

St John's Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130984
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	293684
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Charles Hackett

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	9
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Stephanie Halliday
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002
School address	Glebe Close St John's Worcester WR2 5AX
Telephone number	01905 427011
Fax number	01905 427011

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St John's is a smaller than average pupil referral unit. Its purpose is to support pupils who have been permanently excluded from a mainstream primary school and provide part-time six-week placements for pupils experiencing difficulties within their mainstream school. A few pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils come from primary schools within Worcester and the surrounding area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St John's is an outstanding pupil referral unit. It is very clear about its purpose and achieves remarkable success in supporting pupils effectively to maintain their places within their mainstream schools. It also successfully prepares pupils, who have previously been permanently excluded, very well for their move to a new mainstream or special school. Parents are delighted with the progress their children make and the comment of one parent, 'thank you for giving me back my little boy', in a thank you card to the staff, sums up the comments of many others. Excellent care, support and guidance procedures ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. Their attendance improves and they make significant improvement in their behaviour, particularly in their relationships with staff and other pupils. All of this contributes to the creation of a calm yet positive and vibrant learning environment within the unit. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe and enjoy learning far more than they have previously. Pupils know they are listened to and that staff care greatly for their well-being. The class councils enable pupils to put forward their views on their likes and dislikes and so they make a significant contribution to the activities of the unit. All of this prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Pupils stay in the unit for a short time and so the standards they achieve remain average or even below average. However, all make outstanding progress in relation to their different starting points and pupils' achievements are excellent. This is reflected in the first-rate improvements in reading, spelling and mathematics, as shown by the test scores that are undertaken at the start and end of their placements. However, the information gained in these tests is not collated to enable the unit to know if pupils are doing equally well in each subject. The quality of teaching and curriculum is outstanding. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress, and have the right sort of skills to be able to deal confidently with the demands of being in a mainstream classroom. Teachers and assistants build up pupils' confidence and ensure they have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them when they return to their mainstream school. The curriculum gives considerable emphasis to pupils learning to be healthy and this has been recognised in the unit being given full Healthy School status.

Leadership and management are good. The unit manager leads by example and has developed a closely knit team of staff, whose skills complement each other very well. The chair of the management committee provides positive support but, other than termly meetings, other members of the committee have little involvement in the unit. The unit knows its strengths and weaknesses well and this has led to improvements in the quality of education it provides. Links with other schools are highly effective; mainstream schools very much appreciate the support the unit provides, not only just for individual pupils that attend the unit, but also in how unit staff promptly respond to requests for advice.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the involvement of the management committee in monitoring the work of the unit.
- Collate and analyse further the information the unit has on pupils' achievements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The standards pupils achieve are generally average and below but a scrutiny of their work shows they make outstanding progress in their time at the unit. Their individual records show

considerable improvements in reading and spelling, even for those on six-week placements. Exceptional progress is also clearly demonstrated in pupils' achievement of their targets within their individual education plans. Further evidence of progress is demonstrated by excellent improvements to the presentation of their work, which reflect their very positive attitudes to learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show considerable improvement in their personal development, including their social skills, as a result of their time in the unit. Their behaviour improves considerably and they show a greater understanding of how they are expected to behave in a mainstream setting. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is excellent. As a result, pupils have a much better recognition of the needs of others around them and increased confidence to share and play with others. They have an excellent appreciation of healthy eating through the emphasis placed on this by the unit and their engagement in physical activities in break and lunchtime demonstrates their keenness to be active. It is because of these improvements that so many of them are able to return to mainstream or a special school setting successfully. They appreciate the opportunity to have their views heard and know that staff will listen and respond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is not only highly effective in enabling pupils to make outstanding progress, it is a vital factor in explaining why pupils are able to so successfully return to mainstream and special schools. Teachers and their assistants empower pupils to develop their independence and take responsibility for their learning. This is because they treat the pupils as individuals and encourage them to be independent. Essential in this process is very good planning. Teachers make use of nationally agreed subject plans for each subject and then ensure they link this to the information they have on pupils' different abilities. This level of planning is very effective in addressing pupils' individual needs. Typically, lessons feature pupils using resources that interest them and help them understand that learning can be enjoyable. A key strength is the quality of teachers' marking. Comments are very positive and useful in helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum that puts equally important emphasis on the development of pupils' academic skills and their personal and social skills. The curriculum is planned very effectively to ensure that topics cover in an interesting manner the requirements of the National Curriculum in a number of subject areas. For example, pupils engage in drawing designs based on Van Gogh's picture of sunflowers, alongside planting sunflower seeds and writing a diary of their growth. Additional activities have increased since the previous inspection; there are more visits that pupils undertake and visitors into school. All of these have a highly positive impact on pupils' understanding of the wider world and their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, support and guidance are very effective in helping pupils overcome many of the difficulties that led to their placement at the unit. Staff provide excellent role models and develop very positive relationships with each child, parents and the referring mainstream school. Expectations within the unit encouraged appropriate behaviour, and individual support sessions, such as those dealing with anger management, have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Through activities such as playing board games, pupils learn to share and their skills in social interaction improve considerably. Guidance to support improvements in their academic work is very thorough and based on individual assessment of pupils' achievements.

The school has rigorous procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff fully understand child protection procedures and staffing records are appropriately checked. The playground is well supervised and careful risk assessments are undertaken.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management has been very effective in ensuring that the unit has maintained the high quality of its work identified in the previous inspection and also brought about improvements. This indicates that the unit has a good capacity to improve even further. The unit's good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses has meant that areas identified as needing development have been improved. For example, to improve the quality of the curriculum, additional physical education activities have been added, and to improve the ability of teachers to use information and communication technology, both classrooms now have interactive whiteboards. Staff, under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, have been very effective at liaising with mainstream schools and developing positive relationships, which are used well for the benefit of all pupils. However, the reports to schools after pupils have completed placements are too similar and lack sufficient detail on what unit staff have learnt about each pupil. The unit is given good support by the local authority and the chair of the management committee is a frequent and active supporter of the work of the unit. However, the management committee as a whole has limited involvement in the work of the unit.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Pupil Referral Unit, Glebe Close, Worcester

Thank you for putting up with me when I visited your school recently. You were under enough pressure that day dealing with your Year 6 national tests without having a visitor. The fact that you were so helpful and polite is a real credit to you all. I very much enjoyed looking at the work you have done and meeting your staff.

I think the unit does an outstanding job helping you all and I know from your comments and those of your parents and carers that you all agree with me. The main reason the unit does such a good job is because it helps you all to be able to move on either to a mainstream or a special school. The unit helps you understand how to behave better and gives you a clear understanding of what you need to do when you are in a large class in a bigger school. Teaching and the curriculum are excellent and because of this you make outstanding progress in your work and in your behaviour and attendance. The teachers and their assistants are excellent at making your lessons interesting and making sure that you have a chance to enjoy learning. The headteacher and all the staff manage the unit very well. They are well supported by the chair of the management committee but other members of the committee are less involved.

To be even better, the unit could improve the quality of the reports it writes about you when you return to mainstream schools. The unit could also look closely at how well you do in different subjects to see if you do better in one than another.

Once again, thank you so much for letting me visit your unit and I think you should all be very proud of the progress you have made whilst being there.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett Lead Inspector