

# The Coningsby Pupil Referral Unit

45 Coombe Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1BQ

## Inspection dates

10–11 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Students learn well in lessons and make good progress. They use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in a range of subjects. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported effectively.
- Students who complete their education at the unit gain a broad range of accredited qualifications at GCSE level. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
- Good teaching helps students to overcome their difficulties and close gaps in their learning. Staff respond quickly when students show that they do not understand. This gives students confidence to ask for support.
- Lesson resources are often well chosen to motivate and engage students effectively. Staff are mindful of students' strengths and interests when planning learning activities.
- Students' behaviour and attendance improve quickly during their placements. Students often demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in lessons. This contributes well to their successful return to mainstream schools.
- Students are cared for and supported well. This allows them to feel safe whilst at school in the unit, and at alternative settings. They trust staff to look after and advise them well.
- School leaders and the management committee have a thorough understanding of the unit's strengths and weaknesses. The federation and the local authority have both supported school improvement effectively.
- The unit provides a flexible approach to learning. After-school activities help students to study a more diverse range of subjects in school time than would otherwise be possible.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The quality of teaching is not consistently outstanding. Teachers do not routinely ensure that students have taken notice of their feedback through marking.
- Teachers' planning is not always specific enough when setting work for students of different abilities.
- Students do not make progress as quickly in English as they do in mathematics. Their independent reading skills develop more slowly because staff do not show them how to read difficult words. They do not always provide the best models of writing for students to follow.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector, together with the headteacher, observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons, taught by seven teachers. Students from the unit were visited while learning at the Road to Success alternative provision.
- Students and staff met with the inspector to discuss the unit's work.
- The inspector met with representatives of the management committee, who are responsible for the governance of the unit, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked carefully at a range of documents including the unit's tracking of students' progress, the checks by the unit on how well it is doing and its development plans, safeguarding arrangements and minutes of meetings held by the management committee.
- It was not possible to consider the views of parents and carers using the Parent View website because there were too few responses for results to be shown. However, the inspector took account of parents' and carers' views by looking at the unit's analysis of recent parent questionnaires. The inspector also considered the views of 13 staff who completed questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Jon Carter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Coningsby Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provides education for students who are at risk of being, or have been, permanently excluded from mainstream secondary schools. It is one of the five Croydon PRUs that make up the Saffron Valley Federation, which is governed by a single management committee.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and there has been a significant turnover in teaching staff.
- Although the unit takes students in Years 7 to 11, most students on roll at the time of the inspection were in Years 9 and 10. The number of boys is usually more than the number of girls on roll at the unit.
- Most students have special educational needs that are supported through school action plus. Typically, the needs of these students are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- A few students have statements of special educational needs and are awaiting placement at a special school. As part of the unit's work, some students go through a statutory assessment of their special educational needs during their placement.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is above average. The unit does not currently have any children of service families on roll.
- The majority of students come from White British backgrounds, although significant groups also come from a range of Black backgrounds.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 mainly study for GCSE examinations. Other provision within the Saffron Valley Federation provides work-related education. Nevertheless, the unit uses a small range of alternative provision to meet students' varying needs. This includes Educational Excellence, Road to Success, Cressey College, and SILC.
- The unit used to allow early entry to GCSE examinations, but is no longer continuing with this policy.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that a greater proportion is outstanding, by ensuring that:
  - planning consistently and specifically identifies how students of different abilities will be set work that provides appropriate challenge in each lesson
  - teachers routinely make sure that students have taken notice of, and understood, the feedback they have been given through the marking of their work to further enhance learning and progress
  - visits are arranged for teachers to other PRUs in the federation to share best practice.
- Improve students' achievement in English, by:
  - training all staff to consistently reinforce the basics of reading using the sounds that letters make so that students develop better independent reading skills
  - ensuring that staff show good models of writing, especially handwriting, in their own work and demonstrations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students start their placements with levels of attainment which are often below expectations for their age. This is often due to disrupted education caused by exclusion from, or poor attendance at, mainstream schools.
- Students' progress in mathematics is good. Students use and apply their learning well across the curriculum, for example, in subjects such as food technology. Some students make particularly quick progress because lessons meet their individual needs well and small classes enable them to receive plenty of personalised support.
- Learning in other subjects is typically good. This makes a strong contribution to students' successful return to mainstream schools because the students do not fall behind in their studies in subjects such as science.
- The unit has started to improve students' literacy successfully. During the inspection, for example, students were able to identify and use formal and informal language because teachers in different lessons focused on this as part of a unit-wide literacy target.
- The development of students' independent reading skills is less rapid. Some individual students have improved their reading ability and confidence as a result of recent training for a small number of teaching assistants. However, staff do not adopt a common approach to helping students use the sounds that letters make to work out how to say an unfamiliar word. Mostly, students are told what the word is, rather than having to learn skills to decode it for themselves. This contributes to students making slower progress in English than they do in mathematics.
- The unit promotes equality of opportunity well. Students known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium make similar progress to other students. Boys and girls make progress at similar rates and achieve as well as each other in examinations.
- Those students who complete their education at the unit usually leave with a broad range of qualifications, including GCSEs. Although their attainment does not reach the levels expected of all students nationally, students do achieve the qualifications they need to go on to continue their education at college. Students who attend alternative provision for part, or all, of their placement complete accredited awards that recognise their achievements.
- The unit has successfully reduced the average amount of time a student spends at the unit before being placed in a suitable mainstream or special school. Monitoring and support from unit staff help to ensure that students reintegrating to mainstream continue to be successful in their new school.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and resourcefulness engage students quickly and move their learning on at a rapid pace.
- The school has made good progress in improving the quality of teachers' planning since the previous inspection. Teachers now show greater awareness of the range of different abilities in each class through their improved use of assessment information, which they use to match learning activities more accurately to the level of the class.
- Some teachers take good account of individual students' needs when planning the work that they will do in lessons. For example, in an English lesson for Year 11, one student focused on completing a more difficult piece of work better suited to her ability whilst others worked with the teacher at an appropriate pace for them. However, this quality of planning and delivery is not consistent across all classes.
- Staff show a good awareness of students' understanding and misconceptions. They use this to adapt lessons and respond to students' changing needs. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher recognised the difficulties being experienced by students using algebra to solve

