

# Leicester City Primary PRU at The Phoenix Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132824
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	316029
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Price

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Snowden / Christine Pay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Dudley Avenue Thurnby Lodge Primary School Leicester LE5 2EG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 419538
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Leicester City Primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) consists of the Assessment and Re-integration Centre (ARC), which educates pupils from the ages of 5-9 and the Phoenix Centre, which educates pupils from 9-11 years of age. The centres are co-located alongside primary mainstream schools on two different sites, approximately six miles apart. The centres can educate up to 60 full-time or part-time pupils. Increasingly, they work with children who are at risk of exclusion from schools by offering them joint placements. Currently, nearly all pupils are boys and over half the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of Leicester City Primary PRU is good. It is very successful in helping to prevent permanent exclusions from primary mainstream schools and, where pupils have been excluded, is very effective in helping them to return to appropriate mainstream education as quickly as possible. The centres are well regarded by both parents and the schools they support. One headteacher commented, 'The support they have given is of the highest quality.'

Recent changes in admission arrangements have enhanced other good improvements made since the last inspection. The centres have introduced more effective placements, usually consisting of two whole days with the rest of the week spent in the pupil's mainstream school. This has dramatically helped to reduce the number of permanent exclusions from mainstream schools. There are now far fewer pupils who remain at the centres for indefinite periods of time. Year 6 pupils, without a school placement, are appropriately allowed to remain until the end of the year to help them to make a successful transition to secondary schools.

Standards for the majority of pupils are exceptionally low, often due to their disrupted and fragmented education. However, their achievements are good. This is because of good teaching, which has improved markedly since the time of the last inspection. More effective group work, well paced and interesting lessons, and clearly understood behaviour management strategies are hallmarks of this good teaching. The good curriculum is successful in making learning enjoyable for pupils so that they take an active interest in lessons. The care, support and guidance offered to pupils is good and the development of 'nurture principles', whereby pupils' emotional development is effectively fostered in a warm, caring learning environment, helps to make them more receptive to learning. This in turn helps their good personal development. Pupils find stability and security and, as a result, their self-confidence starts to blossom and many reintegrate into mainstream schools after short periods of time. Parents notice these improvements in their children and one commented 'I thought I would never see my son be so confident and work as hard as he does now.'

The management committee has been very effective in both providing support and challenge to the centres and in playing its part in securing the substantial improvements that have been made. The teachers-in-charge of the centres provide good day-to-day leadership and management. They have worked hard to create stimulating learning environments and have successfully introduced new initiatives to secure improvement. There is a strong grasp at all levels of leadership and management of areas requiring development, although assessment information is not always used effectively to sharpen the planning process. The PRU uses individual academic targets very well to match learning to individual needs in a frequently changing school population. It recognises that it needs to make better use of a wider range of targets to measure more effectively other aspects of its performance.

### What the school should do to improve further

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- Increase the range of targets used to provide a wider measure of effectiveness.
- Make more consistent use of assessment information to inform whole-school planning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards for most pupils are exceptionally low, due to their fragmented education and severe behaviour, which impacts negatively upon their learning. The achievement of most pupils, however, is good. Although placements vary in length, most pupils make good progress because of the careful individual target-setting that is well matched to their needs. However, some pupils achieve way beyond this and make impressive gains in increasing their attention and cooperative skills. The improvements in writing are remarkable. This is because of the successful focus on engaging pupils in literacy, through means which capture their imagination such as film and well chosen texts. Pupils with more protracted, severe emotional, social and behavioural difficulties do not make such rapid gains, but nevertheless they achieve well from their starting points. A significant indicator of the good progress pupils make is their successful return to mainstream schools. Approximately three quarters of pupils make this transition each year.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Attendance is good because children at both centres thoroughly enjoy the well planned, exciting learning and play activities that await them. They enjoy trips and appreciate the links with areas of the curriculum such as sport, literacy and numeracy. They like their teachers and form constructive relationships. Pupils gain in confidence, realising they can succeed because their achievements are praised and celebrated. They talk eloquently about their feelings in personal, social and health education sessions. Behaviour is satisfactory. Children develop a satisfactory awareness and responsibility for themselves and for each other, but can sometimes forget this when not involved fully in learning. They develop a good awareness of other cultures through learning about different faith celebrations and through visitors, including African drummers. They display a good commitment to healthy lifestyles through their keen participation in football, horse riding and other outdoor activities. Pupils learn well the importance of eating healthily at snack and breakfast times. Adoption of safe practices is satisfactory. Although pupils feel they are supported well by staff, some older children do not always consider the impact of their actions on others. Pupils' involvement in the school and local community is satisfactory. Their good academic achievement, plus gains in personal and social skills since joining the PRU, prepare them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching has improved across the centres since the last inspection. It is now good at both sites and sometimes outstanding at the ARC. Planning is thorough so that individual needs of pupils are well met. Staff rapidly develop a good relationship with pupils and their relaxed approach does much to settle pupils quickly. Procedures to improve pupils' behaviour, which can be challenging, are clearly understood and implemented. Teaching is lively and the rapid turnover of activities, along with interesting subject content, ensures pupils concentrate well and make good progress in their learning. Teachers are now much more confident in their use of information and communication technology to enhance their teaching, and this has contributed to greater enjoyment of lessons by pupils. Teachers use group work well to encourage pupils

