

# Leicester City Primary PRU at the Phoenix Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132824
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	360448
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	James Bowden

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	35
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Benson and Christine Pay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited five lessons, seeing five teachers. Meetings were held with the heads of centres and other teachers with management responsibilities. In addition, meetings were held with the Chair and vice-chair of the Management Committee, and members of the local authority. The inspectors also had formal discussions with small groups of pupils at both centres. They observed the unit's work and looked at samples of pupils' work, assessment and progress files, the unit's planning and other assessment records. The lead inspector analysed questionnaires from 5 parents and carers, 15 pupils and 14 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the unit's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is the achievement and progress of all pupils at both centres good enough?
- Is teaching at both centres sufficiently challenging for pupils to enable them to make the best progress possible?
- How effective is the unit in reducing absence and rekindling pupils' interest in education?
- How effective are leadership and management at both sites in establishing a whole unit ethos for improvement?

## Information about the school

The unit is designated a short stay school and is co-located alongside two mainstream primary schools, approximately five miles apart. The Assessment and Re-integration Centre (ARC) has pupils aged five to nine and the Phoenix Centre has pupils aged eight to 11. Both sites are city-wide provisions and cater for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion from schools, those who have been permanently excluded and those whose needs cannot be met in their home mainstream school. Sixteen full-time pupils are on the roll of the unit and seventeen part-time pupils are dual registered with a mainstream school. Pupils join and leave the unit at varying times throughout the year.

Currently, boys outnumber girls by seven to one. All pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, with an increasing number having more complex needs. Approximately a third of pupils have statements of special educational needs and a small number are undergoing assessment for a statement. All others are at the school action plus stage of the special educational needs code of practice. A large majority of pupils are of White British background with the others representing a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

**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 unit provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Although attainment is low and learning and progress are satisfactory, they are improving securely as a result of the unit's provision. It meets its core aim of creating a safe and caring environment with an atmosphere in which every child and adult feels secure, valued and confident. The dedicated and committed staff ensure pupils are safe, listened to and have their best interests at heart, which supports improvements in their personal development well. All pupils who completed the Ofsted questionnaire confirmed this, as did one pupil who, when asked what was good about the unit, said, 'It's safe!' A particular strength of the unit is the good collaborative working with an extensive range of other professionals, including the local authority's behaviour support service, which promotes pupils' well-being and learning particularly well. The unit also works hard and successfully to engage parents and carers, involving them in the admissions process and keeping them informed fully of their child's progress. Consequently, they are appreciative of the unit's work. One wrote, 'Since my child came to this school he has changed a great deal ... its 'brill' here.'

All pupils have recently had negative experiences of education, often accompanied by poor attendance. As a result, they have fallen behind in their academic work when compared to what would normally be expected for their age. Their academic progress across the unit is satisfactory and improving over time. Assessment procedures are effective at each centre, identifying standards on entry and showing how well pupils achieve in relation to their starting points. However, the analysis of pupils' progress data across the unit is not yet sharp enough and is not used effectively to plan future strategies. Notwithstanding this, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy, as well as their organisation skills and independence. This then eases their reintegration back into mainstream school or onwards to other specialist provision.

Pupils generally enjoy their learning. Teaching is satisfactory and helps rekindle interest in learning, which then underpins their improving progress. Lessons start well, and staff ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. However, although the level of challenge for pupils at the start of lessons is often good, this is not always maintained throughout. In some instances, pupils are spoon fed answers rather than being given sufficient time to answer themselves. The satisfactory curriculum, reflecting that taught in mainstream schools, underpins the centre's focus on reintegration. The quality of care, guidance and support for students, including safeguarding arrangements, is good. Staff and other professionals, help each pupil, including the most vulnerable, in very specific ways and ensure all are looked after in a safe, healthy and caring environment.

Since the previous inspection there has been a change of leadership at the Phoenix Centre and accommodation issues there, including those related to health and safety and the lack

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of dedicated subject rooms, became a priority. This impacted on the strategic vision and direction planned by the head of centre in terms of teaching, learning, pupils' progress and curriculum. In addition, the two centres had, in effect, been operating separately, rather than as one unit. Leaders have recognised that there is good practice but that it was not being identified consistently or shared effectively to establish a whole-unit ethos for improvement. In addition, the evaluation of the impact of some of the changes already made has not yet been evaluated fully. Although attainment is low, the quality of teaching and learning across the unit is now improving securely and effectively as a result of a consistent teaching and learning policy for both centres. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and supports improvement planning in order to improve the progress made by pupils and move the unit onwards and upwards. The management committee has been supportive throughout this period in helping establish a coherent approach across the unit. In light of these points the unit's current capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and progress and the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - adopting a more consistent approach to identifying and sharing best practice across the unit
  - evaluating the impact of the resultant changes in practice.
- Sharpen the analysis and use of data across the unit to help plan future strategies.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

In lessons, most pupils are able to consolidate and build on previous learning. They benefit from working in small groups where they receive appropriately focused individual attention. This, along with their rekindled interest in learning and enthusiasm for the rewards system, supports the progress they make. In a design and technology lesson, older pupils had a secure understanding of the importance of hygiene in food preparation and knew the affects of adding yeast to bread mixtures. They then experimented carefully by adding different ingredients to their mix. In a music lesson, younger pupils experimented with a variety of percussion instruments and then described the sounds made, which focused well on broadening their speaking and listening skills. Boys and girls make progress equally well. However, in a few lessons, progress overall is less effective because teachers' questioning is insufficiently challenging throughout.

