

The Orchard Centre Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104288 |
| Local Authority | Wolverhampton |
| Inspection number | 336277 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 October 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Martyn Groucutt |

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

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 92 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Mrs J Wood |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 May 2007 |
| School address | Great Brickkiln Street Wolverhampton WV3 0PR |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the management board, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority. He observed the school's work, and looked at administrative, policy and other documentation and at the on-line information portal. He analysed a total of 24 parents' questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which the centre is effective in supporting pupils' reintegration into mainstream education
- the effectiveness of support for vulnerable pupils within the centre
- the effectiveness of provision across the different elements of the provision.

Information about the school

The Orchard Centre is a large pupil referral unit. Twenty four pupils are full-time at the main centre, including a small number of pregnant schoolgirls, and 68 pupils are dual-registered between the centre and their mainstream schools. There is a separate provision for hospital education which is managed by the centre catering for up to 30 pupils, although numbers fluctuate on a daily basis depending on admissions. The centre is also responsible for running the local authority's home tuition service. Admission to the main centre is dependent on a consultant or educational psychologist referral and all the pupils are vulnerable, with a range of emotional, medical, psychological or psychiatric difficulties. All have histories of severely disrupted education prior to enrolment. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and most are of White British origin. There is a high turnover with many pupils based at the centre for part of their education and a policy of reintegration into mainstream school at the earliest effective opportunity.

The centre has been awarded the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The leadership and direction of the headteacher and her management team are inspirational in providing a clear philosophy and vision in which pupils and staff feel valued as members of a therapeutic and learning community.

Pupils thrive and experience enjoyment and success, often for the first time in their lives in an educational setting, due to the high quality of pastoral care and support provided by the centre.

All Year 11 pupils gain external qualifications up to GCSE level that reflect the highest standards of which they are capable, despite the vast majority arriving with reading ages below chronological ages as a result of their previous broken schooling.

Assessment is rigorous and supportive, although it does not yet maximise opportunities for self- and peer-assessment of work.

Systems for tracking and supporting individual progress give a clear picture of current achievement from an initial baseline and ensure that academic challenge is maximised while continuing to acknowledge the vulnerable nature of the pupils.

The environment of the centre supports and encourages learning, with excellent levels of information and communication technology, stimulating displays and modern equipment throughout the buildings.

Teaching is at least good with a considerable amount that is outstanding and assessment is used very effectively to support learning, with the achievements of individual pupils known and their needs addressed.

Procedures for promoting and supporting reintegration into mainstream settings are highly effective, including continued tracking to ensure individual success.

Parents are generally highly appreciative of the centre and the opportunities it provides for their children to achieve and enjoy education.

The centre has continued to improve since its successful last inspection, for example in the rigour with which it tracks individual pupil progress and in the use of information and communication technology as a tool for teaching and learning. The quality of its self-evaluation is excellent, in part because it has effective data to confirm many of the judgements. It is therefore well placed to maintain its quest for excellence in everything it does and has excellent capacity to continue to deliver high quality provision within a context of continual improvement and improving outcomes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment by

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- developing the use of self- and peer-assessment
- ensuring that pupils and teachers understand the process, appreciate how it supports effective learning and participate fully in using it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Attainment overall is broadly average, but the picture is complex because wider social, medical, psychological or psychiatric issues mean that pupils arrive with fragmented and severely disrupted prior learning. They enter with below average standards but often make outstanding progress once they are more able to develop their full potential. Year 11 pupils are very successful in gaining a range of qualifications including the highest grades at GCSE. While for some attainment may be low, this often reflects good achievement when their starting point is considered. Many experience educational success for the first time and all are expected to become engaged and enjoy their learning. In an environment where they feel safe and protected, pupils' behaviour is outstanding.

Pupils are proud of the centre, support each other well and are keen to take opportunities to improve their learning. The recently introduced cooked meals service and facilities for individualised physical education programmes reflect a commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles which is having a positive outcome on pupils' understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Future economic well-being is promoted effectively through the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills, by a successful work experience programme in conjunction with Connexions, and in helping pupils overcome barriers previously faced in their lives. Attendance is broadly average, but absence is often the result of illness where this has been the primary reason for a pupil's admission to the centre. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that pupils attend the centre when they are able. The hospital education service is also highly effective and staff form excellent relations with medical personnel to support education for young people admitted. The excellent provision for pregnant schoolgirls not only maintains effective educational provision, but also provides wider support and encouragement in facing the challenges of motherhood. Dual-registered pupils are given excellent support by staff from the centre while links with mainstream schools are maintained. Reintegration to mainstream settings for all pupils is an ultimate aim of the centre and is always encouraged, supported by excellent tracking systems to ensure that pupils are able to thrive in the broader setting.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Throughout the centre visual images promote tolerance, understanding and positive images of different societies. Pupils respect each other's often complex needs and are highly supportive of each other, making the school community a very positive place.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is at least good and much is outstanding. It is this that enables pupils to make outstanding progress and achieve success, often for the first time. Because teachers demonstrate a real empathy for their pupils they are able to inspire, motivate and help them maximise their potential both educationally and socially. Excellent assessment procedures enable teachers to develop a detailed knowledge of their pupils, so that an individualised curriculum and a personal action plan underpin the progress they demonstrate. This is at the heart of the centre's success and it enables teachers to challenge individual pupils at the right level to gain maximum benefit without risking anxiety and rejection. It means that in addition to providing the emotional and therapeutic support that pupils need when they attend the centre they are also challenged academically to achieve the best of which they are capable. Supportive and constructive teacher comments, both verbal and written, help pupils to know how well they have done and their next steps. However, at the moment not enough opportunities are taken to develop self- and peer-evaluation.

