

# Stag Lane Pupil Referral Unit at Library Buildings

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133660
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	360557
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bill (William) Stoneham

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>	11–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	21
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Denise Falconer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Askale Daley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 July 2008
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed seven lessons, each taught by a different member of staff, and looked at other evidence relating to the quality of learning. Meetings were held with the management committee, staff and pupils. The inspector observed the unit's work and looked at its self-evaluation documentation, its policy documents, minutes of meetings held by the management committee, external reports, school publications and questionnaires returned by staff and students. No replies were received from the parent/carer questionnaire, but the results from the unit's own surveys were considered.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the unit's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the unit is boosting overall achievement for different groups of students, given the short-term nature of their placements.
- How well the unit is fostering learning and academic progress.
- How well the curriculum meets the individual needs of students who have suffered considerable disruption to their education.

## Information about the school

The unit caters for up to 25 students residing in the north-west London borough of Brent who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education. Its aim is to reintegrate these students into mainstream education as quickly as possible. Hence, many spend no more than one term in the unit. Periodically, a number spend time in a mainstream school as part of the process of reintegration. The unit also carries out preventative work in schools. This is with students who have been identified as being at risk of exclusion. Virtually all students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, invariably associated with behavioural, emotional and social needs. Few, however, have a statement of their special education needs. The unit has Healthy School status and all students are provided with a free school meal as part of the local authority's desire to promote healthy lifestyles. The students come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. While a small number speak English as an additional language, none is a beginner in English. The majority of students tend to be in Year 9. At the time of the inspection all students on roll were boys.

Since the previous inspection changes have taken place in the leadership and management of the unit. The current headteacher has been in office for less than two terms. Prior to her appointment as headteacher, which commenced in September 2010, she had been acting headteacher for the whole of the previous academic year.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Stag Lane Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) offers a good education. There are some outstanding aspects of this provision, including care, guidance and support and the quality of partnership work. The unit has a good record of providing for students who have a range of difficulties and then reintegrating them successfully into mainstream education and secondary school partners value the unit's work highly.

Students often join the unit with low levels of prior attainment. They have substantial gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding, reflecting significant past disturbances in their education. In these exceptional circumstances, the progress they make in their education and their social and emotional development is impressive. Most students, including those with behavioural, emotional and social needs, make consistently good progress in their learning and in their social and emotional development because of the thoughtful, yet challenging, education and care provided. By the time they leave the unit, many students are working at close to the levels expected for their age. Outcomes for most students are in excess of what might be expected given their starting points; for some, they are significantly higher. The progress students make illustrates the commitment of the dedicated staff team.

Progress is accelerated by consistently good teaching. Learning in lessons observed was consistently good. The unit has done much to improve students' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Students' writing and speaking skills improve while they are with the unit. Nevertheless, inconsistencies are evident in the way basic skills in literacy are promoted. Though much emphasis is placed on using subject-specific language, key words are not consistently displayed and staff do not always check that the vocabulary used has been understood by all.

Since the previous inspection there has been good improvement in the way staff use information about students' prior attainment to set specific individual targets and to monitor their progress. Excellent partnerships with a wide variety of specialist agencies play an effective part in enabling students to overcome barriers to learning and in accelerating their progress academically, pastorally, socially and in sport.

Students' good progress reflects a curriculum which meets their needs well. It is broad and the range of enrichment activities contributes well to their good progress. There are good opportunities for students to learn about healthy living and this is reflected in the unit being recognised as a Healthy School. Students also report they feel safe. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school council encourages students to think about their immediate environment, and work with a local residential centre for senior citizens has widened the students' horizons. For a small service, quite impressive sums of money have been raised for both national and international charities.

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Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Safeguarding procedures are good and have continued to improve. The work with parents and carers, some of whom are struggling to come to terms with the profound social, emotional and behavioural issues faced by their children, is also good. The unit evaluates its work well and knows where further improvements are needed. There is a track record of sustained improvement, illustrating the ambition and drive of the good leadership team. There is a good capacity to improve further.

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

- Raise attainment further by ensuring that in all lessons staff consistently seize all opportunities for students to make progress by:
  - developing their literacy skills and ensuring key words are always displayed and their meanings are understood by all students.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Students behave well and isolated incidents of less good behaviour are handled confidently by staff. In lessons, students' behaviour is generally good; they are polite and show consideration to each other. Students stay at the PRU for a short time only; most students make good progress in their learning and in their personal development. This is because of the support they receive and the quality of teaching provided. Good learning is also promoted when activities are planned well to meet students' individual needs. This was illustrated well in a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson. Different levels of work were planned so that all, including those who have English as an additional language, were able to make good progress. Data show clearly that reintegrated students, including the small number of girls who have passed through the service, return with improved records of attainment, particularly in English and mathematics; they are better equipped emotionally and socially to cope with the demands of mainstream school. Considerable efforts are made to foster future economic well-being. When students return to mainstream education, they are more confident and have developed social and emotional skills and are more able to mix and work with other students.

