

# The Milton Keynes Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134310
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	341455
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Blackband

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	14
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	the local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Wayne Marshall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Romans Field Site Stenley Road Milton Keynes MK3 7AW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Two-and-a-half hours were spent in observing learning, and five lessons by the one class teacher were observed. Meetings were held with representatives of the local authority, with a range of staff and with a small group of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at the unit's record keeping, the teachers' planning and assessment and all aspects of the unit's improvement planning. The inspector looked also at seven parental questionnaires, ten pupils' questionnaires and eight responses from staff.

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

- the achievement and progress of all pupils from their starting points and whether all pupils are reaching their potential
- the quality of assessment procedures and how effectively this translates into effective planning and target setting
- whether the unit demonstrates effectively that outcomes for pupils in their personal development are as good as the unit evaluates them to be
- how effectively leaders and managers, at all levels, monitor and evaluate strategies to improve on the pupils' performance.

## Information about the school

The Milton Keynes primary pupil referral unit (PRU) has 12 places for pupils who have been excluded or who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. The pupils remain at the unit for about two terms. The vast majority are dual registered with mainstream schools, while a very few others are awaiting a suitable placement. The pupils attend the PRU for the morning sessions only each day. At midday, the pupils are transferred either to mainstream schools or to their homes. Those going home are given work packs. The PRU staff provide support in mainstream schools to help pupils to reintegrate with mainstream education. The unit currently operates in temporary accommodation on the same site as a residential primary special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The PRU will relocate in March 2010 to new purpose-built premises on the same site. The headteacher of the special school is also headteacher of the PRU.

**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

The unit provides a good education for the pupils. There has been substantial improvement in all areas since the previous inspection. Most pupils enter the unit with negative attitudes to schools and learning. The high level of adult supervision ensures that pupils receive good care, guidance and support. This helps them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils feel valued because of the high quality relationships which exist at all levels. They enjoy being at the unit and report that they feel safe. Safeguarding arrangements are good. This is confirmed by the outstanding attendance of almost all pupils. As one pupil commented, 'I like the PRU because it helps to keep me calm and it helps me to be good.' Several parents and carers stated that their child now 'loves school'.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a clear focus on raising standards to accelerate pupils' progress. Many pupils join the unit with knowledge, understanding and skills which are below the levels expected for their age. As a result of the good teaching and the care and support they receive, their attitudes to education significantly improve. Almost all the pupils make good progress in reading and number work. A few make outstanding progress. Every pupil is given equal worth and encouraged to achieve as well as he or she can. The very small number who go home in the afternoon make equally good progress because their 'work packs' are well suited to their ability and scrupulously marked and reviewed by the teacher. By the time they leave the unit they are starting to catch up with mainstream pupils and their attainment is just below average.

The pupils' progress is effectively assessed. Sound practice is seen in the construction and review of pupils' individual behaviour and personal targets. The pupils know clearly what is expected of them and they achieve well in lessons. Other learning targets are not always as clearly defined. The pupils, as a result, sometimes do not understand fully how to improve their work and this can affect their progress.

There has been continuing improvement since the previous inspection in arranging the re-integration of pupils into their mainstream schools. Partnerships between the schools and the unit are well managed. This has resulted in almost all the pupils being in full-time education, since they attend the unit in the mornings and successfully join their mainstream class in the afternoons. At the end of two terms, the majority of pupils confidently make the transition back to their school or to suitable alternative provision. The unit is well led and managed by the headteacher and assistant headteacher. Every aspect of the unit's work is robustly monitored and improvements made where necessary. This self-evaluation has been effective, for instance, in raising standards of

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teaching and in creating a relevant and interesting curriculum. Managers also rigorously monitor and track the pupils' achievement and so are able quickly to intervene should any pupil start to underachieve. The promotion of community cohesiveness is satisfactory. There are effective procedures to ensure that the unit is a largely cohesive community where the pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues. Pupils, however, have limited understanding of wider religious and ethnic characteristics in the local community and beyond. Governance is satisfactory. The local authority has appointed a new management committee which will commence duties very shortly. The unit has made significant progress since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. As a result, there is a good capacity to improve the unit's work further.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise achievement further by setting learning targets which give clear guidance about how pupils can improve their work.
- Promote the pupils' understanding of community cohesion, by ensuring that the curriculum takes full account of all aspects of community cohesion

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

Pupils often arrive at the unit with negative attitudes to learning and gaps in their knowledge. They quickly appreciate the safe and caring atmosphere and their interest in learning improves. Most pupils achieve outstanding attendance targets. Pupils make good progress in reading, spelling and numeracy and by the time they leave the unit, their attainment in these areas is just below the national average. Their attainment in writing is below average, although standards are improving as a result of the emphasis on writing skills in most of their activities. Pupils make good progress in lessons. They receive a high level of individual support. This motivates them to attempt new work and to learn by their mistakes, confident in the positive encouragement they receive. At the end of lessons, they are keen to demonstrate what they have learned and how well this has built on what they knew beforehand. For instance, pupils reacted with enthusiasm to the teachers' request that they firstly draw and then describe how they felt when angry. The pupils were able to use a range of appropriate vocabulary to describe their feelings and listened with interest to the views of others in the group.

