

St Edmund's House

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131596
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	341173
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Jean Cole
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons, and held meetings with the chair of the management committee, staff and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. The inspector observed the Pupil Referral Unit's (PRU) work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, development planning, management committee minutes and pupils' work. The inspector also scrutinised questionnaires from staff and a sample of pupils, and the one questionnaire that was returned by a parent.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the PRU's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which systematic monitoring and a meaningful curriculum are raising levels of achievement and getting pupils more involved in their learning while preparing them for a future beyond the PRU
- how successfully the PRU promotes pupils' experience and appreciation of cultures and faiths other than their own in this country and beyond
- the influence of the recently revised management committee on the PRU's direction and capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

The PRU provides alternative full-time education for 13 pupils in Years 7 to 11 who have been permanently excluded from school. The very large majority of pupils are in Years 10 and 11. This provision serves a wide geographical area and the composition of the cohort changes termly, and from year to year. Typically, pupils have a disrupted educational history and poor attendance in mainstream schools. All pupils have behavioural, emotional or social needs, and almost all are from families of White British heritage. The unit works in partnership with another PRU to provide some aspects of the curriculum.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Strong collective leadership has been the key factor in the PRU's sustained improvement and the way it strives to offer the best provision and outcomes for pupils and families. Although standards remain low in comparison to national averages, pupils make good progress during their time in the unit, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy. A key strength is the very high proportion of pupils who move on to college or into work. The curriculum is relevant and adapted to the needs of individual pupils. Links with outside partners are exceptionally good. Outstanding care, support and guidance help pupils to develop their self-esteem and confidence, for example when participating in activities at college and during work placements. Self-evaluation is clear and accurate and staff and the management committee have an accurate understanding of where the PRU is now and of the improvements needed. The PRU is well placed to move forward. The trust developed between pupils and staff are the foundation of this success. Parents are very supportive of the provision.

Pupils start with low attainment compared with their peers nationally. This is mainly because of substantial gaps in their education and the impact of behavioural, social and emotional factors. Pupils make good gains in their learning due to good teaching and their willingness to become involved in well-planned activities. This eagerness, shown by the large majority of pupils, is reflected in the pride taken by pupils in some of their work, for example the art work on display and in course work which showed a skilful use of information and communication technology (ICT). Standards reached by pupils when they leave are typically well below those expected nationally for their age because they have so much ground to catch up, and for some in quite a short amount of time. However, it is a mark of the provision's success that, by the time pupils leave in Year 11, tests results and assessments show that all pupils manage to achieve GCSEs or gain other accreditation. This picture represents good progress and many pupils have made substantial strides both in their learning and willingness to become involved in social and practical activities. It is also an indicator of the PRU's success that the large majority of pupils attend regularly, although it is aware of the need to work more closely with parents of the few pupils who do not attend often enough.

The good development of pupils' personal qualities is reflected in their good behaviour, interest and enjoyment of learning. They have developed a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. While the PRU has exceptionally good links with the local community and outside agencies, it recognises the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to appreciate and value people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country and around the world. The PRU also acknowledges the need to include elements of community cohesion when planning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance and by July 2010 meet local authority targets by strengthening the partnership with those parents whose children do not attend often enough, and sharing termly attendance information with them.
- Extend the PRU's strategy for community cohesion by
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from a wide variety of backgrounds and communities nationally and globally
 - ensuring that community cohesion is included in curriculum planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There are clear signs that the PRU's resolve and closely tailored support are making a substantial difference, resulting in pupils' good gains in both academic work and personal development. Pupils' willingness to participate in learning, as seen in English and mathematics, are typical of lessons and reflect good learning. Pupils thrive on success and many show resolve on completing tasks successfully.

Pupils have had periods out of school due to poor attendance, exclusion, or difficult personal circumstances. Consequently, pupils enter the PRU with low standards. The amount of time pupils spend at the PRU varies and standards reached are typically well below those expected nationally for pupils of similar age. However, progress is good because the large majority are successful in making up for some of the lost time and overcoming several of the significant barriers they faced when they started at the PRU. For example, pupils worked with some confidence when during an English lesson they focused on the construction of a piece of imaginative writing that probed their feelings. In geography, a pupil developed an improved awareness of the impact of flooding on the lives of people in this country and abroad. As result of this good progress, in 2009 almost all pupils gained GCSE passes in English and mathematics, and all gained other accreditation, for example in literacy, health care and a number of vocational courses. Current progress data show that pupils are on track to make similar gains this year.

Pupils respond positively to the sensitive and individualised support provided by staff. For all pupils, this response is a marked change when set against the personal difficulties they have had in the past and with which they continue to struggle. Pupils say they feel safe and they gain confidence in an environment that has clear boundaries and expectations that are consistently applied. Pupils are largely friendly and polite, relate well to each other, and mostly talk with staff and visitors in a mature and respectful manner. The large majority reflect on the way they have behaved in the past and show an understanding of what is right and wrong. Behaviour is good and, although the number of fixed-term exclusions rose for a short period, they have now dropped substantially. Pupils particularly like the fact that they are respected by staff and that their views are valued. Their enthusiasm for the activities offered, including cooking, has led to pupils taking a greater pride in their work and adopting healthier lifestyles. Pupils' substantially improved attendance reflects their positive attitudes and enjoyment of the

