



Whittington Hospital Class

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134274
LEA Islington LEA
Inspection number 282524
Inspection dates 9 March 2006 to 9 March 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Charlesworth AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Ifor Ward
School category	Pupil referral unit		Highgate Hill
Age range of pupils	5 to 16		Archway, London N19 5NF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02072723070
Number on roll	12	Fax number	02072885550
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Councillor Doreen Scott
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Rosemarie Hilditch

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Whittington Hospital Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) opened in 2003. It caters for pupils from 5 - 16 years who are unable to attend school because of their physical or mental medical needs. Provision is either in hospital or through the home tuition service. The great majority of pupils are educated in hospital on a very short term basis, on average for two to three days. Consequently, there is a very high turnover of pupils. Most of the rest are educated at home for five to ten hours a week for longer periods of time, occasionally over a year. Some pupils have frequent re-admissions into hospital, and so build up a long-term relationship with the hospital class.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Whittington Hospital PRU offers good provision. Inspection findings agree with the PRU that there are many good features. The PRU is highly successful in working in partnership with others for the benefit of the pupils. The care, guidance and support given to each pupil through this partnership, the strong staff team-work, positive relationships, and the individual approach and careful planning for each pupil are excellent. As a result, pupils of all ages enjoy their work and achieve well. Partnership with parents is outstanding; they are full of praise for the support they and their children receive and the progress their children make. The hospital accommodation is limited, but the PRU has very good resources which are used very effectively to promote learning. Teaching and the curriculum are good. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to meet the different needs of short and long-term pupils. However, some aspects of planning and recording progress are over-wordy which limits their clarity. Very good consideration is given to pupils' personal development, and to teaching them to stay healthy and safe and enjoy their education, but there is no formal means of assessing pupils' progress in this area. The leadership and management of the PRU are good, and focus on organising, supporting and developing staff to provide the best possible education and care for the pupils. Senior managers and staff have a good understanding of the PRU's strengths and areas for development although systematic self-evaluation leading to improvement is not yet fully in place. Nevertheless, the leadership team is keen to develop the PRU further, and the capacity for improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

* develop self-evaluation to inform school improvement;* assess pupils' personal development more formally in order to determine their progress;* develop the format for lesson planning and evaluation to link lesson objectives and learning outcomes more clearly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, standards cover a huge range and are broadly average. Pupils achieve well. The PRU works hard to help them overcome any initial or long-term anxieties, and pupils thrive academically and personally with the individual attention they receive. Short-term pupils enjoy interesting and relevant activities that support their interrupted education. These are often related to helping them to stay healthy and safe. Assessment of pupils' skills and liaison with their home-schools inform careful planning for longer-term pupils. These pupils work towards clear targets set in a wide range of subjects and in individual plans to help them with specific difficulties, such as problems with literacy. Good provision is made for pupils who have English as an additional language and they also achieve well. A number of pupils are in the middle of GCSE examination courses when they become ill. These courses are continued by the PRU and pupils do well. Some targets and work might relate to personal development or

overcoming anxieties, for example to go somewhere specific out of the house. Targets set for pupils with complex difficulties, or those who are terminally ill are also relevant and challenging. Taking into account pupils' illness, anxieties and diverse starting points, their progress is good and they reach the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have extremely positive attitudes to their lessons, behave very well and, taking their circumstances into account, their attendance is excellent. Pupils in the hospital choose to come to class even when feeling unwell or tired - occasionally preferring school to breakfast and getting washed! Pupils taught at home rarely absent themselves from lessons, even though they may have chosen not to attend their home-school for a long time. Pupils learn how to stay safe and choose healthy lifestyles, and to enjoy education. They are well equipped with the basic skills they need for their future economic well-being such as literacy and numeracy, and older pupils develop a good understanding of careers and further education. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils in the hospital class show consideration for one another and develop confidence and self-esteem as they learn and enjoy their work. Spiritual and moral issues are addressed in both settings, and pupils develop their social and cultural awareness by participating in a range of relevant, well planned activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because of the careful, individual approach taken by staff. Strong, positive relationships help staff get to know pupils very quickly and so to provide work that meets their varying needs. At any time in the hospital class, there may be pupils of any age, well known or entirely new to the staff. All are always happily and productively working, because of the support, encouragement and expertise of the staff. The staff are very effective at assessing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, and they consult and include other professionals for their views and help. A new assessment system in English, mathematics and science has recently been introduced. This identifies gaps in learning and together with close liaison with pupils' home-schools and pupils' own views, enables their needs to be well met so that there is minimal disruption to their education. Often, pupils do better than at their own schools due to the individual tuition and support provided. Occasionally, insufficient consideration is given to the organisation of incompatible activities in the small hospital teaching room. For example a Year 10 pupil studying mathematics was distracted by a tempting fruit salad-making activity with a Year 6 pupil at the other end of his table. Good use is made of information communication technology (ICT) to support learning and independence, and to motivate pupils. Home-tuition was not observed during the

