



Whitehouse Centre PRU

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134536
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 282606
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Kara HMI

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Fulford Road
School category	Maintained		Hartcliffe
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Bristol BS13 9PB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 9038071
Number on roll	20	Fax number	0117 9038072
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Vicky Heath
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Marian McMeechan

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	1 February 2006 - 1 February 2006	282606

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

Description of the school

The Whitehouse Centre is one of two pupil referral units (PRU) in the City of Bristol. It serves young people from the south of the city and is housed in a converted primary school. The centre mainly works with pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or who are at risk of exclusion. Twelve pupils are dual registered and also remain on the roll of their secondary school. A further four pupils have a statement of special educational needs for emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are 35 boys and five girls. All of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and many come from the local area, which has high levels of social and economic deprivation. This is the centre's first inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Whitehouse Centre is a satisfactory PRU that is improving. It is working well with other schools and agencies to achieve positive outcomes for the majority of its pupils. Whenever it is appropriate, younger pupils are reintegrated to a mainstream school. The older pupils mostly move on to college, training or employment. The PRU is satisfactorily led and managed at all levels; it provides satisfactory value for money. The centre knows itself well and inspectors agree with the senior managers' judgements about its effectiveness. However, the systems for monitoring and evaluating its work are underdeveloped. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory because of the good care, guidance and support they receive. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory, with some examples of good practice. The centre needs to further develop its systems for recording individual pupil progress in both social and academic skills. More frequent assessment of pupils' learning could be used more effectively to inform teaching and learning. The centre is located in an old primary school, which has had some adaptations but is not ideally suited for their purpose. For example, there are insufficient small rooms for the one-to-one work that is a growing feature of the centre's work. The centre has the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish more systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate the centre's effectiveness.
- Ensure that more regular pupil assessment not only informs the teaching and learning but is also used to demonstrate pupils' progress.
- Work with partners to adapt the accommodation to more effectively meet the pupils' learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils usually arrive at the centre with negative experiences of school. This, combined with long periods of absence and their particular individual learning needs, generally means that they are performing below the standards expected for pupils of their age. The pupils' comprehension, reading and mathematical ability is tested when they arrive and at the end of the year. All of the pupils appear to make at least satisfactory academic progress over time but the centre is not able to clearly identify when this happens or how significant the gains are for each pupil. The majority of pupils make good progress in their social and personal skills but this is not systematically recorded. The centre sensibly seeks nationally recognised certification for the pupils' academic achievements and most pupils leave with several entry-level qualifications. Many of their other achievements are recognised through the youth award accreditations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils' personal development and their well-being are satisfactory. The centre did not meet the target it set last year for attendance of 80% overall. There are many individual success stories of improved attendance but the centre does not have a methodical way of reporting this. Although the centre appropriately promotes and encourages the adoption of healthy living practices, this is yet to have a significant impact on the pupils' lifestyles. Many pupils attend the breakfast club, which provides them with suitable nourishment to start the day and also encourages them to attend and to arrive for lessons on time. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and in lessons it is often better when they are in small groups with high levels of support and also when given practical tasks to complete. They enjoy the individual attention given to them by staff and respond appropriately. The good relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the centre and this often encourages good behaviour. The pupils' moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory but the spiritual element is underdeveloped. The pupils readily make their views clear on all aspects of their education and the staff listen to them sympathetically. Sensibly, the centre has set up a pupil council; this is in its early stages but will give the pupils a more formal channel for their voice to be heard as well as promote citizenship.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. In the well-taught lessons seen, the teachers and learning support assistants made good use of their knowledge of individual pupils' needs and gave them good support. They were aware of issues which may have had an impact on the pupils' motivation to take part in lessons; they adapted their approaches and used effective strategies to engage them in learning. The staff's good humour and unfailing optimism often ensured that even the most reluctant pupil eventually joined in the lesson. In the less successful lessons, the pupils were often given tasks involving the whole group rather than activities which were matched to their individual needs. This sometimes meant the work was too easy for the more able pupils. The teacher sometimes spent too much time on dealing with poor and negative behaviour at the expense of praising those pupils who were getting on well with their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of activities for pupils. At Key Stage 3, it is suitably broad and balanced, with the pupils following a more primary-style curriculum and staying with the same small group of staff for most of the time. At Key Stage 4, pupils are able to pursue a wider range of courses. The range of courses

