

Hospital and Home Education Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133164
Local Authority	City of Nottingham
Inspection number	341359
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	1
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Not Applicable
Headteacher	David Staveley
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
School address	Thorneywood Education Base Fairmead Close Nottingham NG3 3AL
Telephone number	0115 915 3862
Fax number	0115 915 3863
Email address	admin@thorneywood.connet.org.uk

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 information 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 two additional inspectors. The team observed 10 lessons across the two sites, taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff on both sites, groups of pupils and parents. Conversations were had with the chair of the management committee and local authority officers. The team observed the unit's work, and looked at a variety of documentation including progress reviews and external monitoring reports. The 38 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- how effectively the management committee carries out its responsibilities
- the consistency of procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision across different sites, including home tuition
- the process of collecting and collating assessment information from a transient pupil population and leaders' analysis of this data to measure pupils' progress and evaluate their achievements.

Information about the school

The Hospital and Home Tuition Pupil Referral Unit caters for pupils who have a medical condition that prevents them attending their own school. There are four groups of learners, with the following conditions:

- mental health issues, such as an eating disorder, that require specialist inpatient or day-patient care
- an illness that needs general hospital admission, which could be on a regular long-term basis, such as for dialysis treatment or cystic fibrosis, or a routine admission for surgical or medical treatment
- an illness that prevents attendance at school but does not require admission to hospital
- acute anxiety leading to school refusal.

Pupils are taught on two sites about five miles apart. The Thorneywood Education Base works with pupils who have mental health problems. They are either inpatients at the adjacent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service unit or they attend as day patients. Other learners on this site are anxious school refusers and some pupils who would otherwise be tutored at home on a one-to-one basis. About a third of pupils receive home tuition. Pupils with a general medical condition are now taught at the education centre in the Queen's Medical Centre (QMC), whereas at the time of the previous inspection some were taught there and others in another city hospital.

The number on roll fluctuates greatly, changing on a daily basis, as does the make-up of the population in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. There is no specific post-16 provision. Students are taught by the same staff as other pupils and they follow programmes linked to their schools. The one post-16 student and primary-aged pupils seen during the inspection were at the QMC for very short-term visits.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The Hospital and Home Tuition Pupil Referral Unit does outstanding work. It is exceptionally successful in achieving its purpose of maintaining continuity of education for all pupils in all subjects and age groups. It is very effective in helping pupils to re-engage with education following lengthy periods of non-schooling because of emotional and/or mental health issues. The unit is equally successful in maintaining pupils' education during periods spent in hospital for medical treatment.

The pupils are excellent ambassadors for the unit. They are very impressive young people, some of whom have come to terms with long-standing acute and chronic medical conditions, while others have transformed their lives. Outstanding attitudes and behaviour are evident everywhere. Whatever the circumstance, pupils display great enjoyment in their learning. They are enthusiastic, cooperative, respectful and considerate young people who display a striking level of maturity in how they begin to take responsibility for their behaviours or the management of their conditions.

The huge strides that pupils make in aspects of their personal development provide a very effective springboard for learning. Staff exploit this situation exceptionally well. They capitalise on this very receptive learning climate by teaching very high quality lessons. They are able to maintain a very high level of challenge because relationships are exceptional: trust is in abundance. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in their work and achieve well. Their attainment is broadly average. The curriculum is good, being much broader than in many pupil referral units, although the work-related learning programme is under-developed at Thorneywood. Care, guidance and support are exemplary, with excellent, secure procedures for safeguarding pupils.

The unit's success is driven by outstanding leadership, based on the highest of expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders have forged exceptionally fruitful links with partner organisations and the unit works well with parents and carers. Staff strive to implement leaders' commitment and are successful in ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity to participate and to make progress. Promoting community cohesion is difficult given the circumstances, although the unit does this well within the context in which it operates. Leaders carry out school evaluation very well although the management systems for collecting and storing information are not as efficient as they could be for a provision that is split over two sites. A strong track record of innovation and very effective development planning that produces very good results indicates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. However, the planning system is not as efficient as it could be. Governance is good. The local authority fulfil their roles and responsibilities well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make leadership and management even more effective to improve efficiency by:
 - differentiating between strategic intent and actions aimed at maintaining the quality of provision in development planning so that improvement plans focus only on strategic direction and priority objectives
 - streamline management systems, such as the collection and storage of information.