Although there are occasional outbursts, during the inspection the learning of other pupils was not unduly interrupted by any untoward disruptive behaviour. One pupil commented, 'Pupils get on well most of the time and if there are problems, teachers sort things out.' Overall, behaviour improves for almost all pupils and fixed term exclusions have fallen considerably. The atmosphere in the dining areas at lunchtimes is friendly and sociable, being underpinned by good relationships between staff and pupils.

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As well as eating healthily and having a secure understanding of this, pupils also take part in and enjoy physical activities. Achievement in this respect at ARC has been recognised by Healthy Schools status. Because of the transient nature of their placement at the unit and the time it takes to get to and from there, pupils' contribution to the unit and wider community is no more than satisfactory. They have the opportunity to give their opinions and have been involved in collections for charity appeals. When compared to their mainstream schools, pupils' attendance shows improvement, which is often significant for some, although for a very few it could still be better. This, along with their satisfactory progress in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology, as well as in independence and other learning skills, equips them adequately for reintegration into mainstream schools or other specialist provision when they leave at the end of Year 6.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teachers' planning meets pupils' needs well as it is linked to the effective assessment of pupils' capabilities and prior learning. This was particularly effective in a music lesson where pupils, using the information they had gained from the Ancient Egypt topic, were constructing their own instruments. Pupils appreciate the feedback they are given as it tells them clearly what progress they are making. Learning intentions are made clear at the start of lessons, which ensures pupils are aware of what is expected of them at the

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end of lessons. Teachers usually involve pupils in recapping what has been learned. Although adults in the room work together particularly well, there is a tendency for some teaching assistants to give answers too quickly rather than allowing more time for pupils to work out their own responses. However, praise is used wisely by all adults in the room and success is rewarded appropriately, in line with the unit's policy.

The recently introduced thematic approach to delivering the curriculum across the unit has enabled teachers to enliven learning whilst at the same time improve pupils' progress in acquiring key skills. In addition, pupils' artistic and creative skills have been broadened, for example, in their work on Ancient Egypt. Personal, social and health education, as well as specific small group activities led by teachers, contribute effectively to pupils' personal development, including aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Outside specialists are used well. For example, in a successful lesson for older pupils based on the theme of feeling safe, two assistant psychologists led and were ably supported by the class teacher, as well as a specialist behaviour support teacher from the local authority.

Students' health and well-being are at the forefront of the unit's strong ethos of care. All adults work hard to ensure this. A carefully managed and executed programme of reviews is effective in supporting pupils when they first join the unit, as well as when they leave. For those re-integrating into mainstream school good quality extra support is also provided. Parents and carers are also given careful support when needed. Procedures for raising attendance rates, including support from outside professionals when appropriate, have improved the overall average and reduced unauthorised absence.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The restructuring of the leadership team, including new posts with clear roles and responsibilities, is resulting in more focus on the unit as a whole and underpins senior leaders' drive for improvement. There is now a sharper focus on teaching and pupils' progress, as well as the introduction of other initiatives to support improved outcomes. The impact of some of these initiatives is still being realised fully but the quality of teaching and learning is already improving securely and quickly. The unit is effective in ensuring all have equality of opportunity, as it is in tackling any discrimination, which results in an effective ethos for inclusion and no underachievement of any particular group of pupils. The management committee and the unit work closely together to ensure safeguarding procedures and practices are effective, up-to-date and reflect current good practice. Curriculum planning and enrichment activities support the unit's satisfactory

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promotion of community cohesion within the centre itself and, through enrichment activities, from a broader perspective.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was half that of the national average for pupil referral units. The majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are supportive of the centre's provision. In particular, they believe the centre keeps them well informed of the progress their children make, meets their child's particular needs and that the unit is led and managed effectively. A small minority had some individual concerns but there was no discernable pattern to their comments.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leicester City Primary PRU at the Phoenix 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 five completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 35 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	20	3	60	0	0	1	20
The school keeps my child safe	3	60	1	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	20	3	60	1	20	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	60	1	20	0	0	1	20
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	40	1	20	0	0	1	20
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	60	1	20	0	0	1	20
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)	1	20	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	60	1	20	0	0	1	20
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	20	2	40	0	0	1	20
The school is led and managed effectively	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	60	1	20	0	0	1	20

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



- carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's
- main findings from the inspection of their school.

31 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Leicester City Primary PRU at the Phoenix Centre, Leicester, LE5 2EG**

Not so long ago, two of us came to the PRU to see how well you are getting on both at ARC and the Phoenix centre. We also wanted to know whether we could suggest anything to make things even better for you. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons and at lunchtimes. We also met with small groups of you at both sites. I was particularly pleased to hear how some of you think your behaviour has improved. In addition, all of you who completed the Ofsted questionnaire felt the PRU was a safe place to be. The PRU makes satisfactory provision for you and here are some of the strengths we identified.

The PRU works really well with lots of other people, including your parents and carers, to support you.

You get on well with all adults who work in the PRU and appreciate the help and support they provide.

The staff care for you well and make sure you are safe.

In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants give you lots of help and support.

The PRU works well to help and support your move back to mainstream schools and other provision.

The head teachers of the two sites and senior teachers have plans to make things even better for you.

We think the PRU could be better and help improve your learning even more. Therefore we have asked the head teachers of the two sites to help you make better progress and improve the quality of teaching even more by identifying the best things that can be used across the PRU and checking how well it works. We have also asked them to use the information it has on your academic progress to help it plan better support for you. A few of you could also help by attending more often.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you the very best for your future education.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden  
Lead Inspector

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