

Newhaven Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100103
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	323225
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	148
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Alice Hexter
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2005
School address	Newhaven Gardens Eltham London SE9 6HR
Telephone number	020 8859 3114
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Age group	5–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Newhaven pupil referral unit (PRU) has a number of functions. It provides education for boys and girls resident in the London Borough of Greenwich who are not able to attend mainstream school for various reasons. These include: exclusion, illness (including mental illness), persistent non-attendance, newcomers to the country (including unaccompanied minors), looked after children who move into the borough, and those experiencing behavioural difficulties which might lead to their exclusion. Separate departments of the PRU provide education in different ways, from full-time attendance at the PRU to part-time on-site with support in students' own schools. It has an assessment centre where students are assessed before being moved to the most appropriate school. The PRU manages an outreach service which supports students in their own school, and provides tuition for those who cannot otherwise access education. It is also developing internet-based provision. The complexity of provision means that turnover of students is rapid in some departments.

The PRU is based on two large sites that are four miles apart, with an additional schoolroom and ward-based teaching in the local hospital. Students with long-term medical needs have their own suite of rooms on one of the sites. The PRU caters mainly for students in Key Stages 3 and 4, although the hospital-based provision includes students from Key Stages 1 and 2. The students reflect the ethnic and social population of Greenwich borough. Above average numbers are entitled to free school meals, a few pupils have statements of special educational needs, the majority for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). Many students have health and welfare needs. In the last year, students' needs on entry have changed significantly. Fewer are now admitted as a result of exclusion, while many more are admitted as a result of mental illness, complex needs and trauma resulting from their particular circumstances.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Newhaven PRU is a large and very complex organisation that provides extremely well for a wide range of students. It acts very effectively as an educational hub from which students move on—either back to their own schools, on to alternative provision or into further education. This includes the PRU's own full-time provision. The PRU's success is due to the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher and senior leadership team which is sharply focused on continual development and improving the students' outcomes. Performance management is robust and, together with the professional development of the staff, these are important elements in the PRU's effectiveness. The management committee and all staff are fully involved in self-evaluation and review, and information is rigorously analysed to inform developments and improvements.

The curriculum is exceptional, and constantly under review to become more closely matched to students' changing needs. Staff in the assessment centre have recently devised and implemented a successful new curriculum that links different subjects together using themes and topics. A new approach to certain subjects such as 'forensic science' and new accreditation in the full-time Key Stage 3 and 4 provision has improved students' interest and achievement. Web-based 'virtual education' is currently under development to reach those students who cannot access school-based education. The curriculum for each department is different. However, all have common elements that ensure the PRU does not become fragmented. For example, planning, monitoring and review formats are the same. All curricula are formulated to be of real interest to students, so that they enjoy learning, make up for lost time and achieve well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a significant strength and successfully supports teaching, learning and students' achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff are very adept at meeting the PRU's explicitly high expectations for engaging students and supporting their personal development and learning. The PRU has recently started to provide for more students who are new to the country and at an early stage of learning English. Although a specialist teacher has been appointed to support these students, expertise is not yet spread throughout the staff. Consequently, while support is effective for the low number of students currently attending with these needs, practice is not yet sufficiently embedded and consistent across the PRU to assure high-quality provision if numbers increased.

Students' personal development is outstanding and underpins their academic achievement. This is due to the excellent support, care and guidance they receive. The behaviour, attendance, confidence and self-esteem of most students improve significantly, while their anti-social behaviours reduce sharply. This enables the students to engage and learn effectively. Some students persist in patterns of non-attendance that were established in their former schools, but the PRU does all it can to try and change this situation. The great majority of students make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They meet challenging targets set for their personal and academic progress, and their subject skills and reading ages improve rapidly. The attainment of most students is broadly in line with that expected for their age when they leave the PRU, which is a significant achievement for many, taking, for example, their health needs or educational history into account. The students become more inclined to make safe and healthy choices, to contribute positively to the community and are better prepared for their future lives.