- Implement a work-related learning programme for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who attend Thorneywood Education Base.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment varies widely across the unit as a result of the impact that pupils' medical conditions have had on their attendance at school. Some pupils' attainment is high, while others are working at below expected levels. Overall, attainment is broadly average and pupils achieve well. Pupils' ability to attend classes rises dramatically as their mental health improves. Above-average attendance and outstanding personal development help pupils to be well prepared for leaving school.

All pupils have had disruption to their learning. In some cases, this is minor, such as a short stay in hospital following an accident. In the vast majority of cases, however, the disruption is over a long term. Although most pupils on the QMC site spend limited amounts of time under the supervision of the unit, staff enable them to make excellent progress in their personal development. Pupils know a great deal about how to stay safe and healthy through managing their conditions and how to maintain balance in their lifestyle. Their attitudes, resolve, determination and fortitude are exceptional. They make excellent progress in their academic work too because staff work so closely with their host schools that they are able to provide a seamless transition between school and the hospital base. The pupils do very well in the accredited courses that they take in Key Stage 4.

All pupils at the Thorneywood education base have had extraordinarily difficult chapters in their lives. They recall them vividly in their poetry:

'Twisted mirror on the wall
Who is the thinnest of them all?
Is it I with my body so bony?
In this world where beauty has become phoney
Dull face and worn expression
Body consumed by this obsession.'

and,

'I am a summer breeze and I am the harshest wind
I am a worm wriggling through soil, and I am the soil that has been churned
I am the laughter but also the tears that follow
I am right, yet I am completely wrong.' (Paradox Poem)

Extremely poignant poetry such as this demonstrates the length of the journey that some pupils have travelled. They make tremendous advances in rationalising their situation and in taking the necessary steps to deal with it. The journey that they take only succeeds because of the outstanding development that pupils make in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They talk about their situation maturely and they view their future positively. They look forward to re-engaging with mainstream education because they have the confidence to believe that they will succeed academically as well as socially. This is possible because pupils make excellent progress during their time in the base. Outstanding partnerships with pupils' mainstream schools enable unit staff to maintain consistency by working with pupils on the same modules of the same examination courses that they would have been following. They do very well in these courses, as do pupils who are not able to attend the base for group teaching and receive one-to-one tuition in libraries or other centres or, occasionally, at home.

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	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	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The unit provides an outstanding quality of education. Its great strength lies in the way that it balances education with care, and expectation with understanding. Whether lessons are taught to individuals or to groups, the quality is the same. Teaching is outstanding because it always incorporates challenge and it inevitably requires pupils to apply themselves if they are to learn and make progress. Pupils succeed in doing both exceedingly well. Teachers have a very clear picture of their pupils' previous learning based on very good assessment, and very detailed knowledge of their pupils' conditions at all times. This is a critically important factor, as circumstances can change quickly. Pupils confirm that staff are very perceptive

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

and skilled at adapting. One pupil at QMC summed this up as: 'Teachers understand when we can't do the work because we have had a very long trip to get here.'

The curriculum is very different on the two sites. At QMC, it varies according to individual circumstances and it is generally dictated by pupils' mainstream situation, such as maintaining work supplied by the school. Thorneywood provides good accommodation and so leaders can offer a broad curriculum. The unit makes the most of these areas because leaders were decisive in appointing part-time specialist teachers to supplement the general teaching skills of the staff team. This was a very shrewd move that has reaped its reward. It enriched the curriculum, such as by providing a modern foreign language, and it also contributed to accelerating pupils' rate of learning. These teachers are part of the home tuition team too and so this group of pupils also benefits from specialist input. Preparing pupils for the next stage of their education, training or employment is not supported fully by the Thorneywood curriculum as it lacks a structured, practical approach to work-related learning.

