

# Thanet and Dover Alternative Curriculum PRU

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135466
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	329100
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Farrell

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michaela Clay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Westwood Centre, Unit 11 Westwood Industrial Estate Enterprise Road Margate CT19 4JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 231758
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 231758

<b>Age group</b>	14–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Thanet and Dover Alternative Curriculum Pupil Referral Unit (AC PRU), with capacity for 115 pupils, comprises seven venues, one with three sites, making nine sites in all. The AC PRU manager and administrative support are based at the Westwood AC Centre in Margate. Project 15, including arrangements for pupils requiring high levels of support, is based in Ramsgate with 25 pupils. Thanet College, Broadstairs educates 21 pupils. 'UP2U Dover' educates 13 pupils. 'UP2U Deal', with 13 pupils, was, at the time of the inspection, housed in a sports clubhouse for several weeks while its usual base in a Youth Centre was being renovated. South Kent College educates 18 pupils on three sites in Folkestone, Ashford and Dover. In addition, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Dover educates 14 pupils. The AC PRU Centre Manager directly manages Project 15 while other centres are commissioned under contractual 'service level' agreements.

Pupils attending the AC PRU are referred via a multi-agency forum from local mainstream schools within four Local Children's Partnerships. Typically, pupils have been excluded from mainstream schools and have a disrupted educational history. Pupils are aged 14 to 16 years, with twice as many in Year 11 as in Year 10. About 60% of pupils are boys. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and there are a very small number of asylum seekers. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs. As the AC PRU was registered in January 2008, there is no previous inspection report.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The AC PRU offers sound provision. Although not all parents are positive in their views, most are very appreciative. One stated that the AC PRU 'has captured my son's creativeness, potential and abilities'. The provision has an ethos encouraging mature conduct. One pupil said, 'They treat you like a young adult – at school they treated us like kids.' The sound leadership and management of the AC PRU skilfully guide both directly managed and commissioned provision. The management committee gives satisfactory support and challenge to the AC PRU. Evaluation of pupils' progress is satisfactory, and is informed by sound targets in Individual Education Plans. However, data is not always gathered often enough or analysed in sufficient detail for different centres to further refine academic support and guidance. Consequently the PRU's capacity for further development is judged sound rather than good.

Pupils' attainments are exceptionally low compared with others of their age groups nationally because of difficulties in learning and missed schooling in their former schools. From varied starting points, pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. They reach suitable challenging targets and achieve a sound range of accreditation at the end of Years 10 and 11, including vocational examinations and GCSEs. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound because pupils are suitably nurtured. Pupils feel safe, being able to trust staff and talk through any problems. They enjoy activities because these meet their interests and needs. In response to the provision designed to promote healthy eating, pupils are aware of good foods. They participate in physical activities and know the importance of mental and emotional health because these are promoted soundly. Pupils' satisfactory economic understanding is encouraged by strong vocational opportunities and adequate promotion of basic skills. Behaviour is satisfactory because it is soundly managed, and attendance is adequate. However, although pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory, opportunities are missed to extend and build on the good examples evident in some venues.

Lessons observed ranged from good to barely adequate but overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, leading to the pupils' sound progress. Typically, relationships between pupils and staff are sound and teaching assistants make an effective contribution. Teaching particularly engages pupils when it is active and participatory and where vocational or real life relevance is clear. However, in weaker lessons, behaviour is not managed as well as in better ones and pace is slower. The satisfactory care, guidance and support of pupils lead to their sound achievement and personal development. Safeguarding requirements are met and health and safety given proper attention. Wide-ranging strategies to promote attendance are satisfactory. Academic guidance is sound and involves assessments and Individual Education Plans. Regular careers advice and guidance enables pupils to make mature informed choices and parents are kept informed about their child's progress. However the limitations of incomplete centrally produced data constrain even better targeting of support and guidance. The satisfactory curriculum provides sound preparation for pupils transferring to work or further education, drawing on other agencies as appropriate. The wide range of activities, including those promoting personal development, satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils. Pupils greatly appreciate the many extra activities. However, basic skills are only adequately promoted.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more frequent and detailed analysis of data on pupils' academic progress and all aspects of personal development to enable centres to target guidance and support more precisely and raise standards.
- Improve teaching and learning, including lesson pace and behaviour management, to match the quality evident in the best lessons.
- Improve pupils' contribution to the community building on existing good practice.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' attainments are exceptionally low for their age because of their difficulties with learning and missed schooling. However, pupils progress steadily in both Years 10 and 11 and achieve satisfactorily. From the starting points shown by 'base line' assessments in basic skills, they make sound progress in these areas. There is no evidence of unexplained significant differences between the progress of different groups, including boys and girls or young people looked after by the local authority. Most of the challenging targets of progress are met. These inform targets in Individual Education Plans which are used to promote and monitor progress. A wide range of accreditation is offered in which pupils achieve satisfactorily. These include the Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), GCSEs, and many vocational courses such as City and Guilds, and National Vocation Qualifications.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils show a growing understanding of the importance of controlling their behaviour and recognise that staff apply rules fairly. Although pupils are aware of healthy eating guidance, they do not always manage to follow it. Pupils participate in exercise or physical activity and understand the importance of mental well-being. They feel secure and are able to talk to staff about problems. Pupils like coming to the centres and enjoy their activities. Attendance is adequate and the AC PRU works hard to improve it. Behaviour is satisfactory because it is satisfactorily managed, although limitations in accommodation in some centres sometimes make this more difficult. Pupils' economic well-being is satisfactory rather than good because although pupils benefit considerably from vocational opportunities, the contribution of basic skills is only adequate. Pupils make an adequate contribution to the community, but this is variable because opportunities are missed to extend innovative activities such as the building and renovating work done by some pupils.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to barely adequate. Consideration of a range of evidence shows that it is satisfactory overall. Teachers know the subjects and areas they teach and are ably supported by hardworking teaching assistants. Lessons are suitably

