

# The Arc

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131193
<b>Local Authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	295448
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	William Geoffrey Robson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Century Youth House Albert Road Romford RM1 2PS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 764370
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 750879

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<b>Age group</b>	14-16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Arc is a pupil referral unit for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. They have either been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or have been assessed by the local authority as likely to benefit from an alternative curriculum, which their mainstream school is unable to provide. About three quarters of the students are boys and a very large majority are of White British background. Two students have statements of special educational need. The Arc was first registered as a pupil referral unit (PRU) in September 2006, following the amalgamation of two former units. It has not previously been inspected.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this pupil referral unit (PRU) requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the pupil referral unit are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Since its registration as PRU in 2006, The Arc has had to admit more students than it has resources, staffing and accommodation for. The local authority's procedures for referring students from mainstream schools are inadequate and many students arrive with little information about their previous education or needs. The PRU's premises can accommodate only one third of the students on roll and there is insufficient alternative provision in local colleges or from other training providers. As a result, the PRU does not provide full time education for the majority of its students. Even for those students who attend the PRU, accommodation restricts their enjoyment. They have too little space to socialise at lunch or break times. Procedures for safeguarding learners do not meet government requirements.

In these difficult circumstances, the headteacher has succeeded in improving provision in some areas. She has a clear vision for developing the PRU but continues to be hampered by lack of resources. The amalgamation of staff from two separate PRUs has been well managed; they work well as a team and are admirably dedicated to supporting students as well as they can. Students say they feel safe and trust staff. Those who attend regularly are helped to improve their behaviour because of the staff's consistent use of the behaviour policy. One student said, 'It's like a parcel now - it's all been tightened up.' Students are prepared to contribute to their own community through the recently formed students' council. They made sensible suggestions about ways that the curriculum could be improved, for example. There has been progress in extending the range of opportunities for students to study vocational courses, both in the PRU and through the development of contacts with other training providers. This prepares some students well for future employment, but is still unavailable for many.

Much remains to be done and progress is too slow in many areas. Permanent teachers for English and mathematics have not been appointed. The appointment of many supply teachers has led to insufficient continuity in teaching and learning. Overall, teachers do not set challenging targets for students; standards remain very low and students do not achieve as well as they should. The PRU does not monitor students' academic progress closely enough. In particular, the monitoring of progress and attendance at some off-site courses is inadequate. Students' attendance is unsatisfactory, particularly when students are off-site. This lack of monitoring leads to inadequate self-evaluation and the PRU does not set itself clear targets against which it can evaluate its work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide full time education for all students by providing adequate staffing, resources and accommodation to meet their needs.
- Improve students' achievement by setting them challenging targets and monitoring their progress.
- Establish clear procedures for the admission of students.
- Improve students' attendance and monitor it more closely.
- Establish clear targets against which to evaluate the work of the PRU.
- Ensure that procedures for safeguarding students meet government requirements.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Students enter the unit with very low standards because of difficulties they have experienced in mainstream schools. Last year, five Year 11 students gained GCSE passes in English, mathematics and science; four achieved passes in information and communication technology (ICT). Several students also gained entry level qualifications in these subjects, but many left with no qualifications. The PRU was unable to provide them with full time education and many rarely attended. These difficulties persist this year. Those who are taught on the PRU's premises often make satisfactory progress in lessons. However, this is only about one third of the students on roll. When they attend regularly, they do well in business studies and ICT because of good teaching in these subjects. Overall, however, standards remain very low and students' achievement is inadequate. The PRU does not use data effectively to set challenging targets for its students. There are no permanent teachers in English or mathematics, so teaching in these subjects lacks continuity and progress is slow. Achievement on some off-site courses is also unsatisfactory because students' attendance is poor and PRU staff do not monitor their progress closely enough. Several students are given home study packs but there is no evidence of work being completed by students, some of whom receive no other tuition.

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

### **Grade: 4**

Several aspects of students' personal development are satisfactory, especially for those who attend courses at the PRU itself. However, taking into account the large number who have little or no access to teaching or support, their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is inadequate overall.

