

Hillingdon Tuition Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102366
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	355179
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	The local authority
Headteacher	Simon Ashley-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited five lessons, observed five teachers and held meetings with members of the management committee, staff, and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. The inspector observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, development planning, minutes of management committee meetings and pupils' work. The inspector also scrutinised three questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- The extent to which the flexible curriculum and the personalised learning programmes are raising levels of achievement and getting pupils more involved in their learning.
- The effectiveness of the senior management in managing a complex provision.
- The influence of the management committee on the centre's development and capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Hillingdon Tuition Centre caters for pupils with medical, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides alternative education for pupils in Years 7 to 11, who have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school or who have had a change of placement to avoid permanent exclusion. Most pupils are from families of White British heritage and the large majority are boys. A significant proportion of pupils have not attended their mainstream schools for a considerable period. In addition to the pupils who attend full time, the centre caters for the needs of a substantial number of pupils who attend part time. These pupils remain on the roll of their mainstream school to which they return wherever possible. This means that many pupils join and leave the centre during the year. Pupils have regular access to a range of other professional support services, including the mental health team.

Three discrete support teams are managed by the centre. These provide flexible and personalised learning programmes for: full-time education at the centre; education at home with the assistance of information and communication technology; and, for pupils at a number of different locations. The provision places an emphasis on returning pupils in Years 7 to 9 to mainstream school. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, the focus is on gaining sufficient nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSEs, with which to move on to further education, training or employment. The majority of older pupils stay for two years.

The centre is undergoing changes to the way it operates.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The centre provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. One of several good features is the supportive and nurturing environment which places a high priority on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and in developing their confidence. Parents and carers indicate that they welcome the influence the centre is having on their children's attitudes and behaviour. Pupils benefit from good care, guidance and support. Consequently, they make good progress in developing their self-esteem. Such an improvement changes pupils' attitudes and helps them to establish a secure platform from which they develop the confidence to make up for substantial deficits in their education. As a result, the very large majority of younger pupils successfully return to their mainstream schools. Older pupils gain sufficient GCSE passes, or equivalent, and reach other nationally recognised accreditations for enrolment at college, training or employment.

Pupils benefit from good teaching and, as a result, the majority make quicker progress than they did before in the core skills of literacy and, to a lesser extent, numeracy. This picture reflects satisfactory, and sometimes good, levels of progress. This is because, in a relatively short period, the centre changes pupils' attitudes and makes up for substantial shortfalls in their education. Behaviour also improves as a result of clear expectations and strong relationships developed with staff. It is an indicator of its success that attendance levels often improve sharply during the short time pupils are at the centre. However, this success is not reflected in overall attendance, which is low.

Teaching is effective because staff know each pupil, including their needs and backgrounds, well and use detailed information to help with lesson planning. Individual targets are used well by staff and pupils to encourage personal and academic progress. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in a supportive environment and the trust developed between pupils and staff is at the centre of this success. The flexible curriculum is made possible by a range of support that is matched to the needs of pupils. It is underpinned by a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education. The balance between core skills and the development of pupils' creative and performance skills makes it relevant and meaningful. Changes are underway, however, to develop the work of the discrete support teams into a more cohesive process and provide even greater flexibility for pupils' individualised learning programmes. However, a substantial proportion of staff do not feel sufficiently informed of, or involved in, these transitional arrangements.

With strong support from the local authority and the management committee, the senior leadership team has introduced rigorous systems to monitor the progress of pupils. Key staff have an increasingly accurate understanding of where the provision is now and of the improvements needed. The centre is soundly placed to move forward, although assessment information is not analysed in sufficient depth to assist in whole-centre planning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by making effective use of the good links with outside agencies and relationships with parents of those children who do not attend often enough.
- Use information from analyses of data, including results from assessments and national tests, to assist centre planning.
- Ensure that leadership at the very top builds a cohesive staff team that works together effectively to help bring about change to improve the centre's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There are clear signs that the centre's efforts and well-informed support are making a measurable difference. These result in pupils' satisfactory, and sometimes good, gains in academic work and good personal development. Pupils develop their self-esteem and independence, and learn to interact positively with each other and the adults with whom they meet and work. These positive characteristics successfully increase most pupils' interest in, and enjoyment of, education. Pupils' attitudes and confidence improve as pupils experience the centre's supportive learning environment. Their willingness to participate in learning, including the range of activities, as seen in English and art, reflect good attitudes to learning. Once settled in lessons, most pupils also show satisfaction in completing the practical tasks in food technology, for example. They also show pride when explaining the reasons behind their answers, in English. Learning and progress are satisfactory overall, and they are improving securely and quickly. As a result of the increased rate of progress, younger pupils leave ready to reintegrate with mainstream education.

