

Area A - PRU South - Chichester

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131182
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	330304
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascall

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Shephard
Headteacher	Elaine Willett
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2007
School address	PRU South (Chichester) Fletcher Place North Mundham Chichester PO20 1JR
Telephone number	01243 788044
Fax number	01243 788990

Age group	5–16
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Inspection number	330304

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Area A Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is a large pupil referral unit which educates pupils and students who have been excluded from their mainstream school or do not attend school for medical reasons. The PRU consists of two separate referral units. The 39 Club is based in Bognor Regis and caters for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who do not attend school for medical reasons. The other site, Chichester PRU, at North Mundham caters for Key Stages 3 and 4 students who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools. On the same site, but in a separate building, is provision for primary aged pupils who have been, or are at risk of being, permanently excluded from their mainstream schools. Nearly all students in Years 10 and 11 attend Chichester College either on a full-time or part-time basis.

The primary class is due to be moved in the near future to be within a mainstream primary school. Whilst the PRU takes pupils of primary school age it rarely takes pupils between the ages of five and seven and does not cater for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

At the time of the last inspection the PRU was placed in special measures. In September 2008 the consultant assistant headteacher of Chichester PRU took on the role, in an acting capacity, as head of Area A for the foreseeable future.

Many of the students have spent long periods out of school prior to joining the PRU, and as a result, standards on entry are well below average. There are a small number of students who have statements of special educational needs or who are in the process of being assessed for a statement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The pace of improvements over the last term has been considerable and as a result Area A now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and students. Much of this is because the acting head's strong, well-focused leadership has enabled the PRU to put in place effective systems that are supporting many aspects of its work. The acting head has empowered staff and enabled them to take on and carry out their responsibilities effectively. The senior leadership team is very clear about its role and as a result leadership and management are good.

While behaviour is good for those pupils in the primary class and students in the 39 club, it has, in the past, been too variable at the Chichester PRU and often unsatisfactory. The appointment of a behaviour manager and the introduction of a new rewards and sanctions system has done much to improve students' behaviour. Behaviour at Chichester PRU is now good. Students clearly value the new systems, work hard to gain merits and are taking more responsibility for their behaviour. Students talk very positively about the way the PRU has helped them. The good care, guidance and support systems are effective in ensuring students make good progress in their personal development. Their improvements are reflected in the high increase this term of students returning to mainstream or special school settings. This reflects staff's high expectations in ensuring that students understand that their stay at the PRU is only temporary because they are expected to succeed and attend college or mainstream school as soon as they are ready.

Whilst most students clearly like attending the PRU, attendance has been a considerable cause for concern, particularly for those students in Years 10 and 11. The recent appointment of a consultant to monitor and improve attendance has already had a considerable impact on improving students' attendance at college. However, the PRU recognises the need to improve attendance further. Staff recognise that one of the issues linked to attendance is the need to improve the curriculum for Years 10 and 11. Although the PRU's curriculum is satisfactory overall, it is not sufficiently well focused on the individual needs of these older students. For primary aged pupils, those students in Years 7, 8 and 9 and the 39 Club, the curriculum is good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and as a result students make satisfactory progress overall. Good quality support from the local authority has enabled teaching to improve at the Chichester PRU and it is now satisfactory. The quality of teaching for students in the primary class and 39 Club is good and students make good progress. Students at Chichester PRU are making satisfactory progress in their learning and their achievements are satisfactory. Staff have a much better understanding of the progress being made by students and are beginning to use data they have on students' achievements more effectively. As a result, teachers are clear about the progress they want students to make. However, the targets for learning within students' education plans are not consistently well focused on the small steps needed to enable them to achieve their goals. Teachers do not always make best use of their knowledge of students and take into consideration the different needs and abilities of those in their lessons. As a result, many are set the same tasks in lessons.

The very skilled leadership of the acting head has been a major factor in enabling the PRU to achieve as much as it has. She has been very effective in ensuring staff are involved in the changes and they are equally enthusiastic and committed as she is to bring about improvements.

There is a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and this, together with the very high quality support of the management committee, ensures that the PRU has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 to ensure it is better matched to their individual needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of students' individual targets, by ensuring they show students how to improve and making certain all teachers use them to improve students' achievement.
- Build upon the good work already started to ensure that all students attend the PRU regularly.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards remain well below average due to the disruption in students' education that many experience before joining the PRU. Overall, students make satisfactory progress in their learning and achievement is satisfactory but this varies across the PRU. Primary aged pupils make good progress in their learning and develop good skills in literacy and numeracy. Those students in Club 39 also make good progress. Students at Chichester PRU achieve well in science and are benefiting from the new personal, social and health education programme which is supporting their personal development well. Students in Years 10 and 11 make faster progress in mathematics and science than they do in English. The PRU is aware of this and is reviewing the curriculum for this age range. Action is also being taken to ensure that literacy is taught more effectively in other subjects and students have more opportunities to extend their reading skills. For students who attend regularly progress is often good and far more students are now gaining the skills they need to return to mainstream school or start at special school. Those students with a statement of special educational needs make the same progress as their peers, returning either to a mainstream or special school setting.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students talk positively about how the PRU has helped them. They particularly like the fact that staff listen and care about them. One referred to staff as 'amazing' because they are so understanding and patient. Students say they feel valued because they are praised for the good things they do. Students are friendly to visitors and confident to talk about their work and what they have done. The new merit system works well in helping them to manage their behaviour and students consider the rewards at the end of the week are a 'good way to finish off the week'.

