

Hillingdon Tuition Centre

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 102366 |
| Local Authority | Hillingdon |
| Inspection number | 307984 |
| Inspection date | 13 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Linda McGill HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 33 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Mr Simon Ashley-Jones |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 June 2003 |
| School address | Providence Road Yiewsley West Drayton Middlesex UB7 8HJ |
| Telephone number | 01895 447102 |
| Fax number | 01895 447155 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 11-16 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hillingdon Tuition Centre caters for pupils who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from secondary schools in Hillingdon. Many of the pupils, especially those in Key Stage 3, remain on the roll of their mainstream school to which they return wherever possible. This means that many pupils join and leave the centre during the year. Most of the pupils are boys; at present there are seven girls. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion entitled to free school meals is high. One pupil has a statement of special educational need and all pupils are on the school's list of those with educational difficulties or disabilities. The pupils join the centre having experienced disruption in their education and the standards they are working at are usually below those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hillingdon Tuition Centre is emerging from a period of instability when turnover of staff was high. Despite a series of temporary and acting posts at senior level the centre's work with vulnerable young people did not suffer. The centre's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and there are some good features to its work. In particular, it makes a real difference to the pupils' behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment of schooling. Both pupils and parents speak highly of the positive impact attendance at the centre has on pupils' lives. One parent wrote, 'He may not yet be an ideal student, but there has been a marked improvement in his attitude to school'. A pupil said, 'Coming here has changed my life'. In addition, good teaching enables the pupils to make good progress in their learning and begin to achieve success. This equips them well for the next stage in their educational or working lives.

These strengths arise because there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between the adults and pupils, and close attention to the needs of individuals. Most of the pupils leave the centre having made good progress in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Most gain GCSE passes or qualifications at entry level.

The pupils make good progress in their personal development. Pupils begin to enjoy learning and see the relevance of what they are studying, which has a positive impact on their behaviour. Most attend the centre more frequently than their mainstream school and robust action is taken with those who remain hard to reach. The staff get to know the pupils quickly and have high expectations of what they can achieve both personally and academically. The pupils respond well to this. Some aspects of their personal development are not so strong; for example in the contribution that pupils make to the wider community and their commitment to healthy lifestyles.

The recently appointed headteacher has a strong determination to build on the centre's strengths. Many new initiatives and changes have been implemented in recent months, but are not yet firmly embedded. Although the centre's improvement plan is broad and ambitious in scope, it lacks a strategic overview of the steps to be taken over the next three years. Action proposed is not yet related securely enough to improvements in outcomes for the pupils. Not all of the staff have yet signed up to what is planned and there is work to do to build a cohesive team. The management committee has supported the centre well, but its work in evaluating its effectiveness has lacked rigour. This is changing and a better balance between support and challenge is being achieved. The centre has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take steps to build a cohesive staff team that works together effectively to bring about improvements.
- Review the plan for improvement to bring a more strategic approach to planned developments.
- Develop ways for the pupils to make a greater contribution to the wider community and to lead healthy lifestyles.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although the pupils attain standards that are generally below those expected for their age, most make good progress during their time at the centre and their achievement is good. Some pupils arrive part way through their GCSE courses with no completed coursework. They quickly begin to fill the gaps and make up ground so that most leave with GCSE passes or entry-level qualifications. Some pupils achieve several GCSE passes, which include the core subjects of English, mathematics and ICT as well as science, business studies and art. Performance in art is good; pupils achieve higher grades in this subject. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality of individual support that they receive. Pupils carry their target cards with them at all times and know exactly what is expected of them both personally and academically.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, although some aspects are stronger than others. Before attending the centre, most have had negative experiences of schooling and have been excluded or are facing exclusion because of difficulties in managing their behaviour. They make rapid progress in tackling these difficulties. Pupils' attendance, attitudes to learning, behaviour and enjoyment improve substantially. Their behaviour is satisfactory and often good, especially in the way they relate to one another and to adults. However, in lessons some are reluctant to engage fully, are somewhat listless and can lose concentration quickly.

