

Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132026
Local Authority	Kingston upon Hull City of
Inspection number	341274
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	John Farrow

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barry Dibnah
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Shave
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
School address	Snowdon Way Bransholme Hull HU7 5DS
Telephone number	01482 798606
Fax number	01482 787380
Email address	admin@ashwell.hull.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Inspection number	341274

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited 12 lessons, observed the work of six teachers and spent over half the time looking at students' learning. He held meetings with staff, groups of students, senior leaders from a local secondary school, members of the management committee and a parent. He observed the school's work, looked at students' work and their performance data, school policies and documentation, external reports and 16 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- how well individual students achieve
- how well assessment is used to extend the learning of students
- the effectiveness of managers' use of students' performance information to drive further improvement

Information about the school

This small short-stay school provides education and support for up to 40 students aged 11 to 16 years in the City of Hull. Students who attend have either been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their local secondary school. All students have social, emotional and or behavioural difficulties and a few have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing assessment for a statement. There are currently 30 students on roll, most of them aged between 11 and 14 years; usually they return to a local mainstream secondary school within a few weeks or months. All students speak English as their first language and few are looked after by the local authority. The school has secured several significant awards including Investors in People and the National Healthy Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ashwell provides its students with a good education because high-quality and ambitious practice pervades almost all aspects of its work. The school has continued to improve well since its last inspection and now provides outstanding care, guidance and support to students. In conjunction with good teaching and a relevant, highly personalised curriculum this allows most students to make significant improvements in their behaviour and either make a successful return to mainstream education or transfer to a special school placement.

The school works well with parents, carers and other partners systematically to reduce the impact of previously entrenched behaviour difficulties while successfully promoting students' learning and personal development. Almost all parents and carers express strong support for the work of the school and emphasise its positive impact on their children. One parent summed up the views of many when she wrote: 'Communication with parents is excellent. I have never known my son to be so keen to get up and go to school; they must be doing something right!'

Students achieve well partly because teachers hold suitably high expectations of them. Also, as a result of increasingly effective assessment procedures, teachers plan work that is well matched to individual students' needs and that successfully promotes rapid progress. Occasionally, teachers are too quick to provide answers to students' problems or they do too much of their thinking for them; this can limit their independence as learners. Nevertheless, each student is provided with a highly personalised balance of care, challenge and support, well designed to improve their self-control and to ease them gently back into successful learning habits. Consequently, students who invariably enter school in turmoil, often with entrenched learning difficulties, anxiety or hostility, quickly accept and respond to the positive working culture that pervades the school. Target setting, and tracking evidence seen alongside samples of students' current work confirm that despite students' past difficulties or fragmented patterns of attendance, most make good and occasionally outstanding progress in relation to their age, ability and starting points. The small proportion of older students, destined to complete their education at this school, also show a strongly improving trend of attainment. This is recognised and celebrated through an appropriate range of external qualifications.

Many students enter school with a history of persistent absence or entrenched non-attendance. Following admission, their attendance usually improves rapidly while the incidence of persistent absenteeism declines. However, despite the school's determined efforts to improve the attendance of all students, a very small minority are still absent too often and this is limiting their progress and readiness for a quick return to mainstream or special school placement.

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 headteacher and senior staff are highly ambitious on behalf of their students and make good use of well-established monitoring activities to drive forward their shared vision. This underpins their accurate and increasingly well-evidenced view of their school's strengths and the few remaining areas in need of improvement. This means the school has a good capacity to improve further. The management committee plays its part, by helping shape the school's development and by fulfilling its statutory responsibilities well. However, it has yet to develop a sufficiently systematic or effective approach to holding school leaders to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning further by enabling students to develop greater independence and responsibility for their own work.
- Work with parents and carers and the education welfare service to improve the attendance of the very few students who remain persistently absent.
- Ensure that the management committee makes effective use of data on students' performance when supporting or challenging school leaders to tackle weaknesses and improve outcomes for all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Most students, including those with more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities, take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school to make a fresh start to their education; as a result, outcomes for them are improving well. Students soon learn to work hard and at a brisk pace in lessons, taking care and pride in their work. They usually respond thoughtfully and with enthusiasm to lively and engaging teaching that is well matched to their abilities and interests. Despite standards on entry being low, the vast majority of students make good and occasionally outstanding progress in lessons. They show a rapid improvement in their level of attainment over a relatively short period of time, with a majority reaching levels that are broadly in line with national averages. This allows most students to acquire or consolidate the necessary knowledge and skills they will need to return successfully to a mainstream school and complete their secondary education. A very few older students are unable to follow this route and, as a result, complete their education at this school. These students achieve an appropriate range of external qualifications or awards that enable them to move successfully on to the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Students say they feel safe and most enjoy coming to a school. They say they know they are being helped to make good progress and to improve their behaviour. Students trust staff and believe they will always do their best to provide patient, practical help whenever it is needed. Some of the older students wrote particularly compelling accounts of their thoughts and feelings about their experiences in this school and how it is helping them 'turn their lives around' by making better informed personal choices. When attitudes or behaviour go wrong, students usually respond quickly and well to any

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

additional guidance or direction required. They know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and some, if not the majority, want to improve their well-being through activities such as the 'smoking cessation support' provided by the school. Students clearly value being active members of this energetic community and willingly participate in voluntary and charity events (such as the Young Peoples' Ambassador Project) designed to help others either at home or abroad. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory; they know the difference between right and wrong and are learning to respect each other's needs or feelings and to make increasingly reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas facing young people their age.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
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	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this successfully to motivate and inspire students. They make good use of day-to-day assessment opportunities and plan lessons that are well matched to students' abilities and interests. Teachers are innovative and creative in the ways they do this, using information and communication technology (ICT) alongside more traditional resources and activities that appeal to