inspection, but discussion with staff, and a review of plans and progress made by pupils indicates teaching is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and very well thought through. The PRU has devised a wide range of age-appropriate, National-Curriculum based activities for short-term pupils in the hospital class. Resources for these are of good quality and very well stored in easily accessible packs. Everything pupils do supplements what they are learning in their home-schools. Activities are rooted in the Every Child Matters framework of staying safe and healthy, enjoying and achieving in education, contributing to society and preparing for life after school. The curriculum for longer-term pupils is taken directly from the National Curriculum, and is planned as a result of information given by the pupils, their home-school and family. Each pupil has a personal education plan which sets out their programme and what they will be learning to continue their home-school work as far as possible. The PRU is very well resourced for this approach, and staff leave the hospital to visit each pupil armed with interesting, relevant resources and books suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. Interesting activities are planned to support pupils' work, and their social and cultural development. Recent events include a visit to Kew gardens to support a school project, and visits to the hospital ward by a musician and two authors. Teachers work very hard to plan each lesson and evaluate what learning has taken place, but this is not always as efficient as it could be. Lesson objectives are not always clearly written, and assessment of learning is often bound up with an overall evaluation of the lesson. Although teachers know exactly what they are doing in practice, this prevents home-schools and those monitoring pupils' progress from seeing at a glance how well pupils are achieving, and whether the lesson objectives have been met.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely well cared for, and their well-being is given the utmost priority. The nature of many pupils' illness is such that they need a supportive approach which balances re-engagement with education with a sensitivity to their situation. The PRU staff achieve this very effectively. All pupils are considered as individuals and appropriate educational and personal support plans are put into place to help them achieve as well as possible. Pupils' views are sought in various ways, including by an exit questionnaire, and the staff have very close links with parents, both in the hospital and at home. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the PRU and the support given both to their children and to themselves. One typical response to the Ofsted questionnaire says "Overall, the planning, teaching and communication have been excellent from all involved with my child. I feel he is making good progress." The PRU has thorough procedures in place to safeguard pupils, and its work with other professional agencies such as the Child and Adult Mental Health Services, and social services, to support, educate and safeguard pupils is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the PRU are good. The headteacher has created an outward looking establishment that is collaborative in all aspects of its work and puts pupils' needs first. Relationships with the hospital are excellent. There is close liaison with parents, hospital and community based professionals, and pupils' home-schools to support the educational provision and care of each pupil. The PRU is highly regarded by all. The PRU is an integral part of Islington's provision and derives good professional support from colleagues. The headteacher's line-manager in the Local Authority is very supportive and helpfully involved at both a strategic and pupil level. The PRU's management group has been established for a year and includes relevant stakeholders, including parents. Although members are at different points in understanding their new role, overall the group has a suitable advisory and monitoring function. However, formal school self-evaluation based on specific criteria leading to strategic development has yet to be established, although staff and managers have a good understanding of the PRU's strengths and areas for development. Whilst the staff know each long-term pupil very well, and progress in personal development is carefully monitored, it is not fully documented. The staff are already developing their systems to assess pupils' academic achievement against nationally recognised benchmarks and recognise that a similar approach for tracking pupils' personal development would be advantageous, for example when contributing to multi-disciplinary meetings about pupils' mental health issues. The headteacher leads a cohesive, supportive team of staff very successfully. She has set up a good range of management systems to assure the quality of provision and ensure that pupils' needs are met. Staff are very well organised and their work is thoughtfully planned to make the most of their skills. The headteacher carries out successful programmes of performance monitoring and arranges professional development informed by service needs. The staff and managers are open and keen to develop themselves and the PRU further, and its capacity to improve is good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	NA
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Although I only met a very small number of you, I understand that you knew I was visiting the hospital class base yesterday in order to find out how well the school is working and how well you were all doing. I was very pleased with what I found, and completely agree with the school staff's view that your school is a good one.

I found that the Whittington Hospital school does everything it can to give you good quality education, care and guidance. Your relationships with staff members are very strong, and both you and your parents get a great deal of support from the staff. Their individual approach and careful planning for each of you helps you enjoy your work, come to lessons even when you don't feel well and make good progress. The Whittington staff put a great deal of emphasis on making sure that you learn interesting and relevant things and that your personal development is also well supported. The liaison with your own schools is really good. This helps the Whittington staff plan work that continues what you were doing at your home-school, fills any gaps caused by your illness, and enables you go back as quickly and easily as possible. The hospital classroom is small, but there is a really good variety and quantity of resources. I noticed how much you enjoyed using the computers - what a lot there are in such a small space!

The school is well led, managed and organised by Mrs Hilditch. All the staff play a part and make sure that they are up to date and can help you achieve as much as possible. There are just three things I think the school could do to do this even better. These are: firstly, to look systematically at how well it is doing in various areas in order to decide on what to improve next; secondly, to develop their procedures for assessing your academic and personal development to help you achieve even more; and thirdly, to improve their written lesson planning to make it easier and clearer for themselves. I wish you all the very best for your future.