Pupils typically show high levels of emotional and/or social needs, which have resulted in lengthy periods of absence from mainstream school. Consequently, pupils enter the centre with large gaps in their skills and knowledge, and with a negative view about themselves and towards education. The amount of time pupils spend varies at the centre or at the different locations, but the rate of progress is such that the majority of pupils are successful in making up for some of the lost time and overcoming several of the substantial barriers they faced when they started. As a result of the centre's resolve to encourage enterprise and courses related to life skills, older pupils gain enough nationally accredited qualifications so that they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Pupils make good progress in learning about themselves and improving their self-esteem because of the sensitive and individualised support provided by staff and other professionals. For all pupils, this response is a marked change when set against the personal challenges they have had in the past and which they continue to face. Pupils say they feel safe and gain confidence in an environment that has clear boundaries and expectations that are consistently applied. Pupils are given opportunities to present views and help with decisions regarding the running of the centre. Although relationships are often fragile, pupils are polite and usually talk with staff and visitors in a respectful manner. Older pupils reflect on the way they have behaved and express a sound awareness of what is right and wrong. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils like the fact that they are respected by staff and they are treated fairly. Pupils' substantially improved

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levels of attendance reflect improving attitudes. For most, it is the first time they have attended school on a regular basis.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Particular strengths of teaching lie in detailed planning based upon a good knowledge of each pupil and closely tailored support. Good relationships with pupils help staff to raise expectations, manage behaviour and encourage them into participating and doing their best. Lesson objectives are made clear to ensure, for example, that pupils understand what skills they will develop during the lesson. Questioning is often used well to probe pupils' understanding and help adjust the range of tasks and pace of learning. However, on occasion, support staff are not used effectively throughout the whole lesson, and especially at the beginning. Assessment is closely linked to individual behaviour and academic targets, although it is not used consistently by all staff.

Senior leaders are working towards a curriculum that integrates the work of the different teams and gives greater flexibility to each pupil's individualised support and learning experiences. Particular attention is given to addressing pupils' high levels of emotional and/or social needs in the first instance. Personal, social and health education underpins the curriculum and forms a significant part of each pupil's personalised learning programme. Attractive displays, enhanced by good quality artwork, give an insight into the range of pupils' learning experiences. These include a carefully considered balance

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between basic skills in English and mathematics and the development of creative and performing skills in subjects such as art, design and technology, and outdoor adventurous activities. The centre recognises that it has to improve pupils' mathematical skills further, building on the current improvements in English. The breadth of the curriculum is also made possible by the different range of activities offered at college and by local businesses. There is a balanced and realistic approach towards pupils following courses leading to GCSEs and opportunities for them to achieve external accreditation in, for example, skills related to hair and beauty.

Pupils have a good understanding of their targets for personal development and appreciate how the consistent and sensitive support has a positive effect on their self-esteem. Staff show resolve in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and supported. They are alert to the fact that no two days are alike and pupils can arrive on any day with varying levels of interest and willingness to engage. Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected not just in opportunities for physical activity, but also in the provision of healthy food and health-related courses. Individual achievement is effectively managed through improved tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. Academic and personal targets are realistic but challenging.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, the headteacher, with very close support from the local authority and the knowledgeable management committee, has strengthened the senior leadership team and sharpened the focus on key priorities. These changes have led to a systematic approach to monitoring and an acute awareness of the path the centre needs to follow for sustained improvement. As result, teaching and learning have improved and assessment procedures have been strengthened. The centre now has a wide range of assessment information that is both secure and reliable. However, it does not use information from analyses of school data, including results from national tests, systematically to refine centre planning. The promotion of equality and approaches to tackling any form of discrimination are satisfactory. As a result, groups of pupils make similar progress, although there are some limitations for those pupils who find it difficult to settle. Documentation indicates that the provision has a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Staff, who have realistic expectations of where they want their pupils to be, demonstrate a sound capacity for further improvement.

The management committee is very supportive, continually challenging the effectiveness of provision, and giving well-considered guidance and advice. Changes to the way the

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centre operates are underway, but some staff reported their unease at not being sufficiently informed or involved in the transitional arrangements. Attention to pupils' safety is integral to the centre's work and safeguarding procedures are systematic, continually reviewed and firmly established.

Community cohesion is well promoted within the centre, and partnerships with outside agencies are used well to enhance the well-being of pupils. The centre reaches out to parents and carers, who are given a number of opportunities to give views on the provision and benefit from regular contact. However, the centre knows it must do more to help pupils gain a better understanding of people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the United Kingdom and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Few parents returned a questionnaire for this inspection. However, comments received by the centre earlier in the year include a number of very positive remarks. These include the strong support they received from staff and the positive impact on their children's attitudes and behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hillingdon Tuition Centre 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 three completed questionnaire by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 36 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	2	67	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	1	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	3	100	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	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	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	33	1	33	1	33	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	33
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	67	0	0	1	33	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillingdon Tuition Centre, West Drayton UB7 8HJ

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I visited your centre. I enjoyed talking to you, sitting in your lessons and listening to your interesting views. You told me that the centre makes a significant difference to your behaviour and attitudes to learning. It is clear that most of you value the life-changing opportunities that the centre offers you.

This letter is to tell you about some of the things I found while I was with you. It's a place where you feel safe and secure and usually enjoy taking part in the interesting and meaningful activities. Staff have clear expectations of you and provide clear guidelines for you to follow.

Here are some important things about the centre.

- Effective teaching helps you to make quicker progress than you did before.
- The very large majority of you reach standards in the external examinations and assessments that assist you in continuing with your education, training or gaining employment.
- You are well prepared to move on to the next stage of your lives.
- Staff take good care of you, and make sure you have a sound understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet.

To make things even better for you, the centre has been asked to do the following.

- Work more closely with you, your parents and outside agencies to improve attendance where it is not as good as it should be.
- Make better use of the information from assessments and examinations to help the centre become more effective.
- Ensure that all members of staff work together and play an active part in the changes that the centre is undergoing to make it better.

I wish each one of you every success in your future and hope that you continue to help yourselves to make things better.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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