

Elsley and Ronald Ross Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132077
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	293939
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	64
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs T Press
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Gideon Road Battersea SW11 5TZ
Telephone number	020 7228 9818
Fax number	020 7350 2112

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The unit is part of the local authority's Behaviour and Learning Support Service, which offers an outreach service to all mainstream primary schools in the borough. Its core aim is to minimise the risk of either fixed term or permanent exclusions. The unit also offers off-site provision at two bases some five miles apart. Here it provides part-time placements as well as full-time education to learners on fixed term exclusions from the 15 primary schools involved in the local authority's Behaviour Improvement programme. Numbers vary throughout the year. A nurture group also runs once a week for learners in the Foundation Stage and early Key Stage 1 who need to learn and practice the early routines involved in school life. The great majority of learners remain on roll at their home primary school.

Learners attending the unit are significantly underachieving in their mainstream schools and have social, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties and a large number experience financial and emotional deprivation. Generally there are far more boys than girls attending the unit. Currently, 38 per cent of learners are of White origin and 35 per cent of Black origin. Five are at the early stages of English language acquisition.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The unit provides very well for its learners. It meets fully its aim of keeping learners with challenging behaviour and other needs in mainstream school and, where permanent exclusion has occurred, rapid reintegration. The unit has significant strengths. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The unit is effective in supporting each learner in very specific ways, meeting effectively their behavioural and other needs. A parent commented: 'The PRU is supportive, kind, caring and loving.' The unit also has excellent links and partnerships with other professional agencies to promote learners' well-being. Primary head teachers comment positively with regard to the quality of support offered at the unit itself as well as that offered by peripatetic teachers in mainstream schools. Despite the unit's best efforts, accommodation needs are still to be resolved in conjunction with the local authority. There remains insufficient space for teachers to plan their work and there are no small rooms for individual support work, particularly for those learners who arrive throughout the year as a result of fixed-term exclusions. This often adversely affects the relationships of those attending group sessions. On occasion it also limits the amount of time teachers have available for support work in schools.

Standards on entry of learners attending the group sessions and for those permanently excluded or on fixed term exclusions vary widely. Many are significantly underachieving in their mainstream schools and have a negative experience of learning. Those attending the group sessions make good progress towards the personal and learning targets set for them.

The personal development and well being of learners is good. Their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development is good. In a science lesson, a learner commented on how important it was to ensure that the insects and molluscs being observed should be returned to their natural environment. In lessons, learners are enabled to share activities and take turns when appropriate. During the inspection learners behaved well in lessons and showed willing in being involved in activities. Attendance is satisfactory but varies, particularly for those who attend the unit when on a fixed-term exclusion.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of learners; including those who arrive for their first ever group session at the unit and for those who attend because of a fixed-term exclusion. As a result of effective baseline assessments to establish their capabilities, teachers are able to plan their work to ensure it matches the individual needs of learners. A good curriculum, which reflects that offered in learner's mainstream schools, contributes well to the overall progress made.

The whole staff ethos of ensuring the unit's core aims are fully met stems from the highly effective leadership of the head teacher. All staff are very dedicated and committed to working with their learners. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and areas identified for improvement are appropriate. The PRU Advisory Board works effectively as a critical and supportive friend. In light of the unit's track record with learners the unit has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve accommodation to strengthen the effectiveness of provision even further
- ensure the unit's work is not adversely affected by the arrival of fixed-term exclusion learners throughout the year

