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Mr S Garside
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Dear Mr Garside

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15 March 2007 to look at aspects of Tile Hill PRU's work. Please thank the staff for their contributions to the visit.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes and in particular on how well the students achieve.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of two lessons.

On the basis of what was observed during this inspection the effectiveness of the centre's overall contribution to the five ECM outcomes was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

- The pupils achieve well. A significant number of pupils reintegrate successfully into mainstream schools and the PRU achieve its aims very well in this respect.
- The PRU works hard to identify pupils' needs and abilities and has developed an excellent range of assessment procedures to inform its work and to help pupils improve personally and academically. The information it receives on entry from mainstream schools varies. There is often a great deal of information about pupils' behaviour and misdemeanours but often

a lack of detail about the strengths and weaknesses of their learning. A designated member of staff acts as a liaison person who works effectively to make transfer smooth and to collect additional information.

- Pupils' progress is measured precisely. Analysis in areas such as reading and spelling, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, health and social education (PSHE) significantly aids planning and helps to target pupils' needs effectively. Records show that pupils make rapid progress with their reading skills. Pupils speak highly of the improvement they make in their basic skills and the support they receive for this.
- Pupils are to undertake the end of Key Stage 3 national tests for the first time this year.

Personal development and well-being

- The PRU manages pupils' behaviour very well and engenders in them a great sense of achievement. As a result, the pupils enjoy attending the centre. Overall attendance figures are adversely affected by a small number of very poor attenders. A more useful measure of progress is improvement in individual pupils' attendance. However, this comparison proves difficult for the PRU as little attendance information is supplied prior to entry. Some pupils only attend on a part time basis and are not formally educated for the remainder of the time; this is because of the limited number of full time places available. However, this situation is set to ease when the PRU moves to newly refurbished, larger accommodation in September 2007.
- Good resources and an environment which clearly celebrates pupils' achievement support the curriculum and learning well.
- Pupils mostly know their targets and are very keen to improve.
- Pupils are very clear about the purpose of the PRU and know how they are being prepared for transfer back to mainstream school. Those spoken with during the visit have clearly addressed their difficulties well and are extremely keen to return to school.
- There is a good focus on health through sport and the work undertaken for the healthy schools status.
- Good use of questionnaires and personal contact by staff helps staff gain views of stakeholders and pupils; the outcomes from these are very positive.
- Lessons and social times are calm events; pupils are keen on their Friday afternoon clubs and know that attendance at these have to be earned through the PRU's well organised merit system.
- Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work and work highly productively.

Quality of provision (teaching and learning, curriculum and care, guidance and support)

- The teaching observed during the visit was good; occasional aspects were outstanding. Assistants provide good practical support in lessons, although occasionally, they have little to do when the teacher is talking.
- Teachers' planning is largely clear and what the pupils are to learn is stated at the beginning of lessons. Sometimes planning specifies what will be done rather than learning outcomes for pupils. The PRU is highly effective in improving pupils' confidence in themselves and their self-esteem. Work is tailored well to the pupils' individual learning needs and stretches them appropriately without undermining their confidence. There is good attention to key vocabulary and ensuring that pupils understand the ideas developed in lessons.
- Staff work hard to ensure that pupils succeed and pupils are encouraged and shown how to improve their work.
- The curriculum is good. The local authority's curriculum policy is clear and the PRU's curriculum follows this guidance appropriately. There is good emphasis on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and on ICT and PSHE in particular. Pupils are helped to understand the relevance of what they are learning and this helps to engage them better. In addition, they are given ample opportunity to increase their ability to face new situations and to learn how to work, discuss and negotiate with each other.
- The centre works well with other agencies to ensure learners make the most of the opportunities provided for them.
- Pupils receive excellent quality care in a safe and very supportive environment, as noted at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The PRU provides positive emotional security but also keeps pupils informed about why they are there and what they are working towards.
- The accommodation is small but it is of good quality. Much has been done to the external environment to make it an attractive place to learn. New accommodation planned for September will enable the PRU to have more separate specialist rooms. The PRU rarely admits pupils with statements.

Leadership and management

- The teacher-in-charge of the PRU is committed to providing the best quality experience for all pupils. He is well supported by the LA Key Stage 3 PRU leader.
- This is a well organised establishment which has the progress of pupils at its heart and its own improvement firmly rooted in planning. All staff are actively involved in school self-evaluation. The PRU is clearly focused on its key outcomes, such as the effectiveness of inclusion.
- The well-established, experienced staff team are united in their desire to support and develop the vulnerable students in their care.
- The LA has a good understanding of the work of the centre and is supporting the PRU well so that it can account for its effectiveness. Local

authority reviews of the PRU's work are thorough but do not always include an evaluation of pupils' progress.

Inclusion

- A very secure, caring learning environment supports every pupil to grow in confidence and to be prepared for mainstream school. As a result, a significant number of pupils return successfully to mainstream school.
- Staff work together with the pupils and with staff in mainstream schools to effectively break down any barriers to their learning, successfully helping them to reach their potential.
- A genuinely committed staff team know and value all students. Teamwork is excellent. They make a positive difference to the quality of the outcomes for pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continue with curriculum development to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills; this is an area for improvement from the last inspection
- ensure that lesson plans have clear and specific learning outcomes
- obtain a comprehensive range of information from mainstream schools and the LA on entry to the PRU, including information about attendance.

We hope these observations are useful to you.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Thank you once again for your help and support.

Yours sincerely

George Derby
Additional Inspector