

Cotelands Pupil Referral Unit

Selsdon Park Road, Croydon, CR2 8JJ

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders have continued to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress remains good, at the same time as taking on responsibility for more pupils and the home tuition service.
- Pupils at the Cotelands and Ruskin sites make good progress in a wide range of subjects. This helps to prepare them well for going to mainstream school or college when they leave the unit.
- Pupils based on the Cotelands site make rapid progress in some subjects, particularly English and science. This is because teaching is especially strong in these areas.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently good. Their attendance improves rapidly because the support they receive helps them to overcome some of the emotional difficulties they experience. They feel safe and secure at the unit.
- The good range of subjects taught is effective in keeping pupils' interest and motivates them well.
- Extensive partnership with different organisations helps to meet pupils' personal needs, such as through counselling.
- The recent creation of a federation of five pupil referral units in the borough has helped to strengthen the management committee's expertise and commitment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders and managers do not have as much information about the effectiveness of home tuition as they need. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are at early stages of development.
- The unit's management committee is very new following recent changes. It does not yet know enough about the different parts of the unit's work to be able judge how effective it is in supporting pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons taught by six teachers; one of these lessons was observed jointly with the headteacher. Both the Cotelands and Ruskin House sites were visited during the inspection. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and school information on their achievements.
- Meetings were held with unit staff, the Chair of the Management Committee, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the three responses received on the Parent View website and of the unit's analysis of its own survey of parents and carers.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Jon Carter, Lead inspector | Additional inspector |
| Clementina Aina | Additional inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Cotelands Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) educates schoolgirl mothers and school refusers on a site based at the John Ruskin College. There is an Ofsted-registered nursery on site which can be used by students and staff from Cotelands and John Ruskin College. While the nursery is an integrated part of the unit, it was not part of this inspection as there are separate arrangements for inspecting this kind of provision. At the time of the inspection, 26 pupils were on roll at the Cotelands site.
- Since the previous inspection, Cotelands PRU has expanded. The headteacher now has additional responsibility for leading and managing the borough's home tuition service and a new resource, based at Ruskin House, for pupils in Years 1 to 11 who cannot attend mainstream school for medical, emotional and other reasons. This opened on 1 September 2012 following the closure of the borough's virtual school. At the time of the inspection, ten pupils were on roll at the Ruskin House site and 46 pupils were on roll to the home tuition service.
- The PRU is now one of five similar units that have formally joined together to create the Saffron Valley Federation. The federation began in July 2012 and has a single management committee that is responsible for governing its work.
- Pupils attending the Cotelands site stay on roll, on average, for one year.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly larger than average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During the current academic year improve the leadership and management of the home tuition service, by:
 - putting systems in place to allow teachers and senior leaders to know how well pupils are achieving
 - ensuring that senior leaders use the information gained about pupils' progress to know where pupils are doing less well and taking action to address this
 - establishing a system for checking on the quality of teaching provided by home tutors and providing further staff training to improve weaker aspects.
- From the start of the next school term, improve the management committee's governance of all aspects of the unit, by providing members with opportunities to attend training courses to increase their understanding of their role and ability to check the unit's effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' levels of achievement when they start attending the pupil referral unit vary considerably. Many pupils, especially those who are school refusers, have had considerable absence from school. As a result, they are further behind in their learning than most pupils of similar age.
- In lessons at both Cotelands and Ruskin, pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. This enables them to quickly catch up on missed learning and successfully gain a variety of recognised qualifications, including GCSEs. These qualifications, together with improvements to their confidence and self-esteem, ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills develop quickly. Pupils improve their reading through regular opportunities in most lessons to use different kinds of text to support their learning. The small classes help to ensure that every pupil is involved in discussions that, in turn, promote better communication skills.
- Pupils' abilities to use information and communication technology (ICT) develop well. They use and refine their skills in researching and presenting information for different purposes using appropriate software very well.
- Progress in English and science at the Cotelands site is outstanding for many pupils. Pupils who attend Ruskin House make good progress in their English lessons.
- Pupils' numeracy and mathematics skills develop well. They use and apply their number skills effectively in other lessons. For example, in a home cooking lesson, pupils used their sequencing, measuring and estimating skills accurately to successfully produce a pizza.
- The group of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding make better progress than other pupils. This is a result of the effective use of the resources purchased, such as by providing laptop computers for pupils to use at home to do work for examination subjects.
- It was not possible to fully evaluate the achievement of pupils receiving home tuition during the inspection. This is because the systems for checking pupils' progress are in the early stages of being set up. Learning plans for individual pupils are evaluated by home tutors and show that pupils are making progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching usually ensures that pupils' different levels of achievement are considered very carefully. Teachers take good account of what pupils already know about the subject when planning lessons. For most pupils, this ensures that the difficulty of the work they have to do helps them make progress at a good pace.
- Some teaching is of high quality and enables pupils to make exceptional progress. For example, pupils respond well to tasks in English that are demanding, reflecting the particularly high expectations set by staff in this subject.
- Opportunities for developing pupils' literacy skills are regularly built into lessons. There is a common approach to teaching reading, writing and communication that is shared by teachers within the unit.
- On a very few occasions, opportunities are missed by teachers to extend the most able individuals by starting their learning at a more advanced level. This is because they expect all pupils to complete the same work and provide extra tasks for those who finish more quickly.
- Pupils are fully aware of the progress they are making and the levels they are working at from discussions they have with their teachers. Work is marked regularly but written comments from a few teachers do not always make clear what pupils need to do to improve.
- Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also well planned. Pupils have frequent opportunities to improve their personal skills, particularly those