Those students who attend the PRU trust staff and feel safe. They say, 'Teachers talk to you and respect you; they keep you working hard and we feel more confident.' As a result, they respond well to the PRU's behaviour policy. Although there are still incidents of challenging behaviour, behaviour clearly improves the longer students attend the unit. Although students say that they enjoy their education, this is not always reflected in their attendance. It improves by comparison with their time in mainstream schools but is still unsatisfactory, especially at some off-site courses. Those who do attend regularly develop good skills for working life and move successfully into further training or employment. A well-organised course of personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps students to become more aware of healthy lifestyles. However, the PRU cannot provide lunches for students and they rarely choose healthy options from local shops. Students respond well to opportunities to contribute to the local community. For example, a business enterprise course has enabled students to develop a manicure service for the public, which they talk about with enthusiasm.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

In lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. However, the impact on students' learning over time is unsatisfactory. Teaching lacks continuity and consistency because of the PRU's reliance on temporary supply teachers for English and mathematics. Other than in ICT and business studies, teachers do not make enough use of assessment to plan their lessons

and meet individual students' needs. Their expectations of students are not high enough and marking does not provide students with clear information about ways they can improve. Home study packs are not returned by students or marked by teachers. In the best lessons, teachers plan a variety of activities to motivate students and keep them learning at a good pace. In others, they miss opportunities to get students' attention through, for example, more effective use of interactive whiteboards. There are some strengths in teaching. Teachers use the PRU's behaviour policy consistently. Based on the good relationships that they establish with students, teachers manage occasionally challenging behaviour well. With excellent support from learning mentors in lessons, they ensure that students concentrate well, listen to instructions and contribute well to class discussions.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum only provides full time education for approximately one third of the students. These students are taught for most of their timetable on the PRU's premises, where there is a suitable emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. A varied course of PSHE increases students' awareness of the importance of a healthy, safe lifestyle. For example, the local drug and alcohol action team helps students to resist drugs that some may have already experienced. Students are also offered a good and expanding range of vocational courses at the PRU and at several local colleges and training providers. Along with good opportunities for work experience, these courses enable those students who attend regularly to move successfully into further education, training or employment.

However, the PRU does not provide full time education for two thirds of its students. Inadequate accommodation and lack of availability of alternative provision means that many of these students receive little or no tuition. The PRU is exploring the use of home study packs and distance learning courses but these are poorly coordinated at present and do not begin to meet students' needs or entitlement.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

There are several good aspects of this area of the PRU's work for those students who attend the unit either full or part-time. The few parents who returned questionnaires say that staff are caring and supportive. One said, 'The school has excellent communication with parents and any concerns or issues are dealt with as soon as possible.' The needs of looked after children are met through the PRU's links with outside agencies and the production of personal education plans. Most students receive good careers guidance. Students are well aware of their individual targets for improving behaviour and social skills. They receive very good support from learning mentors, who monitor their progress towards these during each lesson and through individual tutorials. Sensitive counselling supports those with more severe emotional needs.

Despite these strengths, care, guidance and support are inadequate overall. The needs of those students who are not timetabled to attend the PRU are not adequately met. There is insufficient support for students' academic development. Staff have just begun to identify subject targets for students and these are not precise enough, nor sufficiently challenging. All staff are fully aware of child protection procedures and the PRU carries out risk assessments rigorously. However, it does not meet all government requirements for the safeguarding of students.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 4

Since the unit was first registered as a PRU over a year ago, the local authority has not discharged its duties effectively. It has not ensured that the PRU provides full time education for students; insufficient permanent teachers have been appointed and accommodation is inappropriate.

The headteacher ensures that the PRU runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and has successfully managed the amalgamation of staff from two other units, following their closure. During the past year, she has initiated several improvements in the curriculum, teaching and learning. In particular, she has ensured that all staff adopt a common policy for behaviour management, which is having a very positive effect on students' behaviour. Teaching and learning are now closely monitored and the development plan includes appropriate priorities for development. However, other areas of monitoring are unsatisfactory. For example, the progress and attendance of students on some off-site courses is not checked rigorously enough. The PRU does not set challenging targets for its students to achieve. The PRU's management committee is supportive but is, in turn, unable to challenge the performance of the PRU. This is because targets and criteria for evaluating the PRU's work have not been established. Self-evaluation and the PRU's capacity for further improvement are therefore inadequate.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	4
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	4
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Arc, Romford, RM1 2PS

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited The Arc recently. I enjoyed speaking to you and seeing the work that you are doing. It was good to see that you get on well with your teachers and I know that staff are trying hard to help you to do well. You may have heard that as a result of my visit, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector has decided that your school requires special measures. This means that although The Arc does some things well, in some important areas there are weaknesses which the school needs help to sort out.

To improve The Arc I have asked staff to concentrate particularly on:

- providing full time education for all students by improving staffing levels, resources and accommodation
- helping you to make better progress with your work by setting you challenging targets and checking carefully to see if you are doing well enough
- improving procedures for admitting new students to the PRU
- improving your attendance and checking it more closely
- setting clear targets for the PRU so that leaders and managers can work out how well the PRU is doing
- making sure that procedures for ensuring your safety meet government requirements.

You can help your teachers to do some of these things. In particular, you can try to attend your courses more regularly and make the most of the opportunities that the PRU provides. Inspectors will be coming back in due course to check how well things are progressing. In the meantime, I hope you will help your teachers by continuing to work hard.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

William Robson Lead Inspector