leading to qualifications has increased and more are planned. The centre's provision successfully incorporates many aspects of personal, social and moral development. The topics covered relate well to issues that impact on the pupils' lives outside the centre, for example, pupils' rights and responsibilities, the implications of substance misuse and sexual health. Good links with local community projects provide helpful support for pupils in dealing with these issues and in raising their general awareness. An imaginative introduction of alternative therapies such as reflexology has had beneficial effects for the pupils who volunteered to receive it. Work placements are arranged for pupils where appropriate. A highly successful work experience course with the local fire service has recently been completed. Links with local colleges and schools provide further opportunities for pupils to gain skills and experience of learning within different contexts. There is a good range of sporting and leisure activities, particularly for the boys, who enjoy participating in football tournaments and take full advantage of the pool tables, table tennis and badminton provided during break times. There are plans to provide more activities suited to the needs and preferences of the girls but at present they are insufficient.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very good care and support is provided by the staff, who are highly committed to the welfare and personal development of the pupils. In addition to the good individual support in lessons, the staff spend time before, during and after school with the pupils. Individual behavioural plans clearly identify specific targets for pupils to achieve in order to improve their behaviour. Community groups visit the centre and provide very useful support and guidance in relation to relevant issues, for example, drugs education. The pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage in life through effective support from the centre and other external partners such as the careers service. Individual pupils' progress and behaviour is discussed at full staff meetings at the end of each day. Guidance based on the academic monitoring of pupils' progress is underdeveloped as insufficient information about individual progress made over their time at the centre is recorded. The centre has not recorded formal risk assessments for individual pupils; this together with a consideration of the amount of detail needed in the existing risk assessments should be reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is providing satisfactory leadership and management. She has formed an effective senior team with the co-ordinators for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Staff morale is high. Their commitment to the pupils' progress and their deep understanding of their needs and their family context are strengths of the centre. The PRU moved to this site in 2003 and remained an annexe to The Florence Brown special school until Easter 2004. The centre was badly vandalised by intruders when it first opened, but everything has now been made good and displays and resources are mostly respected by the pupils. Good use is made of the present accommodation and the satisfactory

levels of resources and ICT equipment are used effectively. However, because of the lack of workshops and practical rooms, the range of vocational and practical activities is limited. There are also not enough small rooms for work with pupils requiring individual support for educational or personal issues. The centre monitors the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations conducted at least twice a year. Shorter and more frequent observations, focused on particular initiatives or developments, could help the centre to raise the quality of teaching. The centre works hard to involve parents and carers in their children's education; they are often in telephone contact several times a week and sometimes daily. There has been a low response to the annual parents' questionnaires; however, those parents who do respond are very positive in their comments. The management committee is developing its role, and its programme of alternating full committee meetings with more focused sub-committee meetings has the potential to enable it to become very effective. The centre receives good support from the LEA, with appropriate challenge from the school improvement officer. The links to the education welfare service and the careers service are satisfactory and improving.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	4	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils Thank you for talking to us, and telling us about your work when we came to inspect the Centre. We think that, given some of the difficulties you have had in your previous schools, the centre does a good job in making you feel better about yourselves and helps you to either return to mainstream school or to go to college or to work when you leave. We were impressed to see how many of you have much better attendance now, although some of you still arrive very late for school. We were pleased to see how well most of you responded to the staff requests, especially in lessons. We think all of the staff know you very well and work really hard to look after you and help you to make progress in all kinds of ways. We have asked Mrs McMeechan and the staff to look at a few things that we think will help the centre to continue to improve:

- find clear ways to check how well the Centre is doing overall and what it might need to change if it is to help you even more
- check out more often how much progress each of you have made so that the staff can see if they need to change their lessons or support for you so that you can make faster progress
- try to improve the accommodation so there are more rooms for practical activities and also small rooms for the one-to-one work that the Centre wants to do more of.

We wish you every success for the future. Yours sincerely Susan Kara and Kathleen Smith HMI Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 www.ofsted.gov.uk