

Alderwood Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134918
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	341571
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	8–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Morcom
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Five teachers were seen and six lessons observed. Meetings were held with leaders, teachers, outreach staff, pupils and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books as well as the schools' planning and documentation. Responses were analysed from the four parents who responded to the questionnaire.

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

- the quality of equal opportunities for all pupils including those in The Bridge
- improvements to the curriculum to ensure that pupils in Years 7 to 9 have their full entitlement
- how well pupils are prepared for the future.

Information about the school

Alderwood Pupil Referral Unit serves 56 schools across South Suffolk. It provides preventative and assessment services for pupils with social, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties who have been permanently excluded, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion, from mainstream schools. Pupils stay for two or three terms and most are White British. There is a small group for four pupils known as 'The Bridge.' This provides for pupils with severe complex difficulties who all have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils stay for up to two years. Alderwood also provides an outreach behaviour support service to local schools, working with over 100 pupils. Outreach work frequently acts as a link into the unit for those who need more intensive support.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Alderwood is an outstanding pupil referral unit. It has maintained excellent provision and outcomes since the last inspection because of the exceptional leadership by the headteacher who has a very ambitious vision for the unit. Together with the deputy headteacher and other leaders, she has been rigorous in improving all areas of provision through very effective self-evaluation and through embedding innovative ideas and practice. This has enabled pupils to maintain their high levels of success in their behaviour as well as in their academic studies. The unit is particularly effective in enabling pupils to manage their own behaviour and take responsibility for their own actions. The very effective behaviour support system is seen to good effect when pupils eagerly wait for their end-of-lesson points. These add up over the week and can be used to provide 'golden time' activities on Fridays that pupils really value. As a result, there is a quiet and calm ethos across all classes and pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils in 'The Bridge,' a small class for pupils struggling to cope with school, have similar success and pupils here were seen working gainfully on their writing tasks. Pupils come to school regularly and greet each day with enthusiasm. Breakfast club is well attended and pupils engage purposefully in a range of activities with adults and peers. Two were seen playing dominoes; another was trying to complete a world map, while others were helping with the breakfast. In lessons, all groups behave extremely well and are fully engaged. They benefit from excellent teaching and very- high quality curriculum activities, which are tailored to meet each pupil's individual needs and abilities. Relationships are outstanding. This leads to exceptional progress in all aspects of learning. The schools' success can be seen in the way that the vast majority of pupils are reintegrated into their own school, or another school nearby, following their two or three terms at Alderwood. The outreach service is very successful in helping to prevent exclusions from other schools.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are exceptionally good. The nurturing approach is very successful in helping pupils to feel valued. Safeguarding procedures, including child protection systems, are rigorous and exceed current government guidelines. Pupils say that it is 'a great place' and that 'they really enjoy coming.' They know that they are progressing exceptionally well because they are fully included in all discussions about their targets. Many have aspirations for their future and are pleased to have the opportunity to settle down, which they do well. Pupils with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils. Excellent leadership and management by all leaders, including the management committee, ensure that the school continues to move forward. Self-evaluation is extremely accurate. Alderwood fully meets its stated aims and its prime purpose which

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is to re-engage pupils with learning and re-integrate them. High-quality links with the local authority support services and with other schools and providers underpins this work. Quick response times, early preventative work and clear referral processes ensure effective transition for pupils. The school promotes community cohesion well; future opportunities for global links are developing but do not yet fully involve pupils. The management committee is very clear about its responsibilities and has an excellent awareness of all aspects of the schools' work. The school has an outstanding capacity to continue improving.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the promotion of community cohesion by exploring and developing links with schools outside the United Kingdom so that pupils improve their understanding of very different cultures.

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

Pupils behave exceptionally well in all areas of the school. They are helpful and often keen to please. They understand their own difficulties and many can talk about past problems. Standards are broadly average and achievement is good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with complex learning needs, make outstanding progress during their time at Alderwood. They make twice as much progress in their literacy skills during their time in the unit as most pupils in mainstream schools. For example, pupils in Years 7 to 9 made exceptional progress in language, in knowledge and understanding and in their social development as they succeeded in designing and making prototypes of rockets during a science lesson. Their excellent understanding of the law of action and reaction helped them to make valid decisions about the materials to use to ensure that their prototypes worked well. The lesson successfully contributed to their enquiry skills as well as encouraging them to improve their dialogue with their peers. 'I learned to work as part of a team,' commented one pupil. Another said, 'Communicating helped me to work with a partner.' Almost all pupils achieve their targets and many exceed them. Their progress in personal development is exceptionally good. A small group of pupils talked sensitively to inspectors about the things they felt they had achieved recently. Several felt that Alderwood had 'given them a chance' and 'helped them to sort themselves out.' They say that they feel very safe and secure at school and they are very clear about how to keep safe in the community.