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most learners arrive at the unit with standards that are well below that expected for their age and they are underachieving in their mainstream school. Those attending the group sessions make good progress towards the personal and learning targets set for them, which enables them to remain in their 'home' school. Those learners who attend the unit as a result of fixed-term exclusion arrive at short notice and some may only stay for one day whilst others stay for longer. It is difficult, therefore, for the unit to quantify academic progress for these learners. Records show that those in the nurture group are enabled to develop the required routines for nursery classes and begin to learn.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The difficulties those learners attending the group sessions arrive with diminish as their confidence and self-esteem improve and their interest in learning is re-kindled. As a result, they are successfully enabled to continue in their 'home' school. One commented: 'I am calmer now in school. I don't go mad straight away.' Three recently permanently excluded learners have been successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools. Outreach work in primary schools has resulted in a number of learners with behaviour concerns being able to continue their education in their 'home' school. Learners who attend the group sessions at the Ronald Ross site say they enjoy their education, feel safe and get along well with each other. All feel confident that there is an adult to speak with should they need to. Learners are fully aware of the need to eat healthily but they report that they would appreciate the opportunity to take part in some form of physical activity whilst attending group sessions at the Ronald Ross site. The majority of learners attend part-time and the number attending full-time varies considerably. However, learners are fully involved in target setting and the reviews of these where they are enabled to contribute their views. Those who have been excluded are encouraged to reflect on the reasons for this and how they themselves can contribute to improving their behaviour in school. Learners are prepared well for their future economic well-being because of the unit's focus on improving their key skills and personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their learners very well and effective assessment procedures inform them of individual's learning needs. Learners attending the group sessions and the nurture group have clear short-term targets for each activity they are involved in or subject they are taught. This informs teachers' planning to ensure learning and personal needs are met. Pupils and parents are fully involved in this target setting process. The group sessions observed were calm, purposeful and engaging and, as a result learners were making good progress towards their individual targets. Effective questioning by teachers involved learners well, improved their speaking and listening skills and enabled them to develop their social skills. This was particularly effective in a lesson where the group was evaluating their flower experiment. Learning support assistants work effectively alongside teachers but sometimes their active involvement is insufficient. Learners' work is marked consistently but comments could be added to inform

them how well they are progressing towards their targets. This would enhance the oral feedback they receive and provide further evidence of the progress they make for their 'home' schoolteachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for the learners in the group sessions contributes well to their academic progress and personal development. There is an appropriate focus, through a topic centred approach, on the key skills of literacy, numeracy and use of information and communication technology (ICT), which is resourced well. Learners' personal development is enhanced further by a focus on personal, social and health education. Very good quality displays in the unit celebrate the whole range of learners' work really well. Delivery of an effective curriculum for those attending the unit because of fixed-term exclusion is difficult because of the short time some stay at the unit and the lack of information or appropriate work set by their 'home' schools. When learners attend over a longer period of time the unit ensures the work matches that of their 'home' school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The unit provides a particularly strong, caring and supporting environment where learners feel safe, develop their personal qualities and make good progress towards the targets set for them. Well-rehearsed 'welcome' procedures in the small foyer areas at each site settle individuals in a very calm and purposeful way before they move into their group sessions. Provision for ensuring health and safety is very strong. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are securely in place and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. If physical restraint has to be used this is logged and full details are recorded. The unit's multi-agency approach and use of outside professional agencies greatly enhances the quality of support learners receive.

Effective baseline testing results in well-focused individual learning programmes, which improves the progress learners make in group sessions and the nurture group. On-going assessment against learners' targets ensures the unit is clearly aware of how much progress learners make and what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the two teachers in charge of the two sites have been instrumental in developing the excellent ethos of the unit as a whole and its outreach work in mainstream schools to support not only learners but also teachers.

Performance is monitored and evaluated but no formal records are kept of the senior management meetings. Improvement planning is linked well to the local authority Children and Young Peoples Plan but in some instances lacks an inward focus on the unit itself. All staff are highly committed to ensure every learner really matters, improving their motivation for learning and ultimately enabling them to make good progress and achieve well. Leadership has ensured the unit provides a high quality, well resourced learning environment, making most of the cramped conditions. The PRU Advisory Board meets regularly and works effectively as a critical and supportive friend of the unit.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Elsley and Ronald Ross Pupil Referral Unit, Battersea, SW11 5TZ

I recently spent a day in your unit, visited you in lessons as well as joining some of you when you arrived. I also had a chat with some of you attending a morning group session at the Ronald Ross site. This was very useful and I appreciated your openness and your enjoyment at being able to measure how tall you are before you returned to your group! I enjoyed my time at the unit and seeing how you really enjoy it there. I agree with your comment that it would be good if you could also have an opportunity for some physical exercise during these half-day sessions. I know that your parents are also very pleased with the progress you make when you are there. You receive a good education at the unit.

The things that are done particularly well for you are these:

- the headteacher leads the school really well and is well supported by the two teachers in-charge at each site
- the teaching is good and means you make good progress both socially and in improving your literacy skills
- the teachers and all other adults who work with you make sure you are safe and extremely well cared for
- the curriculum and other activities during the day make your education very interesting
- the teachers and all other adults who work with you are really dedicated and have your best interests at heart and want to make sure you will be able to do well in the future

What would prepare you even better for the future:

- the accommodation needs improving so that there are more areas for smaller groups, one-to-one work and for those children who spend a short time at the unit because they have been suspended for a short time from their 'home' school

Once again, many thanks for your welcome and I would like to wish you all the best for your future.

Mr James Bowden (Lead inspector)