Multi-agency work is the real strength of the outstanding care, guidance and support. It is integral to everything that the unit does and even the pupils comment that it is the combined efforts of different teams that make the difference. What is so striking is that everyone knows what their precise role is in the overall care of each young person and each knows where the boundary is between their responsibility and that of colleagues.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team is exceptionally effective in driving improvement. It recognised that if the unit was to be wholly effective, it had to construct a detailed picture of every pupil with whom it has significant contact. Therefore, leaders have overseen the establishment of procedures for compiling a comprehensive evaluation of pupils' development, social and academic. Insofar as is possible, this includes statistical data on pupils' academic achievement and leaders use this as one tool in evaluating their progress. Rightly, they recognise that for the pupils with whom they work achievement is much greater than this and they are very skilled at interpreting data to demonstrate the quality of learning. Despite this, the management systems for collecting, storing and retrieving information from two sites are not as efficient as they could be. The home tuition component is monitored very well to ensure that it is effective and that it provides value for money.

Leaders have ensured an exceptionally safe environment, in which safeguarding pupils' welfare is a priority. It is also a very fair and equitable place. All pupils are

treated as individuals and they all have access to the same opportunities. Staff are skilled at removing potential barriers to learning within the unit’s community, but the short stay nature of elements of the provision, such as parts of QMC, prevents extensive opportunities for promoting community cohesion. Despite this, the unit strives to develop an awareness of mental health issues within society. It is highly successful in responding to the needs of its pupils who come from communities across a vast geographical area as some of its resources are regional facilities. The local authority ensures that statutory requirements are met. It is effective in fulfilling its role in those areas that it has ultimate responsibility, such as finance and staffing. The management committee performs its administrative responsibilities well. It monitors expenditure, ensures that the unit is organised in line with good practice and oversees implementation of the curriculum policy. It has recently become better organised and more focused through a developing programme of planned visits and via taking increasing responsibility with unit leaders for monitoring the improvement plan. The plan reflects ambition and strategic intent effectively, but the few key objectives that drive it are submerged by routine management tasks that have no place in a strategic plan. Current practice certainly produces results but not always as efficiently as it might.

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
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	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	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

Sixth form

The number of post-16 students fluctuates wildly. The provision for this group is dependent entirely upon the learning requirements of the individual. The unit has the flexibility to meet this potentially very wide range of needs and when post-16 students receive input from the unit, outcomes for them are no different to those of younger pupils. The excellent management and outstanding provision are the same.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
---	---

Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers appreciate the work of the unit. There was no difference in the praise from parents whose children are at Thorneywood, QMC or receiving home tuition. Comments include: 'Home education has helped my child in lots of ways – given him confidence to meet challenges', 'the school is a wonderful facility at QMC', and 'I find the school (Thorneywood) very responsive to the needs of my child – very caring and interested.' However, parents are not unanimous in their support, as a very small number expressed unhappiness with all areas of the unit's work. The inspection team was unable to substantiate these negative views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at the Hospital and Home Tuition 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 107 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	55	12	32	2	5	2	5
The school keeps my child safe	27	71	8	21	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	61	12	32	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	53	13	34	1	3	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	25	66	11	29	0	0	2	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	55	12	32	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	47	14	37	3	8	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	61	12	32	1	3	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	45	14	37	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	58	12	32	1	3	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	22	58	13	34	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	66	10	26	0	0	3	8

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hospital and Home Tuition Pupil Referral Unit, Nottingham, NG3 3AL

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited the unit, with a particular thanks to those of you who spoke with us. We spent two very enjoyable days with you. You told us that the unit is really good and it helps you a great deal. We agree with you. It does an excellent job.

You impressed us a great deal. We thought that you were very mature young people in the way that you come to terms with your situations and medical conditions. Your attitudes and behaviour were never less than excellent and you make outstanding strides in your personal development, such as learning how to stay safe and to be as healthy as possible. You learn at a very good pace too and make excellent progress in your work because lessons are extremely good. The staff take exceptional care of you and they work very well with your medical teams.

The people who run your unit do an excellent job and they want to make the unit even better. They have ideas about how to do this and we have given them a couple more:

- streamline the ways in which they collect and store data and how they use this information to plan for future change
- introduce more opportunities for Years 10 and 11 at the Thorneywood base to be involved in work-related learning.

Finally, thank you once again. I sincerely hope that every one of you continues to stay positive and I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
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](tel:08456404045), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.