Pupils know and understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. They regularly choose fruit and eat lots of vegetables at lunch times. Regular trips to the local sports centre are a favourite with most pupils. They are passionate about sports and eagerly await the next football match against local opposition. Pupils have a clear sense of fairness and know right from wrong. They are working hard on managing their own behaviour and are pleased with how well they are doing. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent and their cultural development is good. They make a good contribution to the community; they are helpful around the school and regularly raise

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funds for different charities. For example, they are busy organising a cake stall and a bike ride for the people of Haiti and fully understand the problems faced by the people who live there. They work well with their peers from other ethnic groups and there have been no racial incidents in the past three years. Pupils have been learning about the lives of the Maori people but their awareness of other countries and different faiths is more limited. As a result of the significant improvements in their personal development and in their positive approach to learning, and because of their excellent attendance, pupils are very well placed to continue improving in the future.

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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The behaviour support system is extremely effective and results in calm, industrious classrooms where pupils work hard. Rewards are earned through very good behaviour and high quality work. As a result, pupils really enjoy coming to the unit and their individual attendances rise rapidly during their first term. This is due to their eagerness to do well, take part in the rich range of curriculum activities and earn points for themselves and their group, which lead to additional trips and 'golden time.'

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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Teachers know the pupils very well. They provide exciting and varied activities and make particularly good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils and promote learning. Teaching assistants play an important role in the individual support of pupils, helping them to succeed. Pupils' work is assessed rigorously and every pupil has regular weekly progress meetings to ensure that they are doing well. The creative curriculum has improved and is very effective in helping pupils to understand the links between subjects. For example, pupils use their ICT skills very well to improve their knowledge, present their work and find things out for themselves. Trips to places of interest are very popular and pupils talked excitedly about their visit to the London Dungeons and to Colchester Zoo. The rich range of additional activities, together with the breakfast club and the football club, are very popular and well attended. Links with the local allotment society are helping pupils to learn about growing vegetables and developing healthy eating habits.

The school takes exceptionally good care of the pupils. Procedures to keep them safe are robust. Pupils say that there is always someone to talk to and someone to help them. As a result, relationships are excellent. Individual education plans are regularly checked and monitored. Links with local services such as the educational psychology service, the local police and churches are very strong and promote high-quality support both in and outside the unit. Those with additional learning needs have very good access to the support and help that they require. Excellent links with local schools and with the behaviour support service ensures that reintegration is successfully achieved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Exceptional vision is a key feature of the outstanding leadership and management of the unit and the outreach service. Accurate self-evaluation and strategic planning have identified the right priorities to enable the unit to continue improving. Innovative practices are evident in the way that the curriculum has been reviewed, changed and embedded to provide exciting and creative experiences for all groups of pupils, including those in The Bridge. As a result, pupils want to come to school and work hard to do well. Challenging assessment and tracking procedures, thoroughly monitored by the deputy headteacher, quickly identify pupils who are struggling or falling behind their targets. Individual help ensures that these pupils quickly catch up. Managers fulfil their responsibilities diligently. The management committee and the local authority support

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and challenge the unit extremely well. They are proactive in their approach to monitoring all aspects of provision and outcomes and fully meet their statutory responsibilities. Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally rigorous. Child protection training for staff goes beyond requirements and risk assessments are extremely thorough for each individual pupil. Procedures to encourage attendance are innovative and include home visits, rewards and meeting pupils on the way to the unit. Leaders promote equality of opportunity exceptionally well and ensure that there is no discrimination, for example, in the wide range of different approaches used to enable each individual pupil to manage his or her own behaviour. The unit promotes community cohesion well, including through exceptional local links and partnerships, which enable pupils to develop good knowledge of their immediate environment. As a result, they learn about the needs of others as well as themselves. Wider links are developing effectively, helping pupils to understand some of the economic and social issues in the United Kingdom today. Future opportunities for global links are developing but do not yet fully involve pupils.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the school. They feel that their children are very well looked after and are making very good progress. All of the parents who responded to the questionnaires said that the school keeps their children safe and secure. 'Alderwood has helped my child very much and I would like to say a big thank you to all the people who work there,' commented one parent. 'My child is happy to go

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to school now and enjoys being there. The progress he has made will help him when he returns to his mainstream school,' wrote another.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alderwood 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 inspection team received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 16 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	75	3	75	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	75	1	25	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)	0	0	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	75	1	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.



22 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alderwood, Ipswich, IP3 0EW

Thank you for your help during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting you. The unit provides you with an outstanding education and this letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during our visit.

You achieve well and make outstanding progress during your time at Alderwood.

Your attendance improves and is well above average.

You have very good relationships with your teachers and teaching assistants and you really enjoy your activities.

Your behaviour is excellent and you really like the way you can earn points to help you gain your 'golden time.'

You are gaining a good sense of the community and raise lots of money for charity. We liked the way you are organising activities to raise funds for the people of Haiti.

Your headteacher and other leaders keep you safe and secure. They lead the school extremely well.

We know you have been learning about the Maori people and have learned about their war dance. We are asking your school to improve your understanding of other cultures and lifestyles by making more links with schools in other countries. You can help the unit to improve further by continuing to work hard in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead inspector

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