to cooperate, take turns and respect one another. The effective use of individual learning targets to inform planning and the marking of pupils' work so they know how to improve are exceptional at the ARC. The use of targets and the quality of marking are good at the Phoenix Centre but are not of the same consistently high standard.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' needs and the close liaison with other schools prepares pupils well for their return to mainstream schools. The use of themes to deliver the curriculum has made learning a more interesting and creative experience and, as a result, more enjoyable for pupils. For example, a project on pirates was used to teach a wide range of subjects such as geography, history, literacy and numeracy. Shared mealtimes provide valuable opportunities for staff to model positive interaction with pupils. Opportunities for pupils to develop their emotional well-being are being promoted through greater use of role play. However, the introduction of these initiatives is relatively recent and they are not yet fully embedded in the curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities to develop healthier and active lifestyles through a wide range of outdoor pursuits such as abseiling, canoeing and archery. These activities provide enjoyment, rewards for appropriate behaviour and positively develop self-esteem. The strong emphasis on the basic skills of numeracy, literacy and personal development prepares pupils well for their next phase of education and beyond. Year 6 excluded pupils are well prepared for secondary school transition.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The overarching strengths of both centres are the good knowledge that staff have of their pupils' needs and the provision for their care and well-being. Children are nurtured well and helped to develop strategies to contain and 'defuse' their behaviour, including anger management sessions and access to external agencies, such as the behaviour support team and health professionals. As a result, fixed term exclusions have been dramatically reduced. Child protection procedures are robust, along with related safeguarding requirements. Pupils receive good support from teachers and feel able to seek help when they need it. Academic guidance is particularly good at the ARC, with very effective ongoing assessment so that any underachievement is quickly noted and addressed, together with parents being regularly telephoned about their child's progress. Some pupils at the Phoenix Centre are not always as fully aware of their learning targets as they are at the ARC. Parents are delighted with the provision at both centres which they say is having a good effect on their children's attitudes, behaviour and progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The management committee has effectively overseen significant improvements across both centres since the last inspection, so that both now support other schools within the local authority well. The PRU recognises that it needs to use more routinely a wider range of targets to measure its effectiveness as it develops further.

The teachers-in-charge of the centres are energetic, enthusiastic and innovative. The impact of initiatives on pupils' motivation and achievement, such as the implementation of nurture principles and reorganising the days when pupils attend the centres, are indications of their effective leadership and management. They have worked hard to create good teamwork and a welcoming ethos, and have provided good training for staff so that they are skilled in managing the challenging behaviour of pupils. The centres know themselves well. Leadership and management at all levels have focused on the right areas to secure good improvements in teaching, the quality of the curriculum and in pupils' personal development. However, assessment information is not always used perceptively to inform improvement planning sufficiently. Excellent partnerships have been established with a range of agencies. Relationships with other schools are very good, so that pupils can return swiftly. The centres have made good progress since the last inspection and both have good capacity to improve further.

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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
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

<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>	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	3
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

19 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leicester City Primary Pupil Referral Unit, Leicester, LE5 2EG

We enjoyed our visit to your centres and meeting and talking to you. We think your centres are good. You are making good progress in your lessons and in your personal development. Staff at your centres are good at looking after you very well and work hard to get the best out of you. They are good at helping you to settle in quickly and many of you are able to continue your placements at your mainstream school with support from either the Phoenix or the ARC. You are taught well. Teachers are good at making lessons interesting and many of you enjoy learning, improve your behaviour and take part in lessons enthusiastically. Learning is made interesting for you through a good range of activities, including the use of visits and projects.

The teachers-in-charge who manage your centres, together with the management committee, are doing a good job and they are always looking to see how things can be made better. An example of this is the plan to develop the playground to give you more things to do at breaktimes. Many of your parents commented how well staff work with your families so that they know how well you are doing, or particular difficulties you might be facing.

To make the two centres even better, I have made the following suggestions.

- The centres should use more targets to make it easier to check on how well they are doing.
- The centres should make better use of the information on how well you are doing to help them know what needs to be improved.

You can help play a part in making the centres as good as they can be, by carefully following the instructions of staff and continuing to work hard, so that you are in a good position to return to school.

Yours faithfully

Frank Price Lead inspector

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