



# Beachcroft School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 133923  
**Local Authority** Westminster  
**Inspection number** 294103  
**Inspection date** 7 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Judith Charlesworth

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	111 Shirland Road
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–14		W9 2EL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02076414370
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	9	<b>Fax number</b>	02076414381
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Alison Toia
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
5–14	7 December 2006	294103

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Beachcroft is a pupil referral unit (PRU) which opened in 2003. It was established in part to help address the high rate of exclusions in the local authority by providing alternative educational provision and support for the excluded pupils, and guidance for mainstream colleagues in managing challenging behaviour. Beachcroft offers full time placements for students from Key Stages 1-3 who have been permanently excluded from school. It also provides home tuition for those who cannot attend school because of medical needs. There are currently 9 students on roll, all in Key Stage 3. At the time of the inspection, there were no primary-aged students and none with medical needs. Students' behavioural difficulties have often led to significant gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding and their attainment on entry is variable. When resources allow, the PRU provides six-week part time respite places for students who are at risk of permanent exclusion; there were seven on roll during the inspection. It also offers support for mainstream school staff in managing and supporting students with behavioural difficulties; two sessions per week for students without a school place; and outreach services for students with behavioural difficulties. The PRU is housed in a former children's home. This is its first inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Beachcroft provides good quality education and outstanding support, care and guidance for its students. It aims to equip students with the educational and personal skills to return successfully and quickly to mainstream school – or to transfer to a special school if this is more appropriate. It is only in the past year that sufficiently robust staffing, systems and practices have been put into place to enable this to be achieved. As a result, students now achieve well, and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave the PRU. Their personal development and well-being are good and most return to school successfully.

The driving force of Beachcroft's improvement is a strong and highly effective new leadership team supported by very well qualified, professional and motivated staff. It has strong partnerships with the local authority and other agencies, such as local professionals and youth services. The staff are united in expecting and promoting high standards. Realistic external and internal evaluations of the quality of provision resulted in good plans and successful action to improve all aspects of the school. Much has been put into place in a short time, for example, new curriculum initiatives, various forms of record-keeping and a new behaviour management system. Everything is working effectively, but senior staff recognise that some of the systems, such as the tracking of students' progress, now need revising and further development. Staff resources are used exceptionally well. The head teacher is also the head of the authority's behaviour services and deploys staff according to current need. For example, when full-time student numbers are lower in the PRU, more students on respite placements are accepted. This ensures the PRU gives good value for money. However, more should be done to improve schools' take-up of provision for students with medical needs. Taking into account the PRU's recent improvement and the innovative developments to benefit more disadvantaged students, their capacity for further development is excellent.

Beachcroft has high expectations of the students' behaviour, attitude to school and work, and their achievement. The students respond well to this. Their enjoyment of school is outstanding – several, for example, arrive early in the mornings. Their attendance, previously poor, is satisfactory and improving, and behaviour is good. There are now no students who refuse to attend, and no exclusions. The atmosphere in the school is professional but warm and relaxed. Students apply themselves well in lessons because the teaching is good and they are motivated by the new reward system for good behaviour, effort and achievement. They make good progress.

The curriculum is designed effectively to appeal to the students' needs and interests. One third of curriculum time is spent off-site using facilities such as sports, arts and media centres. The students very much enjoy these sessions. They are particularly keen on choosing healthy options and participate in as much exercise and sport as possible. The good quality of education, together with the emphasis on personal development and the self-management of behaviour and anger effectively help students learn how to stay safe and healthy, and become equipped for their future economic well-being and making a positive contribution to the community.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