that involve interaction with others. For example, in an outstanding science lesson for Year 11, pupils worked together to research, discuss and present information about recreational drugs, together with the positive and negative effects of making different lifestyle choices.

- Some training has taken place to broaden the resources available to home tutors through improved access to internet-based materials. This has resulted in more frequent use of ICT to support those learning from home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils' attendance typically improves rapidly during their time at the unit. For some pupils, the different learning environment gives them the confidence to change their attendance habits dramatically, from being a school refuser to being present in the unit every day.
- Pupils' behaviour at the Cotelands site is often exemplary. They show great respect for their teachers and respond well. Their positive attitudes to learning actively help lessons to proceed smoothly.
- Pupils working at Ruskin House behave well but are not always punctual, indicating that they are still developing their understanding of the expectations of being in a school. Attendance information for pupils receiving home tuition shows that most engage regularly with their tutor.
- Pupils feel safe because of the good care that they receive and the positive relationships they have with staff. They feel comfortable around each other because they share common problems and do not feel isolated. One pupil simply said, 'It is so much better than a mainstream school.'
- Pupils have a thorough knowledge of how bullying occurs, often through first-hand experience at other schools. They are clear that bullying, based on prejudice or otherwise, does not occur at the unit. Pupils improve their self-esteem while at Cotelands, which helps to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of bullying again upon return to mainstream education in school or college.
- Pupils receiving home tuition have started to benefit from more rigorous systems introduced following the change in leadership. There are now clearer expectations about the level of engagement expected from pupils which has seen an increase in the use of internet-based learning resources. Better planning for pupils' return to mainstream school is beginning to increase the number of pupils who start coming to school again through arrangements to attend lessons at Ruskin House or Cotelands.
- Parents and carers agree that pupils are kept safe. They notice the change in their children's attitudes to school and appreciate the work done by teachers and other staff to support their return to education.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders clearly communicate to staff that high-quality teaching and support are the key to success for Cotelands' pupils. The established procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and the impact of the work of other staff at the Cotelands site provide a good model of effective practice. These are now being used to fully evaluate teaching and learning at the Ruskin House site and for home tuition staff.
- The headteacher gave due consideration to taking on the responsibility of leading the provision based at Ruskin House and the home tuition service with the objective of improving the quality of education that pupils receive. This has ensured that the good quality of education has been maintained for existing Cotelands pupils while improvements were made to the other parts of the service which had not previously been as effectively led and managed. This illustrates the PRU's successful commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Although a good start has been made, there has been too little time for the work that has been done so far to improve the management of the home tuition service to be fully effective.

However, the plans that are in place to improve the quality of teaching and improve pupils' progress are beginning to be implemented, particularly so that pupils' progress can be monitored and evaluated.

- The local authority has provided light touch support for Cotelands PRU in the past due to its record of strong leadership. Most of the support has focused on developing advanced practice through collaboration with other school leaders.
- Information from monitoring the quality of teaching has been used effectively to decide the priorities for staff training at the Cotelands site. Recent focus on teaching and using literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum, for example, has helped to ensure that pupils' achievement has improved in English. These systems are underdeveloped for the home tuition service.
- The unit offers pupils a suitably wide range of subjects. This helps to ensure that pupils of all ages are well prepared for returning to mainstream education in another school or college and are equipped to learn on an equal footing with other pupils of the same age.
- Courses for older pupils are well matched to their strengths and preferences. They are chosen to make sure that pupils can complete them in the short period that they are referred to the centre. This helps to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by difficulties they have experienced earlier in their school career.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The recent creation of the Saffron Valley Federation has increased the education expertise available to all five of the pupil referral units that are part of the group. Members of the committee have insufficient ways of finding out about the work of the unit. The committee has a sound understanding of the need to hold unit leaders to account for their decisions. For example, they receive reports on the impact of additional funding on pupils' progress and know the importance of monitoring the link between the quality of teaching and the salaries that are paid to staff. However, the committee recognises that some training is required for its members for them to be able to carry out this part of their role more effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 123976 |
| Local authority | Croydon |
| Inspection number | 403803 |

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

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 5–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 82 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Jennifer Adamson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18–19 January 2010 |
| Telephone number | 020 3252 2020 |
| Fax number | 020 3252 2021 |
| Email address | schooloffice@cotelands.croydon.sch.uk |

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