The PRU has a very positive influence on other schools, through its outreach and advisory work, and also by transforming the behaviour, attitudes and attainment of the great majority of

students under its remit. Receiving schools' evaluations of the PRU's work are highly positive. The PRU's aim is to promote 'achievement and enjoyment through learning'. This strapline is printed on all its documents and prominently displayed. The PRU has established close links with parents and carers and the great majority are very pleased with the positive effect it has on their children. Partnerships with other agencies and providers, for example, to support students in need or enhance the curriculum offered, are outstanding. The PRU is vital to the local authority's ability to meet the needs of a significant number of students with wide-ranging needs. It meets this challenge very successfully. Its capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the provision for students at an early stage of learning English by developing a consistent approach to practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students' attainment on entry ranges from above average, for example for a few of those with medical needs, to well below average for the majority. Most of these students have previously been persistent non-attenders or have exhibited behaviour that has prevented them from learning effectively. Some students have never attended school. All students, however, make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, particularly in the core skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The majority attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the time they leave. The quality of art work is particularly good. Students return to mainstream school with academic skills that are on a level with their peers'. Combined with significant improvement in their personal development, this promotes their successful re-integration. Students in Key Stage 4 who complete their statutory education at the PRU gain a good number of qualifications which prepares them very well for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The students' outstanding personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, strongly underpins their excellent achievement. It enables the majority to move on with the self-confidence and personal skills they need to enjoy education and achieve well. It effectively supports the achievement of those who attend the PRU long-term, or for specified periods of time. Behaviour is good, which is a significant improvement for many. Fixed-term exclusions are high, but are generally used as a last resort for new students with BESD who are not yet fully compliant with the PRU's expectations, for example violence towards staff. The PRU does not use permanent exclusion. The fixed-term exclusion of individuals reduces significantly over time. The PRU uses many suitable measures to improve and support attendance which, for the majority, improves steadily. It remains satisfactory overall, although attendance rates are greatly affected by some students' medical needs and some persistent non-attenders.

Most students enjoy school very much. This is confirmed by their parents and carers. They generally lead healthy lives, for example when choosing to use the PRU's new fitness suite and to cycle to school where possible. The students say they feel safe in school, and readily suggest and accept measures to improve safety. Racial incidents and bullying are rare. The atmosphere