adapted to the different learning requirements of pupils, for example the individual tuition in building and carpentry at Thanet College, which engages pupils' interest and motivates them. Assessment is satisfactory and informs subsequent teaching and learning. Relationships are strong and pupils trust staff. Resources are adequately used overall, but teachers do not always enliven all lessons with objects or pictures and this has a negative effect on pupils' enjoyment and consequently their learning. Behaviour is generally satisfactorily managed but in a few lessons it is not always as well managed as in better ones, and here the pace of learning is slower.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The activities offered in the curriculum satisfactorily meet the different learning needs of pupils. The wide range of practical activities, including vocational opportunities, particularly engage pupils' interests. Important topics such as health and safety and preparation for work are given the necessary coverage, often drawing on the sound relationships with other agencies. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme soundly promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem. A wide range of extra activities such as water sports and climbing are very much appreciated by pupils. However, basic skills are only adequately promoted. Sometimes limitations in accommodation constrain the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Staff show a high degree of concern and care for the welfare of pupils. They understand pupils' individual needs and work hard to support them. Health and safety and safeguarding requirements are met. Strategies to address deeply ingrained non-attendance of pupils are wide ranging and satisfactory. Regular careers advice and guidance enables pupils to make mature informed choices about the next steps in education, training or careers. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress, and one stated, 'For the first time I am looking forward to attending parents' evening.' Academic guidance is satisfactorily promoted and careful use is made of baseline and other assessments and of Individual Education Plans. However, settings are unable to make full use of centrally collated data to refine their support, as this information is not freely available and this restricts pupils' learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Managers set a clear direction leading to sound care and education. Suitable targets for staff performance help raise standards. Equal opportunities are promoted satisfactorily, leading to similar progress for different groups of pupils. The administrative support for the AC PRU is committed and efficient. Community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted, although not fully evaluated. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of religious and cultural matters and sound economic understanding, and there are satisfactory links with outside agencies and parents. Resources and staff are suitably deployed and teachers and assistants work closely together. The management committee provide sound support and challenge to the AC PRU. The committed leadership and management of the AC PRU give a sound basis on which to build further improvements. Leaders and managers have a sound knowledge of the PRU's weaknesses and strengths and a clear notion of what must be done to improve. However, while the evaluation

of pupils' progress is satisfactory, data is not always produced as frequently, or in as much detail as it should be to enable the different centres to further refine support and guidance and raise standards.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

3 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thanet and Dover Alternative Curriculum PRU, Ramsgate CT9 4JG

It was good to meet you when my colleague and I inspected the AC PRU recently. Thank you for talking to us about your different centres.

The AC PRU provides you with satisfactory education and care. Your learning and development are sound and the teaching and the care and support you receive are suitable. The curriculum meets your needs and the provision is satisfactorily led and managed. You told us about the things you enjoy, such as the extra activities, and that you appreciate being treated as young adults.

However, the AC PRU does not always gather enough information on how well you are doing; it misses opportunities to extend some of your good work for the community, and teaching is not always as good as it could be.

In order to support improvements, I have asked the staff to

- gather detailed information about how well you are doing more frequently so the different centres can support you better
- improve teaching and learning so all lessons are as good as the best
- extend the things you do to contribute to the community.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.

With every good wish for your future.

Yours faithfully,

Lead inspector