

Camden Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100007
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	323209
Inspection date	10 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	11
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Ms Ruth Draper
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
School address	100 Stanhope Street London NW1 3JX
Telephone number	020 7974 8035
Fax number	020 7916 2931

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the pupil referral unit (PRU) and investigated the following issues:

- if there are any differences in achievement in different subjects or between different groups of pupils
- what more the PRU needs to do to help pupils to move back into a mainstream school, or where appropriate, to other, more suitable provision
- how the management committee ensures, and assesses, the unit's success.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons; talking to pupils, members of the management committee, staff and a couple of local headteachers; checking the school's self evaluation records and pupil-progress records; looking at pupils' written work and analysing the results of questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The unit has ten full time places for children in Years 1 to 6 who have been excluded permanently from their home schools. It is currently oversubscribed. All pupils on roll have significant social, emotional and behavioural needs and have exhibited highly disruptive behaviour in their previous schools. Amongst the current pupils, nearly all have a statement of special educational need and the remaining are undergoing assessment for such a statement. Increasing numbers of pupils are arriving at the PRU with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs and many have other learning needs. Nearly all are boys. On rare occasions a girl is admitted. Though the ethnic mix changes from year to year, most pupils are of White British backgrounds. The remainder tend to be Black Caribbean or African. All pupils are eligible for a free school meal. Almost all are known to social services and have an allocated social worker. A small but significant number of pupils are in the care of the Local Authority and some are living with other family members such as grandparents under special guardianship or similar arrangements. The PRU carries out outreach work in local primary schools with children at risk of being permanently excluded. There are places for eight dual registered part-time pupils who are at the risk of being excluded but, as the PRU is currently oversubscribed, there are currently no dual registered pupils on roll. The PRU is sited next to a primary school and shares the building with the Camden Primary Learning Support Service (PLSS) which is also managed by the headteacher. The headteacher is, therefore, part-time in the PRU and two coordinators carry out the day-to-day running of the unit when she is with the PLSS.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The PRU makes good provision for its pupils. As a result, they make good progress both in improving their behaviour and in their learning. Pupils grow in self-esteem and confidence within the encouraging and highly supportive atmosphere created by the staff. They learn to become part of a community, for the first time in most cases, and many also make friends for the first time. The growth in personal development and the progress they make prepares pupils well for their next step in education and enables them to successfully integrate when they move to a more permanent placement.

The PRU staff provide excellent support for pupils' behaviour. They set very clear targets which pupils know and understand and pupils are actively involved in assessing how well they are doing and in managing and modifying their own behaviour. As a result, most pupils are able to successfully move back into a mainstream school, or to other appropriate provision such as a special school, within a year or less. A few pupils remain at the PRU for longer. This is usually because their needs are more complex and they require longer-term support to prepare them for the next stage of education or there is difficulty in finding a suitable placement for them because of the nature of their difficulties. What is noticeable is that where pupils remain at the PRU for a longer period of time, progress in their learning begins to slow down after the fifth term. Staff believe, following their assessment of this issue, that the likely cause is pupils feeling left behind and then becoming de-motivated. The PRU is very aware of the downturn in progress and a new electronic system for tracking progress highlights it very clearly. Staff are looking at strategies for dealing with the issue and examining the potential of setting up a second class for pupils who at the outset can be identified as needing a longer period of time at the PRU. Hence, the pupils will arrive with the expectation of being at the PRU for longer.

The slower progress for longer-term pupils is in contrast with the good progress made by the large majority of pupils especially in their first couple of terms at the PRU. Progress is equally good in English and mathematics. High emphasis is placed on these subjects as pupils arrive with poor skills in literacy and numeracy and with large gaps in their learning. By the time they leave, these skills have improved considerably. Standards by the end of Year 6, though remaining below average, are much closer to nationally expected standards than when pupils joined. One of the three pupils taking national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2008 reached the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. The others attained the expected level in at least one subject. Different groups of pupils make equally good progress. The only time when progress slows, other than for pupils who remain at the PRU for five terms or more, is when external factors impact on pupils' lives such as changes in the care arrangements for them. In these instances, staff work very closely with other services, such as social services, and the families to minimise the adverse impact of such change on pupils' behaviour and learning. Overall, the links with external agencies and other professionals are excellent and make a strong contribution to pupils' social and emotional development, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This in turn helps pupils to focus better on their learning. Links with other schools are also strong. Relationships with the school next door are particularly good. For example, staff and pupils at the PRU are regularly invited to events hosted by the school. These provide good social and cultural development for pupils.