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activities. For most, it is the first time they have attended school on anything like a regular basis. However, a minority of pupils attend spasmodically and the PRU is aware that it has more to do to ensure all pupils attend regularly. All pupils are given opportunities to present views and help with decisions regarding the running of the centre. As a result of the staff's determination to encourage enterprise, work experience and courses related to life skills, pupils are appropriately prepared for life beyond the PRU.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) underpins the curriculum and forms a significant part each pupil's personalised learning programme. Although under continual review, the strength of the provision lies in its flexibility and the ability to offer pupils individualised support and learning experiences that reflect their interest, such as health care and skills in construction. The breadth of the curriculum is made possible by the different range of activities at the two centres, one of which is a partner PRU. There is a balanced and realistic approach towards pupils following courses leading to GCSEs and

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

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opportunities for them to achieve external accreditation in, for example, skills related to the building industry and health and beauty. Pupils' experiences are enriched by visits to local centres and businesses where they develop confidence and gain valuable life skills. However, the PRU recognises the need to develop links nationally and globally and include elements of community cohesion in curriculum planning.

The strengths of teaching lie in detailed planning based upon a thorough knowledge of each pupil and the collaborative approach taken by teachers and their assistants, who work effectively within teams and provide individualised support. Precise questioning probes and enhances pupils' understanding. Good relationships with pupils help to raise expectations, manage behaviour and cajole them into doing their best. Lesson objectives are made clear to pupils to ensure, for example, that they understand what skills they will develop during the lesson. Assessment information is used well to identify appropriate levels of approach, and marking is supportive and closely linked to individual targets.

The excellent support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised and valued by parents. One parent's comment represents the positive response made by others: 'It's fantastic to see such positive attitudes towards children and to give them another chance.' Pupils are well known by staff who are committed to ensuring that they are exceptionally well cared for and supported. Staff are very alert to the fact that no two days are alike and pupils can arrive on any day with varying levels of interest and willingness to engage. Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected, not just in opportunities for physical activity, but also in the provision of healthy meals and health-related courses. Highly effective individualised programmes of support are provided for all pupils covering a wide range of personal and learning needs. Their progress, both academic and personal, is tracked and monitored closely.

Pupils have a good understanding of their targets for personal development and appreciate how the consistent and sensitive support helps them improve their behaviour and social skills. Strategies to improve attendance have led to a pronounced improvement since last year and all pupils attend much more frequently than they did in mainstream schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong collective leadership has established a provision that demonstrates a

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commitment to developing each pupil's self-esteem, lifting levels of achievement and raising standards. The PRU promotes equality and tackles any form of discrimination well. Staff have a secure understanding of the PRU's strengths and areas for improvement. This picture is accurately reflected in documentation, which is sharply focused on improving the outcomes of pupils' educational and personal development. Systems are well embedded and, as result, pupils make good progress and standards are set on a road to sustained improvement. However, the PRU recognises the need to take over the responsibility from the local authority for the formal analysis of the progress data. Staff feel well supported and are committed to the work of the PRU. Their high but realistic expectations of where they want their pupils to be by the end of each term demonstrate good capacity for moving on.

Given that provision is well matched to the needs of the pupils, who make good progress in the relatively short period that they attend, value for money is good despite the below average standards on leaving.

The recently revised management committee is supportive and the chair works closely with the headteacher, giving well-considered guidance and advice. Knowledgeable committee members challenge the effectiveness of the PRU's development and ensure that policies are systematically reviewed. Attention to pupils' safety is integral to the PRU's work and safeguarding procedures are systematic, continually reviewed and firmly established. Local services and agencies are used exceptionally well to enhance the well-being of pupils.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the PRU and in the local area. Links and partnerships with outside agencies and local businesses are very well established. The PRU also supports the work of national charities. However, it knows it must do more to help pupils gain a better understanding of people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the UK and globally. Parents are given good opportunities to give views on the provision and benefit from regular contact.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

One parent returned a questionnaire for this inspection. However, six parents had completed a survey, sent out by the PRU earlier in the term, that included the same questions. The responses to all seven were positive and the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the provision. These included remarks about the PRU's caring and supportive environment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edmund's House to complete a questionnaire about their views of the provision.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the provision.

The inspection team received one completed questionnaire by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 13 pupils registered at the PRU.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	1	100	0	0	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)	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	100	0	0	0	0	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

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmund's House, Maidenhead SL6 8SB

I very much enjoyed my visit to your PRU and thank you for making me feel welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things I found while I was with you. It is a PRU where you feel safe and secure, and enjoy taking part in the wide range of interesting and meaningful activities. The staff are working hard to make it even better.

Here are some important things about your PRU.

- You make good progress in lessons.
- You respond positively to the good teaching.
- You value the range of activities that help you to improve your behaviour and develop into mature young people.
- Those in charge of the PRU are making improvements that are helping you to make even faster progress.
- All staff take exceptionally good care of you, and make sure that you know what to do to keep safe.
- You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet.

This is what your PRU has been asked to do to make things even better.

- Take action to improve attendance by working with those of you, and your parents, whose attendance is not as good as it could be.
- Help you to understand more about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the UK and beyond.

I wish each one of you every success in your future education and life beyond the PRU and hope that you continue to help yourselves to make things better.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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