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

students' curiosity, to promote active participation and enjoyment. A good example of this was seen in a 'virtual' GCSE ICT lesson, where students were successfully challenged by an 'online teacher' to work independently, and against the clock, to locate, organise, and evaluate a variety of topical information in line with external accreditation requirements. Teachers and teaching assistants work together successfully using instructions, questions and other forms of classroom talk very effectively to support and extend students' often limited vocabulary, knowledge and understanding. While this supports students' fragile self-esteem particularly effectively, it also reinforces a somewhat 'dependent' style of learning. For example, in some good lessons seen, each step of learning was carefully orchestrated by the adults, resulting in restricted opportunities for the students to think, make independent decisions or consider and learn from their own mistakes.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and particularly well suited to the needs of students likely to be reintegrated into a mainstream school setting. It is also effectively adjusted to the needs of students who have more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are undergoing statutory assessment procedures. It is well organised and provides good opportunities to enrich or inspire the lives of the students. For example, it is successfully developing a strong local community cohesion dimension while maintaining a relentless focus on the rapid development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Accurate and sensitive assessments of each student's academic, personal, social and emotional needs inform all aspects of the life and work of the school. As a result, students receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Students say there is always someone they can turn to, should they need help. They also have good access to high-quality support in relation to promoting sexual health and well-being, or dealing with domestic violence or drug and substance abuse. Support is always highly personalised, practical and tailored to each child's and family's circumstances and delivered by staff who know the students well. Staff show a dogged determination to secure improvements where they are most needed; for example, when working with the families of the very few remaining persistently absent students. Unrelenting and highly effective efforts are also made to ensure that the school provides a safe environment for students and staff.

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?

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 headteacher and her staff are successfully delivering their shared ambition. They are providing a safe, consistent and caring setting in which vulnerable and challenging young people can learn to form robust and cooperative relationships with each other and adults, successfully re-engage in learning and begin to achieve their underlying potential. They effectively communicate their high expectations to students, their families and key partners across the city. They are successfully preparing their students for their return to mainstream school, or the next stage of their education or training. School leaders have systematically improved the use of teachers' day-to-day assessment that is driving further improvements in learning and progress. They are now working closely with senior staff from a local secondary school to draw on their expertise and ensure that they continue to build an ambitious level of challenge into their developing target-setting and tracking arrangements. Members of the management committee make a satisfactory contribution to the leadership of the school by maintaining a sound oversight of their statutory duties and ensuring that students and staff are safe. They work well with the headteacher to make certain that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met and constantly updated. However, while they are strongly supportive of the school's leaders, they are yet to make more effective use of the students' performance data to hold school leaders to account for the outcomes they secure. Despite this weakness, the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination exceptionally well, and pursues highly effective strategies that support and enable students to make sustained and significant gains in their performance and participation in the life and work of the school.

The school also works particularly well in partnership with parents and carers and makes determined efforts to establish honest and purposeful relationships with them; even if they hold conflicting expectations of what education can or should offer. Consequently, most parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's efforts to keep them fully involved in all decisions that affect their children. Partnership working with mainstream schools is outstanding and leads to a high success rate among returning students. Agencies such as education welfare or child and adolescent mental health services also make a critical contribution to determining and implementing the most appropriate type of support or interventions to promote students' well-being and future education pathways. Equally good arrangements with voluntary partners also successfully promote greater cohesion and engagement with diverse community groups beyond the school's local community. As a result of the highly effective practice and increasingly good outcomes secured by students, the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>	<p>3</p>

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 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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Almost all were positive about the quality of education and care provided. Most valued the quality of the school's relationship with them and their children, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. Comments made by one parent interviewed were typical of those written on other parents' and carers' questionnaires, and described how the school and its staff are helping students overcome a range of personal, learning and behavioural difficulties with tenacity and compassion. A small minority of returns opposed this overall positive pattern, but the inspector judged that relationships with parents and carers were overwhelmingly constructive, and upheld the positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 30 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	50	6	38	2	13	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	63	4	25	1	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	81	2	13	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	81	3	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	56	7	44	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)	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	63	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	63	6	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	75	4	25	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.



05 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Ashwell Pupil Referral Unit, Hull, HU7 5DS

Thank you for both the welcome and the help you gave me when I came to inspect your school. I would particularly like to thank those of you who spent time talking to me during the inspection.

I believe that Ashwell provides you with a good education and outstanding care and support. I visited lessons and looked at examples of your work and found that you make good progress, because of good teaching and your own hard work. I think you are being well prepared for the move to your next school or to further education or training. Your behaviour in lessons and your attitudes to work were particularly good, and I thought you were sensible and capable young people. Occasionally when you feel upset or lose your temper, your behaviour is managed calmly and learning usually carries on without too much disruption.

Many of you arrive with a history of difficulties from your previous schools, but with help from staff you soon begin to improve both your work and your behaviour. I'm asking the teachers to increase the opportunities they give you to work more independently; this will help those of you who return to larger classes in your next secondary school. A small number of you are still absent too often and this is limiting what you can achieve at this school. I am asking the school to work with you, your families, the education welfare service and others to improve the attendance of those of you who are absent too often. I am also asking the school's management committee to keep a close eye on your progress and results, to make sure the school continues to help you achieve as well as you possibly can. You can help yourselves by continuing to work hard and by making sure you attend even more regularly.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Farrow

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.