The unit provides a calm, happy and safe haven where pupils enjoy learning. Their self-confidence rapidly improves when they join the unit because they feel well cared for by staff and are confident that any problems they have will be sorted out. The pupils therefore make good progress in improving their self-esteem, their willingness to learn and their behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Most pupils demonstrate growing levels of empathy, tolerance and understanding. They play happily together, they are pleased when others do well in their work and they socialise very successfully with pupils from the attached special school. Their cultural understanding and their knowledge of their local and wider communities is satisfactory. They support

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initiatives to improve aspects of their life in school and the local community. During their time in the unit the pupils gain a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. Their good progress in basic skills, in improving their attitudes to education and in controlling their behaviour prepares them well for their return to mainstream classes.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is well matched to each pupil's learning needs. This is achieved through effective initial assessment which enables teachers to adapt work to suit the pupils' attainment and achievement. Teachers know their pupils well. They plan effectively to provide for several small groups of pupils of differing ability. The skilful teaching assistants work effectively with each group, providing good support. They have high expectations of the pupils and challenge them through the brisk pace of lessons and the well-directed questions. The curriculum appropriately emphasises basic skills. There are regular sessions of literacy and numeracy which are based on national teaching strategies. This adds rigour and structure to lessons. Since the previous inspection, the

<sup>1</sup> 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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use of information and communication technology has been substantially improved. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to help them illustrate their lessons and pupils make regular use of computers to draft and correct their literacy work. Teachers ensure that the more vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning difficulties receive a high level of extra support. Most individual targets, particularly those which concern the pupils' behaviour, are very clear. The activities given to different groups are sometimes, however, based on learning targets which are not specific enough to meet the precise needs of each individual and which do not take enough account of sharply focused small learning steps. As a result, the pupils sometimes are not able to understand clearly enough what they need to learn next and how to improve their work.

Teachers and assistants manage behaviour well. When pupils' behaviour sometimes becomes unacceptable, staff deal with it consistently and with support for the pupil involved. There is a developing range of activities to enhance the pupils' learning. They take part in charity events such as 'Hats for Haiti' to support earthquake victims. Pupils share a range of activities with the special school, including trips to the theatre and visits to the local community. Their physical activity is encouraged through football training with professional players from MK Dons.

The pupils are well supported. There is an effective programme of personal, health and social education which has a positive impact on the pupils' personal skills. The pupils are very well supervised. They respond well to the clear structures and consistent expectations of staff and they have confidence in trusted adults. There are good systems to promote the pupils' reintegration into mainstream schools. Teaching assistants from the unit, who know the pupils very well, provide high quality support in mainstream classes. The 'liaison teacher', along with the assistant headteacher in charge of the unit, manages the reintegration process effectively.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The unit is led and managed very effectively by the headteacher and the assistant headteacher, who is in day-to-day charge. All staff share their vision and, consequently, there is a clear, common purpose which permeates the life of the unit. The unit's commitment to equality of opportunity is outstanding. As a result, it is extremely successful in removing barriers to learning, thus improving the pupils' life chances and

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ensuring they all get a 'good deal'. Accurate self-evaluation leads to effective action being taken to remedy identified weaknesses and to raise standards through sharply focused improvement planning. Child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding requirements are robust and meet current statutory guidelines. The previous management committee has been involved in all aspects of the unit. There has recently, however, been a short period, pending the move to new premises, when the local authority has managed the unit directly. The governance of the unit has been satisfactory. A new management committee is due to take over in March 2010.

The unit's staff work well with partnership schools to support pupils' welfare, social and learning needs. There are good procedures to communicate regularly with parents and carers, such as the pupils' 'homeschool book' which is monitored daily by the teacher in charge. The unit makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It promotes cohesion well within its own community and engages with a large number of partnership schools. There is only limited evidence of its success in promoting community cohesion beyond the unit.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers are very pleased with the unit's provision. Parents and carers believe their children are happy and safe and that the unit has had a positive impact on their child's behaviour and attitude to school. The inspection findings agreed with this view. A very small minority, while happy with the provision in the unit, expressed concerns that the local authority had not acted appropriately to meet their



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children's additional learning needs by placing them more quickly in a school which specialised in this type of learning difficulty.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Milton Keynes Primary Pupils 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 seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are fourteen pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	84	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	84	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	84	1	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	42	3	42	1	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	70	2	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	70	2	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	28	5	70	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	14	5	70	1	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	14	5	70	0	0	1	14
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	56	2	28	1	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	84	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	84	1	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	84	1	14	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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 February 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Milton Keynes Primary Pupil Referral Unit, Milton Keynes MK3 7AW

Recently, I came to visit the unit to report on how well you are doing. I enjoyed my visit and I appreciated the way you all made me feel welcome. It was good to meet you all in the classrooms. I really enjoyed your good work assembly and the brilliant dancing with the pupils at Romans Field School!

I have judged the unit to be 'good'. I think the following are some of the good things about the unit:

- you make good progress in your work and you start to catch up in reading, spelling and mathematics
- you make good progress in improving your behaviour and in learning to like school more. The unit staff make every effort to help you settle back happily into your school
- you all get on well together and you have helped to make the unit a happy place. As a result, you like coming to the unit and your attendance is excellent
- the staff make sure every one of you can learn as well as possible by giving you a lot of support and encouragement.

I would like the unit to improve a few things to give you an even better education. I have asked the staff to:

- make what you are expected to learn in lessons more clear to you, so you know exactly how to make your work even better
- help you to understand better how communities work together, not just in your school but also in Milton Keynes and the wider world.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Blackband

Lead Inspector

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