

Phil Edwards Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131266
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	315767
Inspection date	10 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	58
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs J Oliver
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	17 Sylvan Road London SE19 2RU
Telephone number	020 8771 5603
Fax number	020 8771 5650

Age group	11–16
Inspection date	10 December 2007
Inspection number	315767

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The centre was visited for one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the centre and investigated the following issues in detail: the progress the students make, the quality of teaching and learning, and how well the curriculum, especially in Years 10 and 11, meets the individual needs of the students. Evidence was gathered from the centre's self-evaluation form (SEF); assessment and other records; planning documentation; observation of the centre at work; discussions with staff, a member of the management committee and students; and the parents questionnaires. Other aspects of the centre's work were not explored in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the centre's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Phil Edwards Centre provides education for students with a variety of behavioural, educational and social needs. All the students are in Years 7 to 11 and most have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. There are more boys than girls but the number of girls being educated is rising. The service is also responsible for the management of three other units. These are:

- Croydon Digital - an online supported learning facility for excluded students in Key Stage 4. This service is offered to some 25 students.
- The Mayday Hospital Service - this caters for students of both primary and secondary age who are in-patients at the Rupert Bear Ward of the Mayday Hospital, Croydon. The numbers involved vary enormously; as does the time that the students are involved with the service. Once the youngsters are medically fit, they return to their mainstream primary and secondary schools. This unit is located some nine miles from the Phil Edwards Centre and was not in operation on the day of the inspection because the teaching staff were on in-service training.
- The Home Tuition Service - this involves a small group of students who have been referred to the centre by the special needs department of the local authority. The students concerned are being reallocated school places. There may also be a small number of students who have been discharged from the Mayday Hospital Service. They are receiving home tuition before resuming their full-time secondary school careers.

The service covers the whole of the London Borough of Croydon, though the majority of students attending the Phil Edwards Centre reside in north Croydon. This is an area characterised by substantial pockets of social deprivation. The students come from a wide range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds and span a wide range of ability.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Phil Edwards Centre is a good pupil referral unit with some strong features. It is successful in meeting its aim of supporting vulnerable students who have frequently had a disrupted education. Where appropriate, the centre and its associated units are successful at re-integrating students into mainstream schools. The service is also very successful at ensuring older students, especially those in Year 11, follow an appropriate curriculum and are given every possible opportunity to progress to the world of work, or to further education. The centre has an excellent record in this respect. At the end of the last academic year, over 80% of students gained college places or entered directly into employment. This is an impressive outcome given the disruption that many of the students have suffered in both their personal lives and their education careers.

Students enter the Phil Edwards Centre and its associated units with widely varying levels of prior attainment, though for most, their educational standards are well below average. Those who successfully re-integrate into mainstream education have usually made at least good progress in their academic studies and have worked hard to achieve other targets, most of which are associated with issues like punctuality, attendance and behaviour. Those students who remain in the service to the end of Year 11 invariably make at least good progress in both their educational and personal targets. The centre enters students for national examinations in Years 9 and 11. The outcomes are variable. Standards are below average but a minority of students reach at least national average standards in these examinations. Overall, in relation to their starting points, most students make good progress, but some do far better than this and their achievements are excellent.

Students achieve well because they are well taught and the good curriculum, which is especially strong in Years 10 and 11, meets their needs well. There are a number of pupil referral units in the authority. By working together, they have agreed on some aspects of specialisation. Though the Phil Edwards Centre has developed some good vocational courses in Years 10 and 11, it has not relentlessly pursued such options; this route has been left to other providers and, where appropriate, students are able to transfer. The centre concentrates on offering students in Years 10 and 11 a more academically based curriculum. The students are able to study up to eight GCSE subjects. Other accredited courses are also available in literacy, numeracy and computing, for example, which help to prepare the students well for life after 16. The progress the students make is further aided by the good care, guidance and support offered.

Students' personal development is good. Most enjoy their education and prefer attending the centre to mainstream schools. As one student said: 'I feel more valued here. Staff care about me and I receive more attention.' Many students develop good attitudes to learning and the student council reported that incidents of bullying and racism are rare and, if they do occur, staff deal with them rapidly and appropriately. Behaviour in lessons and around the centre observed during the inspection visit was good. Attendance is below average, but the recorded figures relate to the whole service. The overall attendance figures are distorted by a small minority of students who, for various reasons, do not attend well. The figures for the Phil Edwards Centre and the Croydon Digital service are better. The centre is using various strategies to encourage better attendance but they are not yet having enough impact. The students are developing a good understanding of how to live safer and healthier lives and the centre offers excellent guidance on where the students can go to receive advice and support. Personal development is well supported through citizenship and personal, social and health education. Good provision is made for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The centre is enlivened

by many interesting displays relating to Black History, for example. Spiritual and moral education are promoted well through charitable efforts and by encouraging the students to reflect on some unhappy incidents that have affected the centre in the recent past. The student council offers them a good opportunity to exercise responsibility and to take decisions, and the provision for careers education is good. Much effort is devoted to improving the students' basic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy. Some students have difficulties in these areas. Thus, despite the best efforts of staff, the promotion of the students' future economic well being is satisfactory.

Most teaching is good and students are offered a range of opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively. However, not all lessons are sufficiently challenging. For example in some lessons teachers tend to provide answers too readily rather than encouraging students to work things out for themselves. The good curriculum meets individuals' needs well. The highly creative Croydon Digital service is an innovative approach designed to help students, who have medical and other problems that make attending the centre difficult. By being able to work on line at home, or in a public library, the students are able to continue learning.

Only a small proportion of parents returned the inspection questionnaire and those who did were overwhelmingly supportive of the work undertaken. Few parents or carers made written comments, but one stated, 'The Phil Edwards Centre is a wonderfully warm and caring place, and my child is doing well here. It's the staff who make a difference. Well done to them!' Another parent praised the quality of work in both art and science.

The service is well led. The staff are committed and enthusiastic and are dedicated to helping the students overcome adversity. Though considerable emphasis is placed on the quality of personal care and support, the main driving factor is to ensure that the students are offered a very good quality of education. Challenging targets are set and often met. The headteacher and her staff work hard to ensure this and the highly effective management committee offers much support. It also performs its 'critical friend' function well. There are good systems for monitoring and tracking each student's performance and the service has excellent working partnerships with many other providers and agencies. Self-evaluation is accurate and planning for further improvement is good. The service offers good value for money and there is a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of learning by ensuring that all students are fully challenged in all lessons.
- Ensure all possible strategies are used to improve attendance further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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	3

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?	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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

18 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Phil Edwards Centre, London, SE19 2RU

Thank you for welcoming me on my recent visit. I greatly enjoyed my time with you. I was impressed by many of the things you told me about. Overall, I have concluded that your school offers a good education with some strong features. Your centre has a good headteacher and good staff, who are working hard to secure improvements for you. Standards overall are below average, but you are making good progress in your work. Some of you are doing better than this. You are offered a good curriculum and your staff are very caring and supportive and are keen for you to do well. The teaching you receive is good and the centre provides a safe environment for your studies. I was also pleased to see good levels of behaviour during my visit.

I have suggested the following two areas for improvement.

- Helping you to learn better by giving you more appropriate challenges and by focusing on the most important skills.
- Improving levels of attendance.

In relation to the second point, there is much you can do to help your teachers.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to this inspection. I would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector