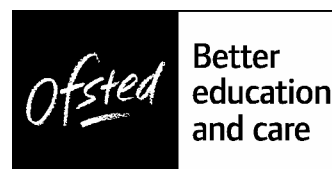


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08 January 2007

Mrs C Langton
Head of Service
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Dear Mrs Langton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – pupil referral units (PRUs)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 November 2006 to look at aspects of the PRU's work.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes and in particular on how well the pupils achieve.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of two lessons.

On the basis of what I observed during this inspection the effectiveness of the PRU's overall contribution to the five ECM outcomes was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

- The standards of students on entry to the PRU are broadly average. Good links with the schools from which they come enable teachers at the PRU to be confident about their starting points.
- Achievement is good and students make good progress in relation to their capabilities and the courses that they follow.
- Their commitment to learning, as shown by their good attendance, helps them to do well.

- In 2006, at the end of Key Stage 4, all students gained or exceeded their predicted grades in examinations for which they were entered.

Personal development

- Students prosper in the atmosphere of mutual support and respect fostered by the PRU and they grow into more confident learners.
- Students develop a good sense of social responsibility and help one another.
- They respect the views of others and share their own politely.
- They are aware of the rights and duties of citizenship.
- They are keen to become economically independent and to take up the career and work opportunities provided by the PRU.
- When they leave the PRU most go on to college courses or vocational training; a minority return to school.
- Students, including those who are most vulnerable, say that they feel safe at the PRU.

Quality of provision (teaching and learning; curriculum; care, guidance and support)

- Teaching is well planned and firmly based on good understanding of students' individual learning needs.
- Students are given clear advice on how to improve their work.
- Students show their very good attitudes to learning by working hard in lessons.
- They collaborate with one another very effectively, sharing their views readily, and enjoy the lively dialogue that take place in lessons.
- Liaison with schools and with other providers and agencies is strong and helps students to make the most of their opportunities.
- The PRU takes effective steps to safeguard the students and the children in the crèche. It reviews these regularly in conjunction with the Local Authority (LA).
- Students get careers advice and are kept well informed about their future options.
- The curriculum does not yet include an option to continue study of a modern foreign language and the PRU acknowledges that the vocational courses offered at the centre are too limited.

Leadership and management

- The centre is strongly led; the Head of Service has a very clear sense of purpose and understands what must be done to ensure that the centre continues to improve.
- The Head of Service works closely with the LA Inclusion Service to make a flexible response to the needs of individual students.
- The PRU is highly competent in organising and delivering individual learning packages.

- There is a robust structure for monitoring the effectiveness of the PRU.
- Very good relationships are maintained with parents and carers.
- The PRU is rigorous in reviewing its strengths and weaknesses and it plans effectively for future developments.
- In addition to good links with the LA Inclusion Service, there are strong relationships with Health and Social Services, colleges and providers of work-based learning.
- The protocols governing admissions to the PRU are very clear and underpin the positive relationship that exists between the PRU and schools.
- The management committee carries out its role effectively and plays its part in monitoring the work of the PRU.

Inclusion

- The PRU has developed its role to fit in with the LA's vision of "widening educational opportunities" by welcoming vulnerable students of both sexes into the supportive learning environment that it provides.
- The crèche provides a vital element of support to young mothers, enabling them to continue their education more readily.
- Vulnerable pupils, including those with mental health difficulties, are greatly supported by the network of health workers and other professionals to which the PRU has access and this gives them a chance to benefit from the educational opportunities offered to them.
- Following the philosophy of the LA Inclusion Service, the PRU strives to match programmes of education to the needs of individual students and this promotes effective learning.
- The PRU maintains strong links with feeder schools so that there is continuity in learning.
- Students remain on the roll of their former schools and this helps to secure their rights to suitable education.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- clarifying with the LA the budget delegated to the centre following a proposal from the LA to centralise the gathering in of student led funding
- broadening the range of vocational courses that the PRU offers, which would particularly benefit less academic students
- offering a modern foreign language by securing the necessary teaching expertise
- improving IT facilities within the centre – especially by acquiring an interactive whiteboard in order to aid lesson planning and reinforce the already strong level of student participation in lessons.

I hope these observations are useful.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Thank you again for all your help and support.

Yours sincerely

Michael McDowell
Additional Inspector