The broad and balanced curriculum ensures a breadth of learning that also gives weight to creativity. Art is a particular strength and excellent displays help to create the vibrant atmosphere that is a notable feature of the centre. Partnerships are strong and effective, including specialist links with the family, adolescent psychiatric and hospital services and with Connexions, as well as the specialist services of the local authority. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and the individualised nature of provision means that excellent attention is given to all. The centre's work with other agencies helps it in its wider supportive work with families. One parent wrote, 'The centre is

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

wonderful... it has helped my child and supports me too.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 1 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, with the excellent support of her senior management team, provides inspirational leadership. There is a clear vision that includes an expectation of academic challenge, irrespective of any previous failure to cope with the rigours of the school system, or background of any pupil. This sees the creation of challenging targets for all, with targeted support that enables pupils to experience success. There is a constant search for continuous improvement, effectively illustrated in the recently developed on-line information portal. With pages for teachers, pupils, and parents/carers, and many features that open up the life of the school, this is becoming an effective tool for supporting the administration for a centre which is based in more than one building and for promoting learning partnership with homes. The leadership has the fullest support of staff, the management committee and parents/carers. It has created systems and processes that are rigorous and robust in promoting improvement and supporting its pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding, as are the quality of partnerships that bring a range of expertise in supporting the learning and the broader lives of the pupils. The management committee play a positive role in the centre and undertake their responsibilities well. The promotion of community cohesion is good, but is also an area being further developed, this being more difficult than for mainstream schools since the centre serves the whole of the city and beyond.

Since every pupil is encouraged to develop and achieve their full potential there is the strongest commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and tackling of discrimination. This lies at the heart of the values and mission of the centre and in its desire for excellence it deploys its resources very effectively to achieve outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |

| Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents have very positive views of the centre and of its effectiveness in meeting the sometimes complex needs of their children while providing them with a challenging curriculum and high expectations. One wrote, 'After being diagnosed...the centre has rebuilt my daughter's life,' and another, 'The centre has been the making of my daughter as she had extreme difficulty... because of her anxiety.' It is clear that the vast majority of parents are fully supportive of the centre, its leadership and staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Orchard Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 8 | 33 | 14 | 58 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 14 | 58 | 8 | 33 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 12 | 50 | 10 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 11 | 46 | 12 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 12 | 50 | 10 | 42 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 10 | 42 | 13 | 54 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 9 | 38 | 10 | 42 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 9 | 38 | 13 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 12 | 50 | 10 | 42 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 10 | 42 | 8 | 33 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 12 | 50 | 11 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 15 | 63 | 8 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 15 | 63 | 5 | 22 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Orchard Centre Pupil Referral Unit, Wolverhampton, WV3 0PR

Thank you for the very friendly welcome that you gave me when I carried out the recent inspection of The Orchard Centre. It is clear that you really do appreciate being able to attend such an exceptional place and that you get on so well with your teachers and other staff.

Mrs Wood and her colleagues work extremely hard to help you to be successful and to gain the most you can from your time at the centre. I was very impressed by the way that you respond and with the progress that you make as a result of your hard work. You are also very positive in your relationships with each other and the behaviour that I witnessed was outstanding. The centre itself is an excellent place, with lively displays throughout the building that illustrate the work you have done and successes you have accomplished.

Your teachers keep excellent records of your progress, which is often very good indeed and which enables many of you to be successful in a range of exams. This helps you to work hard and enjoy your learning, because the work is at just the right level to help you best. The staff seek to ensure that all your needs are addressed and even though you all found it hard to go to school before you attended The Orchard Centre, for a variety of reasons, you have all been able to do well since you started. Well done!

The teachers mark your work well and regularly, giving you good advice in their comments. However, I think that they could do a bit more to involve you in making judgements about the quality of your own work and the work of your classmates. I have asked them to look at ways in which they could develop this more, which will help you to think more about the quality of your work.

I hope that you continue to enjoy attending the centre for as long as you are pupils there. I would also like to wish you all the very best for the future in whatever that might bring.

Yours faithfully

Martyn Groucutt

Lead inspector

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