simultaneous equations and amended the plan to take time to revise the basic skills again.

- Teachers regularly encourage students to use and apply basic literacy and numeracy skills in lessons other than English and mathematics. For example, in an outstanding history lesson for Year 9, students used pictograms to make calculations associated with the bombing of Pearl Harbour.
- Learning resources are prepared well. They often stimulate students' interest because staff take care to consider how students like to learn. For example, in an English lesson for Year 9, students' understanding of how to write dialogue improved because the stimulus material was written as a story which involved each of them as characters.
- Teachers mark students' books regularly. Their written comments are well chosen and focused on helping students to improve the quality of their work. However, teachers do not routinely check that students have taken note of, and understood, their comments in an effort to improve their work. This means that marking is not having as much impact as it could have on helping students to make progress.
- Teaching does not always provide a consistently strong model of good writing and presentation skills. In some classrooms, the position and size of whiteboards make it difficult for staff to demonstrate a high standard of handwriting. This does not set a positive example for students, especially those who find it difficult to present their work neatly.
- Teaching promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. For example, Year 10 students were challenged to improve their understanding of literature through the examination of the language used by Shakespeare, and, in citizenship, students put forward their opinions on the death penalty as part of a lesson on human rights and responsibilities.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

**are good**

- The unit successfully helps students to make significant changes to the way they behave. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the unit is typically good. Students often demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They show their interest by asking relevant questions and applying themselves to the work they have been set by their teachers.
- Staff provide strong and consistent support to students when they have difficulty from time to time in keeping to the unit's rules. The positive and trusting relationships between staff and students allow issues to be resolved quickly. This enables students to re-engage with learning.
- Students improve their understanding of how to keep safe and avoid risk during their placements. Learning programmes at alternative provision, for example, contribute well to developing students' understanding of the risks of using drugs and alcohol.
- Most students improve their attendance during their placement at the unit. The unit has rigorous procedures in place and works well with other agencies to monitor students' punctuality and absence, including those attending alternative provision.
- The unit is successful in tackling discrimination and fostering good relations. There are few incidents of racist behaviour or bullying. On the rare occasions when these happen, they are dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff. This, together with the consistent enforcement of the code of conduct, ensures that students feel safe, both in the building and when out on trips and visits.

### **The leadership and management**

**are good**

- The staff team, under the leadership of the headteacher and her deputy, shares a common vision of continued improvement and high expectations. The effectiveness of recent changes in maintaining good quality teaching shows that the unit has the capacity to continue to improve.
- All staff make a useful contribution to the checks the unit makes about the quality of its work. This helps to ensure that there is a comprehensive and thorough understanding about the unit's strengths and where the unit most needs to make improvements. The unit's development plan

sets appropriate targets for future development.

- The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by unit leaders in lessons is regular, accurate and checked with the help of external advisers. Information from this process has been used well to identify staff's training needs. Courses that staff have attended have had a demonstrable effect on improving outcomes for students. For example, 'restorative approaches', where staff facilitate positive discussions that avoid blaming either person, have promoted students' independence and self-confidence effectively. However, links with the other PRUs in the federation are not always used well to support the sharing of best practice in teaching.
- The unit ensures that the broad range of subjects available for students to study helps them to be prepared well for the next stage of their education. Students benefit from being able to take part in different extra-curricular activities, such as sport during the school day, and to catch up with other lessons after school.
- The local authority has ensured that the headteacher has received appropriate advice and support since her appointment. Support for the unit has been well focused, contributing significantly, for example, to the improvement of teaching in mathematics.
- The unit's procedures to ensure that students' welfare is appropriately safeguarded are thorough and meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of both the unit's work and its own practice. The committee is aware of the different skills of its members and actively works to ensure that there is a breadth of experience in different areas of governance. However, this has not yet been used to identify specific training needs for individual members. The committee members make careful checks of information given to them by the headteacher about students' learning, progress, behaviour and attendance and ask challenging questions of unit leaders to help improve the rigour with which the school evaluates its own performance. The management committee has a policy in place for linking teachers' pay with their performance in the classroom and as leaders. The federation arrangements allow the management committee to have a good overview of the local authority's PRU provision.

## 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	101706
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	425478

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Lucy Meagher
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 October 2010
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