\* Improve the systems for data and information collection so that they can be used more effectively to track students' progress and contribute to school improvement.\*  
Promote the service provided for pupils with medical needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Full time students' attainment on entry varies, but tends to be below average for their age. This is often due to unidentified or unmet learning needs which underlie their challenging behaviour and disrupted learning. Beachcroft gives the identification of any specific learning needs very high priority, and an educational psychologist is well used to this end. Individual learning plans (ILPs) are drawn up for each student. They clearly identify their needs and outline learning and behaviour targets. This ensures that whatever their level of attainment and difficulties, all students' needs are met well and they have equal opportunities for achieving. The students' reading ages, test results and other records show clear improvement over time, as does the work in their books. Lower attaining students make particularly good progress in literacy skills. By the time students leave the PRU, their attainment is broadly average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The social, behavioural and emotional difficulties that caused students' exclusion or respite placement diminish as their confidence, self-esteem and academic achievement grow. Students develop an insight into what provokes them and learn how to manage their emotions. As a result, their prospects for future learning, economic well-being and becoming responsible citizens improve. Schools report that the behaviour and attitude of students following respite placements are much improved. Full time students are particularly keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and this aspect of their development is outstanding. Their comments led to revised, healthier lunch menus, and the PRU has recently started a health and fitness course on students' request. The students', moral, social and cultural development is good. They respond very well to the opportunities given to develop appropriate social behaviour. For example, lunchtime, which involves all staff and students on site, is a very pleasant social occasion, and students behave well on public transport and at their afternoon activities in the community. Cultural and multi-cultural development is addressed effectively through the curriculum. In a recent questionnaire, students indicated unanimously that there was no racism in the school. Incidents of bullying are infrequent and the students understand and generally abide by the PRU's rules. The students' spiritual development is satisfactory as most are still developing the values, principles and attributes to underpin this aspect of their development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is good. Minor elements in lessons, such as occasionally missing opportunities to support understanding, or not reinforcing the importance of appropriate clothing for sport, detract from otherwise high quality teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic, professional and strive to make lessons interesting and relevant to students' needs and interests. Students on respite placements are included quickly and effectively into the small, established classes. Lessons are based firmly on the planned curriculum. Most include practical work which students enjoy, such as real investigations in science and activities which take account of different learning styles. Students' ILP targets are addressed well by work and questioning that is matched to their individual needs. Behaviour is very well managed and discussed with students at the end of each lesson so that they understand how well they are doing. The staff support one another very well to ensure students understand their work and remain calm and engaged. On one occasion, for example, a male support assistant dressed up and produced 'quadruplets' to help students remember the concept of quad in mathematical vocabulary. This was a very memorable lesson and the students learned well. As a result of this good teaching, students' behaviour is good and they are keen to work. This, in turn, has a positive effect on their self-esteem and attitude to school, and they make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is sufficiently flexible for students on respite placements to be included easily. Good consideration has been given to the curriculum content for these part-time students. Subject planning is based on national curriculum guidance and has been adapted for the particular needs of the PRU. Plans are relatively new, however, and not all have yet been fine tuned. For example, the staff are considering further adaptations to the health and fitness course to meet students' needs and interests even more closely, such as food technology with a focus on healthy eating. Within a broader curriculum, particular emphasis is placed on improving students' literacy skills, and also on their numeracy and information and communication technology capability. There is a good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education which helps students understand and manage their behaviour and anger, stay safe and conduct themselves more appropriately. The use of off-site facilities and courses run by the Youth Service supplements the curriculum and the PRU's limited facilities very effectively. It also gives the students a good opportunity to demonstrate that they can behave well outside school and to understand the benefits of becoming positively involved in community based activities. The curriculum helps students return to school as soon as possible and become better equipped for future learning and economic well-being.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding aspect of the school's work, and underpins the students' achievement and personal development. Students' academic achievement is very effectively promoted through the ILPs and regular assessments, and the good support given in lessons. Behaviour is very well addressed through the positive atmosphere and clear, well-understood behaviour management practices. The staff are excellent role models. They clearly enjoy the company of the students, yet offer professional, supportive advice and guidance in a manner that students willingly accept. The staff are keen to gain the students' opinions and develop the PRU's practice as a result. The PRU works very successfully with a range of other agencies such as local schools and the Youth Offending Team. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Child protection procedures are in place and fully implemented, and risk assessments on most aspects of the PRU's work are completed. The suitability of staff to work with children is checked thoroughly, although this information is not yet compiled into a single central record as required. The PRU works in close liaison with parents, and gives them considerable support. They are very happy with the PRU's effect on their children, and some parents and students continue to turn to Beachcroft for support after the students have moved to another school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Beachcroft caters for a relatively low number of students on site, partly because of its limited size and partly because of the pattern of referrals and decline in exclusions in the local authority. However, it caters flexibly for several groups of disadvantaged students, both on and off site. Much of this complex wider provision has been developed by the PRU itself, and its capacity for further improvement and development is excellent. The overall leadership and management of the PRU are good, with in-school roles and responsibilities clearly defined and very effectively carried out. Beachcroft derives good support from the local authority and is important to its strategy for challenging and hard to place students. However, more could be done to support the PRU in raising its profile in local schools, particularly in relation to the provision for students with medical needs which has a low take-up.

The senior managers have an outstandingly clear view of the direction the PRU should take. In the past year, as a result of thorough self-evaluation, the managers have effectively established the right systems, practices and atmosphere to ensure the PRU's effectiveness and develop its functions. There is a clear staffing structure with allocated roles and responsibilities and staff performance is monitored and evaluated effectively. The PRU's effectiveness is evident in students' improved attendance, behaviour and achievement, the decline in exclusions and the increase in numbers moving back to mainstream or other schools. A cycle of review of the new systems and practices has begun in order to improve them, but has further to go; the senior managers recognise this and want, for example, to use data more effectively and to

include parents and other stakeholders in the process. In the past year, the PRU has diligently recorded a wealth of detail about aspects of its work and students' progress. However, this is not always in a form that is easy to use to give a bigger picture of, for example, individuals' progress in subjects, or to collate to inform targets for school improvement.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
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**

You may remember that I visited your school to see how well it was working and how well you were doing. I enjoyed talking to you, and seeing you working in class and socialising at lunch time. I was very pleased that one of you came to my room during the afternoon specially to ask me to comment on pieces of art work. My visit helped me come to my conclusions about Beachcroft, and I'm sure you will be pleased to hear that I agree with the staff's, your parents' and your views that Beachcroft is a good school.

First of all, I think that your behaviour is good and that you work hard and make good progress. Most of you now successfully return to mainstream school which is a great achievement. I think that the school is very well run and that Alison is a really good leader. The staff are good, professional teachers who care very much about what happens to you and do all they can to make lessons lively and interesting. I think that's why you learn well. They are also keen to help you become more settled and manage yourselves better by offering you lots of support and guidance. I think that your improved behaviour and greater confidence is the evidence that they are successful in this. The staff have thought hard about the best subjects for you to study to help you move on from Beachcroft. I particularly like the way that they have arranged for you to use facilities in the community, such as the sports and media centres.

I have suggested to Beachcroft's managers that they fine tune their record keeping system so that it is easier to interpret and use to make plans. I have also suggested that they spread the word about the provision for students who cannot go to school because of their medical needs, because there is rather a low take-up of this service.

I wish you all the best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Judith CharlesworthLead inspector