Pupils know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle but are not always enthusiastic about living one, although participation in physical exercise is increasing. They play football safely in the small yard. Bullying is rare and pupils trust the adults that work with them. The pupils' contribution to the centre's community is growing. Some have helped with redecorations and garden improvements and all participate in selecting a pupil to receive a monthly award for what he or she has achieved. Their voices are heard at regular centre meetings and in individual consultations. However, the pupils' contribution to the wider community is limited. The good improvements in personal development and in academic progress mean that pupils leave the centre well prepared for the next stage in their educational or working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and has a positive impact on what pupils achieve. Teachers pay close attention to meeting individual pupils' needs. The judicious use of praise and ensuring pupils experience success are powerful motivating factors. Pupils say that they are helped to learn because teaching groups are small and they receive good guidance from teachers and help from learning support assistants. Importantly, they also say that they know the teachers' interest in their learning is genuine and because of this they make progress in subjects in which they have previously failed. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent, characterised by warmth and trust. Behaviour is managed gently, firmly and unobtrusively. The strategies that learning support assistants should use in their work with individual pupils are not always clearly shown

on lesson plans. This means that their support is sometimes general, rather than clearly focused on what the pupil should learn next in order to move on.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The main aim for pupils in Key Stage 3 is re-integration into mainstream schooling. The curriculum supports this satisfactorily by emphasising basic skills and personal, social and health education. At Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils study English, mathematics, science and a small number of other GCSE courses. Pupils have the opportunity for extended work experience as well as for entry-level examinations in English, mathematics and business studies. The range of vocational opportunities is growing. Vocational courses are followed at local colleges and the centre is beginning to provide some, for example in hairdressing, on site. The centre has recently acquired a new minibus, to enable visits and travel to sporting activities to be easier and more frequent. After-hours activities are constrained by the fact that many pupils have some way to travel, but a football team has recently played some fixtures. A weekly girls' group makes sure that girls are included in extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The centre places care, guidance and support for pupils at the heart of its work. To this end, it works well with a wide range of agencies, other schools and with parents to make sure that individual needs are met. It is clear that the staff want the best for the pupils and expect the best of them. The arrangements for protecting and keeping these vulnerable young people safe are robust. There is a good balance between pastoral and academic guidance and pupils have targets both for their personal development and for their work in English. Staff and pupils know these targets well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There have been significant changes in the centre's leadership over the past two years but the position is now stabilising. The headteacher is enthusiastic and clearly committed to improving and expanding the centre's provision as quickly as possible. However, the legacy of the past has not been fully eradicated and not all staff are comfortable with the speed and direction of change. The centre's self-evaluation is broadly accurate in highlighting strengths and weaknesses, but although the local authority was involved in the process of evaluation, input was not sought from all staff members and the management committee. The centre's broad and ambitious improvement plan is weakened by lacking a strategic overview of its three-year time span.

The chair of the management committee provides good support to the centre. The centre's work is discussed at fortnightly meetings and at full committee meetings, but processes to evaluate the centre's effectiveness lack rigour. Steps are being taken to improve this aspect of the committee's work.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

22 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillingdon Tuition Centre, Middlesex, UB7 8HJ

I really enjoyed the day I spent inspecting Hillingdon Tuition Centre recently. It was good to meet you and the staff who work with you. I would particularly like to thank the pupils who took time to come and talk to me about their experiences at the centre. My judgement is that the centre is satisfactory, overall, and there are some aspects that are good.

You told me that the centre makes a real difference for the better to your lives. Some of your parents also told me this in the questionnaires that they returned. I agree, because I could see it as I spent time in lessons, observed what happened at break time, talked to staff and looked at some of your folders of work. Many of you have not had happy experiences at school before, but it is clear that you enjoy coming to the centre, and that you make good progress in your studies and in your behaviour. I was particularly impressed by the excellent relationships the adults have with you and the attention they give to helping you overcome past difficulties.

The leadership team is fairly new. Your headteacher is keen to build on the centre's successes and has many plans to make its work even better. These plans will be more likely to succeed if they are carefully staged, and if all the members of staff support them and pull together. I have asked the headteacher and management committee to make sure that happens. I also found that there are some aspects of your personal development which could be stronger. You can help to bring about improvements by being more committed to leading a healthy life and by responding positively to the centre's efforts to involve you in helping the local community.

I wish you every success in the next steps in your lives, whether joining mainstream school again, at college or at work.

Best wishes,

Linda McGill

Her Majesty's Inspector