The majority of students improve their attendance from their previous schools. For those pupils in the primary class, attendance is good, whilst in all other areas of the PRU it is satisfactory. Attendance at Chichester College was poor until this term. It has improved considerably and is now satisfactory.

Opportunities to participate in sport and outdoor education are valued by the students and they make good use of the local community facilities. There is much enthusiasm about the

range of activities and discussion about how they have learnt to cook outside on a fire. Students show a good understanding of staying healthy and keeping safe and comment how lessons in personal, health and social education and science are helping them to have a better understanding of the risks associated with such things as drink and drugs. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and clearly enjoy opportunities to cook and understand what makes a healthy meal. Students feel they are involved in the PRU and their views are listened to. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring relevant basic skills and work place experience, and are prepared appropriately for life when they leave school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has many strengths and is much improved, particularly at the Chichester PRU, since the previous inspection. There is a far more consistent approach this term to the management of behaviour and teachers are effective in bringing students back on task. They use the new systems well, reminding students of the consequences of their actions. Staff's very good relationships with the students are a great asset and they use humour well to encourage students to complete tasks. There is good team work with support staff, who support learning and behaviour well. Teachers' increased confidence is reflected in the increasing range of strategies they are using to make lessons interesting and hold students' attention. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well, such as in art. Teachers are beginning to work together to develop students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum and make better use of targets to develop students' skills.

Teachers are more consistent in ensuring students understand what skills they will learn by the end of a lesson and many are using this strategy well. However, teachers do not always make best use of their knowledge of students and their targets to ensure that work is matched to their ability. As a result, students too often do similar work without sufficient consideration about whether they have the individual skills to complete it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Much thought has gone into the curriculum for primary pupils and students at the 39 Club. As a result, the curriculum for these students is effective and meets their needs. The curriculum for those students in Years 7, 8 and 9 at Chichester PRU supports their learning well. The recent increased focus on personal, social and health education and better use of tutor time is providing students with the skills they need to return to mainstream or other schooling. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11, however, has not been sufficiently well linked to the needs of each student. All students are expected to attend college but little attention has been paid to the suitability of this placement for all students. Recent, robust monitoring of attendance and quality of provision has caused senior staff to begin to look more closely at the curriculum that the PRU should be offering. There is good recognition of the need to widen the range of vocational courses and extend work-experience opportunities further as well as ensure better promotion of basic skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and welfare of students are strengths and given high priority by staff. Robust systems are in place to ensure students are safe and well cared for. Procedures for child protection and risk assessments are very good and systems for vetting staff are secure. The very good systems that have been established recently which support behaviour and students' personal development are having a positive impact on enabling many students to return to school and manage their behaviours more effectively. Very good links with other agencies and access for students to see a counsellor are also supporting students well. New procedures at the start of this term have enabled staff to have a far better understanding of the needs of students when they are start at the PRU and this is, in turn, enabling staff to manage students' entry and exit from the PRU more effectively.

Staff are recording the progress of students in their learning on a regular basis. Through good links with other mainstream schools and regular moderation they are able to assess accurately students' abilities and are developing their skills in predicting the progress students should make over time. There are examples of very good practice in the marking of students' work, particularly at the Chichester PRU in English. In this subject, feedback is detailed and provides students with helpful 'hints' as to how they can improve their work. This is not yet consistent across the PRU and marking does not always give sufficient attention to students' targets to enable them to understand how they can attain their predicted grades.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Through a very clear understanding of what has needed to be done to bring about improvements the acting head has put in place and developed systems and procedures that have enabled the PRU to improve very quickly. She has achieved this by involving all staff and ensuring that all are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff in turn have risen to the challenge and have achieved a considerable amount in a short space of time. There is a clear commitment to not only maintaining the present standards but improving them further.

Senior leaders have gained in confidence and work well together ensuring a consistent approach in the way they manage and bring about change. They have developed their roles well and have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the PRU further. This is because data regarding students' achievements are being analysed well and are beginning to be used to bring about change. This is evident in the PRU's recognition that more needs to be done to promote literacy and extend opportunities for students to improve their reading skills.

The acting head is very well supported by the chair of the management committee. Regular visits by the chair and her very high expectations of staff are helping to raise standards. The management committee provides considerable challenge and has been instrumental in extending staff's involvement in local schools. Links with the community are effective and there are plans in place to extend the PRU's involvement further in the community.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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?	2

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	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	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**

4 December 2008

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of Area A Pupil Referral Unit South-Chichester, PO20 1JR

Thank you for making Paul and me so welcome during the inspection. I enjoyed the opportunity to talk to you during the day. You were very positive in your comments about the PRU. The PRU provides you with a satisfactory education and you make satisfactory progress in your learning.

- You have made good improvements in your behaviour and are polite and friendly.
- You make good progress in your personal development and as a result successfully return to a mainstream school.
- You clearly like taking part in all the sport and outdoor activities and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy.
- You have good relationships with staff and feel safe in the PRU.
- You work hard to gain merits and value the end-of-week prizes.
- Teachers are good at making lessons interesting and helping you understand the skills you will learn.

In order to make the PRU even better we have asked staff to:

- Improve the curriculum for those of you in Years 10 and 11 so that it is better matched to your individual needs.
- Improve your targets for learning so that they show you what you have to do to improve and ensure all teachers use them to help you learn more.
- Build upon the good work already started to ensure that all students attend school regularly.

I hope you will continue to support staff and try hard to ensure you attend the PRU on a regular basis.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall Lead inspector