Attendance shows consistent improvement and is close to the national average. Most students attend regularly and their attendance rates are frequently significantly higher than those attained when they were in mainstream schools. Though considerable attention is placed on fostering students' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, some inconsistencies remain and attainment in literacy and numeracy is just below average.

Thoughtful work is done to ensure good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Regular assemblies and the teaching of ethics both make a significant contribution. Good opportunities are offered to build social skills and confidence through events such as 'Enterprise Days' and sporting activities, and appropriate work is undertaken to promote cultural awareness.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>2</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?

Lessons are interesting and succeed in engaging and motivating the students. Learning is good because lessons are consistently taught well by staff with good subject knowledge. This was illustrated well in an enjoyable English lesson where the students had to consider different forms of writing and had to comment on bias. All made good progress. In most lessons the students responded sensibly and often with interest to the challenges set by their teachers; working relationships between staff and students are good.

The curriculum is good. Students enjoy following programmes that have been carefully structured to meet their individual requirements and curriculum innovation has contributed to improved attainment. This is illustrated by the good work undertaken in subjects such as ethics, citizenship and PSHE. These lessons are designed to boost confidence and self-esteem as well as encouraging the students to think about others. Work seen during the inspection on knife crime and the problems associated with gang membership was relevant, hard-hitting and successful in encouraging the students to reflect on their actions and those of others. The provision of sport, including golf, further helps the students to develop confidence and self-esteem.

The unit provides outstanding care, guidance and support where the individual needs of the students are paramount. Staff work hard to establish trusting relationships with students' families, parents and carers, so that even those whose circumstances make them more difficult to reach are involved in their children's education and care.

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Responsibility and enjoyment are encouraged. A sensitive reward system encourages the students to work hard and behave well, but they are also given scope to reflect on their actions and how others might be affected. Teachers and teaching assistants operate well together to ensure that students enjoy their work and exercise responsibility. Students are encouraged to pursue healthy lifestyles. Healthy food, including fruit, is available through the breakfast club and at lunchtime and there are good opportunities for physical recreation.

Staff have worked hard to secure students' improved attendance and they monitor the attendance of every student carefully. Another strength is the support offered when students are reintegrated into mainstream schools. Staff from Stag Lane maintain contact with the receiving school and are available to give support and advice, and offer practical help. This provision is praised warmly by local schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Though a minority of staff in their inspection questionnaires expressed some concern about the management of student behaviour and the level of staff morale, inspection evidence supports the majority view. The leadership of the committed headteacher, together with the dedicated support of all staff, results in a clear focus on driving improvement. Self-evaluation is good and staff are ambitious for the students to enjoy success and improve their lives. The management committee fully support the unit's work. They too are keen for success and take their monitoring role, including overseeing safeguarding, seriously. Excellent working partnerships with many agencies help to secure outstanding care, guidance and support and good quality education programmes. These factors are working together to secure the students' good progress and their good education.

Students also make good progress because the management of teaching and learning has an appropriate focus on raising attainment. An emphasis on respect, rights, boosting confidence, self-esteem and encouraging responsibility underpins much of the PRU's work. Community cohesion is good, including good work undertaken with an adjacent senior citizens' centre. The unit promotes equality and tackles discrimination well as evidenced, for example, by a curriculum initiative whereby students were taken to Brunel University to attend master classes in mathematics. Given the context of the service, this is a novel and most laudable initiative.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

No responses were received to the questionnaire issued prior to the inspection to parents and carers. The unit regularly undertakes its own surveys of parents and carers and these results were scrutinised as part of the inspection process. Though written comments on the questionnaires from parents and carers are rarely made, the data collected overwhelmingly show high levels of satisfaction. A small minority of respondents expressed the view that behaviour can be a problem and is not always managed well. In all other respects, the surveys strongly support the inspection judgement that this is a good school that is enhancing the lives of the students.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stag Lane Pupil Referral Unit 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 inspector received no completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 21 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	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	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.**



11 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Stag Lane Pupil Referral Unit, London NW9 9AG**

Thank you for making me so welcome during my recent visit. I have fond memories of meeting and talking with you and seeing your work. I was impressed with what you are all achieving. You told me about the good education you receive and I am pleased to say that I agree with your views and I have judged Stag Lane PRU to be a good school. You are making good strides in your learning and personal development. The staff help you to do this but you also help by your positive attitudes, your good behaviour and improved attendance. I also enjoyed attending your lessons and joining you at breakfast and at dinner.

There are so many aspects of the centre that are at least good and this is underpinned by you having a dedicated staff who all want you to do well and who help you overcome your difficulties. You also benefit from a good curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support. Though the education you receive is good and I am impressed with the way you are developing your literacy and numeracy skills, I have asked your staff to ensure that there is more consistency in the way that they develop your literacy skills in lessons. You can help your staff gain further improvements by ensuring that you always behave well, are polite and continue to attend regularly.

Thank you again for making me so welcome. I enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham

Additional inspector

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