A good curriculum and good teaching contribute well to pupils' progress and their successful transition to their next school. Lessons are well planned and prepared and teachers have high expectations of learning. Behaviour is well managed and teaching assistants play a key role in

both supporting individual pupils and in helping teachers to maintain good behaviour. The pace of lessons is good and work is pitched at the right level for individual pupils. Sometimes, however, whole class sessions are a little long and opportunities are missed for making lessons more practical and interactive. Pupils enjoy being involved and become more easily engrossed when work is practically based. The curriculum makes excellent provision for enrichment activities such as rock climbing, which pupils love. Such activities provide good opportunities for physical activity and contribute well to pupils' health and well being as well as supporting the development of team skills. The school is revising its art and music curriculum to give it greater breadth and to provide more opportunities for the active involvement of pupils. The PRU's accommodation, including access to outdoor areas, limits a practically based curriculum. The use of the playground in the adjoining primary school helps but is not sufficient for all the needs of the PRU.

Pupils are outstandingly well looked after and cared for. Daily briefings and de-briefings mean staff know exactly where each pupil is in relation to their social, behavioural and emotional needs. They regularly discuss pupils' behaviour targets with them. As a result, pupils are very clear about how to make their behaviour better. Staff provide good feedback to pupils on what they have learned and where they have achieved learning objectives. However, there is less consistent feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work. Hence, pupils are not as clear about their learning targets as they are about their behaviour targets. Safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about healthy eating and staff work with parents, carers and pupils on how to cook and prepare healthy meals. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what foods are good to eat though they are not always keen to adopt good eating habits. Pupils are well supported in developing their social skills and in learning to be part of a community. The school promotes community cohesion well and is particularly good in promoting the PRU as a cohesive community. Pupils are developing their skills of citizenship well through participating in the school council and raising funds for good causes. Overall, their contribution to the community is good. Given their backgrounds, becoming part of the PRU community is a major step for most. Improved behaviour means that the PRU is a safe place and pupils say they feel safe. Good attendance is indicative of pupils' enjoyment of school.

The PRU owes its success to good leadership and management. The headteacher consults very effectively with other local headteachers and works in partnership with the management committee to set a very clear direction for the work of the PRU. Local headteachers rightly feel that the PRU provides good support both for pupils who are permanently excluded and those who are at the risk of exclusion. Effective procedures are in place to manage the work of the PRU on the days the headteacher is not present. Staff work well as a team and to common aims and goals. All place high emphasis on meeting the needs of pupils and support one another to achieve these. Their work with parents and carers is an excellent feature of the work of the PRU. Staff are prepared to go the extra mile to help and support parents and to involve them actively in the work of the PRU. As a result, parents have very positive views of the PRU reflected in the comment made by one parent: 'I cannot praise staff enough.' Staff, in turn are well supported by the headteacher and the management committee. The latter sets clear expectations of the PRU and is well focused on examining key outcomes such as attendance, achievement, behaviour and the rate at which pupils move onto suitable and more permanent provision. The new electronic system for compiling and presenting data is helping to improve the quality of reports to the management committee. The system is being developed further to provide even better strategic information. Longer term outcomes and studies presented to the committee

show that pupils who have been through the PRU go on to complete their education successfully without being excluded again. Coordinators work well with the headteacher to lead and manage the PRU. Together they make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and assess the effectiveness of the PRU. Overall, the PRU's self-assessment is accurate and well used to help to continuously improve it so that the capacity to make further improvements is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision for pupils who have long term and complex needs and are likely to be in the PRU for five terms or more so that they continue to make good progress.
- Make lessons even more practical and interactive to further engage and support pupils' learning.
- Ensure pupils have as good an understanding of their learning targets and how to improve their work as they do their behaviour targets.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Camden Primary Pupil Referral Unit, London, NW1 3JX

I enjoyed visiting your school, and particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and the opportunities to watch you work. I would like to thank you for making me feel welcome. The unit gives you a good education and prepares you well for your next school.

These are some of the best things about the unit.

- You make really good progress in improving your behaviour and developing your social skills.
- You enjoy being in the PRU and particularly enjoy the practical activities in the afternoons such as rock climbing.
- Good progress in literacy and numeracy means that you are helped to make up for any gaps in learning that you have when you first arrive.
- The PRU has excellent links with other agencies and local schools and works outstandingly well with your parents or carers.
- Staff take excellent care of you and work with others to help meet your individual needs, especially your behavioural needs.
- Your headteacher works well with staff to make the PRU as good as it can be.

I have asked your headteacher to make three improvements so that the unit becomes even better.

- Make sure that pupils who stay longer remain engaged in their learning and continue to make good progress.
- Provide you with more opportunities for practical work especially in the mornings when you do literacy and numeracy work.
- Make sure that you know your learning targets as well as you know your behaviour targets.

It was very nice to meet you and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead Inspector