plan effectively the next steps in pupils' learning
- whether full time pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum planned well to meet their needs.

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

Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons. In addition, discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, the chair of the management committee, representatives of the local authority, mainstream schools and support agencies. Other evidence considered included school data on standards and progress, policies and other documents, external reports on the PRU's work and parental inspection questionnaires.

Description of the school

Harbour PRU provides support and education to boys and girls in North Suffolk who have either been excluded permanently or are at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream schools. The PRU's aim is to return permanently excluded pupils to a mainstream school to continue their education. Most pupils on roll are identified as at risk of exclusion and attend Harbour PRU on a part time basis whilst remaining on their mainstream school's roll. There is a small group of full time pupils who have either been permanently excluded or are in the process of being moved to another school. The PRU, through its behaviour support service, provides support to schools in North Suffolk to increase their capacity to help pupils at risk of exclusion.

There are 18 pupils on roll aged between 7 and 13 years. The PRU has seen a rapid increase in referrals of younger pupils. The large majority who attend Harbour PRU have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many come from areas of severe social and economic deprivation and are of White British heritage. A few pupils have additional learning difficulties, such as those relating to autism spectrum disorders. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Since it opened in 2004, the PRU has been in temporary accommodation made up of three demountable buildings providing classrooms, offices, playground and a small school garden. A new permanent building is currently under construction.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Harbour PRU's effectiveness is outstanding. This applies to the support for vulnerable pupils and to its outreach work, which increases the capacity of schools in North Suffolk to assist their pupils who are at risk of exclusion. The PRU meets its main aims of helping pupils, schools and parents exceptionally well. It has increased its impact since its last inspection by maintaining a good rate of improvement, especially around the development of staff expertise, multi-agency work and training in schools. This is the result of the outstanding leadership and management, commitment and teamwork running through the PRU's work, which is very ably supported by the contribution of the PRU's management committee. All of the staff have a role in outreach provision and work in the PRU, which integrates practice very effectively and gives the PRU an excellent capacity for the further improvement of its principal roles. Outstanding provision in the PRU meets pupils' behavioural, emotional and social needs exceedingly well, including those with an autism spectrum disorder. As a result, achievement is outstanding and pupils are very well prepared for a return to school.

While the PRU's outreach support has focused on supporting individual and small groups of pupils in schools, increasingly, the PRU leads projects to develop schools' own approaches and expertise. This has been received well by schools. Harbour PRU has a high reputation in the local authority, in North Suffolk schools and amongst parents. The views expressed by schools and parents are extremely positive. Harbour PRU does a great deal, through its excellent partnerships, to lessen the stress being experienced by parents and schools by leading the way on managing the difficulties some pupils experience.

The PRU has worked with 1136 pupils in this school year and the great majority of these in their own school. The success of the PRU's interventions is seen in the greatly reduced exclusions in primary and middle schools in North Suffolk. All those pupils who had contact with the PRU, through outreach provision or by attending for a period of time, avoided exclusion. A core of 43 pupils, the most challenging and vulnerable, attended the PRU either part time or full time for a fixed period. Most went back to mainstream schools and a few were placed in special schools better equipped to meet their needs.

The key to success is the outstanding progress made by pupils in their personal development, which means they are in a much improved position to return successfully to school. This is the result of excellent care, guidance and support. PRU staff are very skilled in building positive relationships, which is part of their huge impact on transforming pupils' attitudes to school. The staff also set high expectations for behaviour. They make agreements with pupils about the most important things they need to tackle, concerning their behaviour in particular, in order to return to school. From this, plans are made and targets are set. Pupils' response to achieving their targets is extremely good with the result that behaviour is outstanding. The requirements in the statements of special educational needs, for the few pupils who have them, are met very effectively. Pupils' attendance, compared to what it often was before coming to the PRU, improves enormously, rising on average by 30% to be at least 90%, and on average 95%. Pupils enjoy school considerably because of the close attention, care and support they receive.

The curriculum is outstanding as it contributes significantly to pupils enjoying school and achieving success. It offers an interesting and relevant range of work and activities which include literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils' work is planned in small units which for many suits the short time spent in the PRU and, for each unit completed,

pupils receive an award. This boosts confidence and creates a sense of achievement. Pupils experience excitement and enjoyment in many of their activities. The outdoor leaders programme, mirroring the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, develops pupils' independence, initiative and confidence. Through this, their involvement in planning a community based activity alongside other events, such as the Christmas Fair and fund-raising for charity, provides excellent opportunities for pupils' contribution to the community. Because pupils spend so little time in the PRU, it's scope to promote community cohesion is limited. However, it significantly improves pupils' capacity to be good citizens. There are, for example, school projects in Uganda and Botswana being supported by pupils' fund-raising efforts. The curriculum gives a very high profile to pupils learning to live healthily and stay safe. The PRU's comprehensive safeguarding policy is implemented extremely effectively and provides a robust response to keeping pupils safe and protected. The quality of pupils' lunches was criticised by the previous inspection and this has improved. Pupils grow vegetables in the PRU garden, which they use in cookery to contribute to their lunches.

Teaching is good and plays a very significant part in promoting pupils' personal development and providing them with care, support and guidance. The excellent relationships with pupils and the teamwork of teachers and classroom assistants ensure the excellent progress in pupils' behaviour and their emotional and social development. As a result, pupils are cooperative, work willingly and they take this with them when they return to school. The previous inspection criticised assessment, as it hindered lesson planning and the PRU's ability to gauge pupils' academic progress. Since then assessment has improved and is satisfactory. However, assessment is complicated by pupils' short stay in the PRU and because of this short term involvement with pupils, their academic progress is not one of the PRU's overarching concerns. Nevertheless, the PRU is seeking to refine its assessment procedures because it recognises that greater accuracy could be achieved in measuring pupils' progress and therefore guaranteeing their work is always challenging.

What the school should do to improve further

- strengthen assessment to measure the small steps in pupils' progress to aid the planning of appropriate academic work during their short stay in the PRU.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	4
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

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	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
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?	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**

9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harbour PRU, Lowestoft NR33 9NB

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Harbour which was made all the more pleasant by your welcome and friendliness. Thank you for your help with the inspection by answering my questions and letting me see your work.

As you know, the purpose of my visit was to judge how good Harbour is at giving you support for returning to school. It was very clear to me that Harbour is doing an outstanding job with those of you who attend and for the great many other pupils it helps in their own schools. The staff have a great deal of knowledge and many skills to help them do such a good job. One of the strengths of Harbour is how well they share their knowledge and skills with schools.

You overcome any difficulties you have with school extremely well because you make huge progress in improving your behaviour, self-confidence and enjoyment of learning, thanks to your hard work and the excellent care and support provided by Harbour. The work and activities at Harbour, such as outdoor leaders, cooking and gardening, make learning much more interesting. The attention to a healthy lifestyle, living safely and making a contribution by raising money for charities is helping you to develop really good attitudes and prepares you exceptionally well for the future.

The lessons I saw were good and the fact you were always cooperative and worked hard helped. I have said to Mr Baverstock that I believe teachers need some more information about your knowledge, skills and things that you might find more difficult to learn, to help them plan your work more precisely.

Harbour is outstanding. Well done and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector