

Havering KS4 PRU

67 Albert Road, Romford, RM1 2PS

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There are inconsistencies in teaching across the seven providers commissioned by the local authority. As a result, some students, and especially the high flyers, are not doing as well as they could.
- There is not a wide enough choice of GCSE subjects for higher attainers.
- The teachers on some sites do not question students sufficiently or invite discussion. Some opportunities for writing in subjects other than English, are not exploited. Because of this, the students' literacy development is not as good as it should be.
- Students do not have a clear enough understanding of how well they are doing or how to improve their work.
- Attendance overall is lower than average and some students have poor attendance which affects their learning.
- The management committee has too few members to be fully effective and does not have a clear enough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in the PRU.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has a very clear understanding of what to do to improve provision and the students' performance.
- Since her arrival, the monitoring of teaching and the tracking of students' achievement have been significantly strengthened.
- The PRU now rigorously and accurately evaluates its own strengths and weaknesses, and strategies for improvement are in place and are beginning to be effective.
- The students say they feel safe. They behave well and this is, in many cases, a substantial improvement from their previous schools.
- The excellent induction process for new students results in them making a confident start to their studies.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team had meetings with hub staff, including the senior management team, outreach support advisers and curriculum advisors, a variety of staff in other centres, students, the chair of the management committee and with officers of the local authority concerned with the placement and the future support for students when they leave the PRU.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school improvement plan with associated action planning, data on the students' performance and tracking of progress, monitoring reports, the work students were doing in their books, behaviour records and the documentation relating to the safeguarding of the students.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in nine lessons and parts of four lessons.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher conducted joint observations with inspectors in each lesson observed.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents and carers expressed to the PRU at formal meetings and the PRU's own surveys. There were no responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The PRU provides for students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or who have been assessed by the local authority as likely to benefit from an alternative curriculum to that normally found in mainstream secondary schools and which their school cannot provide.
- About three quarters of students are boys and students are overwhelmingly from White British backgrounds
- About half of the students are eligible for pupil premium funding, which is allocated for students who are entitled to free school meals and those in the care of the local authority; this is above the national average. All students are identified as having special educational needs for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and are at the stage of school action plus. Four students have a statement of special educational needs.
- All students are educated at full time placements at alternative sites around the borough. There are seven different providers, six of which are private companies and/or charities who have been commissioned by the local authority to provide an educational diet which fulfils National Curriculum requirements while giving students a choice of academic and vocational pathways.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that all students make good progress by:
 - making sure all teachers have high expectations and do not accept work which is less than the student is capable of
 - ensuring that activities challenge every student, especially those of higher ability
 - ensuring that teachers on all sites are fully aware of students' academic targets set by the PRU and adapt their lessons accordingly to enable each student to reach his or her full potential.
- Improve the quality of the students' learning by:
 - ensuring teachers ask relevant questions of students to check their understanding and to improve the students' language skills
 - making sure that students are given the opportunity in as many lessons as possible to express their ideas and learning, both orally and in writing, to extend their literacy skills
 - making sure that students fully understand how well they are doing and how to make the next small step in building on their progress
 - providing a wider choice of GCSE subjects.
- Help all students to improve their attendance by:
 - further improving the monitoring of absence and the strategies recently adopted to encourage full attendance
 - developing the role of outreach support workers to combat the poor attendance of the very small minority of students
 - developing further the links with students' families to encourage their commitment to their children's education.
- Improve the impact of the PRU's leaders by:
 - developing the skills of the management committee, especially in understanding students' performance data and in finding out how good teaching is, so they can hold the PRU's leaders fully to account for their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students usually enter the provision with relatively low standards of attainment, due largely to a previously troubled school history. By the time they leave their attainment remains below that expected nationally.
- Almost every student gains at least one GCSE pass in either, or both, English and mathematics, although these are at lower grades. The number of passes has continued to rise year on year, but no students have gained passes at the higher A* to C grades. Progress is sometimes inhibited by weak provision for literacy teaching which slows the rate at which students learn.
- Although most students make progress at expected rates, a few do not, mainly due to poor attendance and sometimes to a lack of appropriate challenge. Higher ability students, in particular, are capable of reaching higher standards and do not always achieve their potential. Students with disabilities, those with identified special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium make equal, and sometimes better, progress to the majority of their peers.
- Recently introduced improvements in the initial assessment of students and the setting of challenging targets are beginning to increase the pace of students' learning.
- The PRU's leadership is starting to hold the seven providers more to account and standards of teaching are rising. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the students' performance.
- Students generally achieve accreditation in their chosen vocational subjects. Most students leave with National Vocational Qualifications or BTEC passes and this enables them to access suitable further education courses.
- Improvements introduced recently are beginning to strengthen the quality of teachers' marking. There are too many instances, however, where students are unaware of how to improve their work and this slows down the rate of learning.
- The students make good progress in their personal development. Due largely to the high quality of pastoral support, the students gain confidence in their ability to learn and they develop positive attitudes to their work.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is too much variation between the providers in planning what the students will learn in each lesson. The objectives of lessons are sometimes unclear and students are unaware of what they are expected to achieve. There are recent improvements due to the expertise of experienced staff who operate as curriculum advisers. These changes build on the teachers' good subject knowledge by helping staff identify the most important points to get across to the students in each lesson.
- Teachers do not always take account of the targets set centrally by the PRU, which are carefully based on assessments of the students' prior learning and knowledge of the levels they are working at. As a result, lessons are sometimes not adapted to the differing learning needs of individuals and this can result in work which is too easy for some and too hard for others. In some lessons, expectations are too low and this slows the progress of higher attaining students. Where the teacher's expectations are high, the students respond well to the challenge and make good progress.
- Feedback to students, either orally or through marking their work, is inconsistent. Students do not generally have a solid understanding of what level they are working at, how well they are doing or how to make their work better. This slows down their learning.
- In the best lessons, the students have a clear idea of what they are going to learn and the teacher asks questions to check their knowledge and extend their understanding. This was seen in an effective French lesson where the teacher used a mixture of French and English to challenge the students to reply in French. The students here were aiming for the higher GCSE

grades and responded to the brisk pace of the lesson with enthusiasm.

- In other lessons, teachers engage in telling the students facts with too few opportunities for students to consolidate their learning by questioning and discussing the issues raised in the lesson.
- Teachers give students too few opportunities to extend their literacy skills in subjects other than English. For example, they do not often require students to read longer passages of information or to express their thinking in full sentences or paragraphs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The students report that they feel safe and secure on the different sites, a view confirmed by staff and by parents and carers. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe through extensive and effective personal mentoring by experienced staff and through their personal, health and social education lessons. Students praise the high level of care from staff.
- Instances of bullying are almost unknown. Students confirm that there is no discrimination of any kind.
- Students often join the PRU with a history of challenging behaviour and disrupted schooling. The very well organised induction process ensures that students are made welcome and that they are involved in helping to decide their own learning packages. The extremely high levels of support they receive, where necessary, have a significant impact in helping students to adapt once more to classrooms and the discipline of learning.
- Behaviour is good on all the sites. Students have positive attitudes to learning and relationships are good. There is good development of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Students are consistently encouraged to show tolerance and understanding to others and to examine their own behaviour and principles. They develop a clear understanding of right and wrong because of the strong behaviour management strategies consistently employed across all sites. For instance, this term the number of exclusions has dramatically reduced and is now minimal.
- The pupil premium has been used with good effect to buy appropriate software to monitor and support students with behavioural problems and to employ extra staff to support students through mentoring and careers guidance. As a result, students eligible for free school meals have successfully narrowed the gap between their progress and that of other students.
- Attendance is below average for pupil referral units nationally and within the London area. Most students have a poor record before entering the PRU and take a short time to readjust to regular attendance. The attendance of the majority of students improves well over time from their low starting points, but is not yet, in most cases, at acceptable levels. The attendance of a few is poor and has a serious effect on their learning.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start in establishing procedures to raise standards. She is well supported by her deputy and by a committed centrally-based team who monitors learning and the students' behaviour and well-being effectively. The local authority provides high quality support and guidance.
- Although the recent change to placing all students with alternative providers has been managed well, there are noticeable areas of inconsistency between providers, both in teaching standards and the students' performance. These have been identified through detailed and accurate self-evaluation, and clear action planning is in place to bring about improvements.
- The headteacher has introduced rigorous and regular monitoring of teaching at each site. This is starting to bring positive results, especially as any weaknesses identified are followed up effectively by the curriculum advisers. Support for individual teachers through face-to-face contact and a developing programme of training has been successful in starting to raise standards. Allied to this, the headteacher has introduced a robust system for tracking the

students' performance, based on a clear assessment of their ability and standards of attainment on entry. As a result, the students' targets have begun to be realistically challenging for them and expectations of their achievement are rising.

- Although the curriculum is mostly broad and balanced, with the seven providers offering a mixture of academic and vocational courses, higher ability students do not yet have access to a sufficiently wide range of GCSE subjects and this limits their potential success. However, the curriculum plays a substantial part in re-kindling most students' interest in learning. Almost all students go on to further education, training or employment when they leave.
- The morale of staff is high. There are robust procedures in place to manage the performance of teachers and other staff and to reward teachers, based on clear criteria.
- Although the PRU is developing effective procedures to deal with absence, these are not yet embedded well enough to have a substantial impact. The competent outreach support workers have not yet been able to form positive relationships with some of the students and their families.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are secure and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There are too few members of the management committee, especially representatives from the community and professions related to the school, such as medical or social care. As a result, the influence of the committee has been diluted and members are unable to challenge the PRU's management or the local authority with enough rigour. They have received little training for their role. The headteacher presents detailed information to the committee and members are now better equipped to question the students' progress and the quality of teaching. Systematic monitoring by the committee is developing, but the PRU's leadership and the members of the management committee are aware that this scrutiny is not yet sharp enough. The committee has not carried out any routine monitoring to establish the impact of pupil premium funding. Members are unaware of procedures for managing teachers' performance. The PRU, in common with other similar establishments, does not have a budget of its own and the local authority manages finance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131193
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	402450

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Dawn Rounce
Headteacher	Kerry Linden
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 December 2009
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