is calm and relationships with staff are very good. Displays of students' work show that they are reflective and their efforts are valued and recognised which improves their confidence and self-esteem. The students make a positive contribution to the PRU and wider community in a number of ways. They regularly raise money for worldwide charities and support a sustainable lifestyle. The students become well prepared for their future lives by their improved academic standards, success in work-related learning and greatly improved personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The success of teaching and learning is due to a number of factors. It is underpinned by the effectiveness of provision to improve students' personal development. Academic targets are set for individuals in each subject and staff are clear about what they want students to learn. They use different teaching styles and effective, ongoing assessment to meet students' needs and readiness to learn. Behaviour management is excellent, and lessons are usually calm and productive. In all departments, lessons are carefully planned and have a common format in which the objectives are clearly outlined at the start. Expectations of the students are realistic but challenging, and support staff work very well in conjunction with teachers to promote learning. Staff effectively support the small number of students who are at an early stage of learning English, but this is not standardised by school-wide policy and agreed practice. ICT is used extremely well. Lessons are very well presented and often include interesting internet-derived material, for example on the BodyWorks exhibition that students visited during the inspection. Students generally work on their own laptop computers, which they much prefer. Consequently, they apply themselves very well and produce good quality work. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored. This informs professional development which the PRU uses effectively as a means of school improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is exceptional. Each department has its own curriculum, but there are common themes. These are to: engage and interest students, provide each student with personalised learning, help students catch up and achieve well, and equip them for the next stage in their lives. All departments have good resources. Provision in ICT is strong and has had a very positive impact on achievement and standards. It is developing rapidly, as the school pilots an initiative across the local authority to provide web-based learning and management across its schools that will ultimately extend across London. The PRU is also developing its own 'virtual education' for students who cannot otherwise access education for emotional, health or legal reasons. Recent developments are exciting and innovative. For example, a new thematic curriculum has been introduced in the assessment centre. This promotes students' basic skills, while also robustly addressing personal development and cross-curricular knowledge through topics such as 'community participation' and 'sustainable futures'. The Key Stage 3 support provision, in which students attend both the PRU and their own schools, concentrates on improving students' basic skills, and helping them manage themselves more appropriately. The curriculum in all departments is supported by extensive enrichment and community links. Excellent use is made of various off-site providers, for example for sports, music, construction skills, college links and work-related learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The ethos of continual support, care and guidance strongly promotes students' academic achievement and improvement in their behaviour and personal development. All required policies and practices are in place, implemented and regularly monitored to ensure students' health and safety. Their emotional needs are carefully tracked and addressed. The PRU has excellent relationships with a range of external agencies to provide additional support and services to students in need. Outstanding academic and personal support is given to students in all departments. This varies according to their individual and collective needs. For example, students with medical needs are carefully supported to access as much education as possible, on the hospital ward and schoolroom, in the PRU, or at home if necessary. The impact of the PRU's provision is demonstrated in its outstanding recording procedures. Assessment is effective and supports students' achievement, re-integration or move to the next stage of their lives. Each student has a number of academic and personal targets. These are regularly reviewed by staff and students, and the students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. Partnership with parents is strong, and the great majority are very pleased with the work of the PRU and the support it gives them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The local authority relies heavily on the PRU to meet the needs of students who require particular assessment and support. Consequently, it has extended and improved its provision since the last inspection, and has become a pathfinder in its field. Development has been driven by the need to provide for a wider, more complex student population, the national children's agenda (Every Child Matters), and the PRU's desire to ensure students' enjoyment, achievement and equality of opportunity. The PRU's leaders and managers are reflective, self-critical and expect high standards. Performance management, monitoring and review involve all staff and the management committee, and are core activities leading to continual improvement and professional development. The promotion of community cohesion has been well considered and addressed through the PRU's everyday work. Financial, building and equipment resources are very well used to create the high-quality provision that supports outstanding outcomes. Links with parents and carers, other providers, services and employers are strong. The PRU is accredited as an Extended School and a Healthy School. It provides a training base for a number of other professionals, and members of staff sit on various local and national committees and bodies. The PRU's leaders and managers, including the management committee, are very effective. Department staff work in supportive, tight-knit teams, which each contribute fully to the leadership and management of the PRU as a whole. The PRU's capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

05 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Newhaven Pupil Referral Unit, London, SE9 6HR

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you, sitting in on your lessons and talking to you about your work. I particularly enjoyed watching some of you sculpting imaginary animals from your sketches and designs. We came to the PRU to see how it is working and how well you were doing, and we were very pleased with what we found. We agree with school staff and your parents that Newhaven PRU is an outstanding school.

We think that the PRU makes a great difference to many of your lives, and your ability to achieve well. This is because it provides high-quality education, support and care. The staff have high expectations of you. They lay down clear guidelines and set you personal and academic targets for improvement, and you rise to meet them. Your progress is outstanding. Well done! Most of you enjoy attending the PRU. I know many of you regret having to leave when the time comes, but this just shows what a good job it has done, and how you understand yourselves better. Most of you attend school much more regularly than you did previously, and your behaviour is improved too. The staff work very hard to keep you safe and healthy, and prepare you for the next stage of your education and lives. It's up to you now to continue that when you are outside school, or move on to other educational provision.

The curriculum offered by the PRU is outstanding in all departments. It is designed to help you make up for lost time and to really interest you, whatever your needs and circumstances. The teaching is excellent too, and this is why you make such good progress, whatever department you are in. The PRU is exceptionally well led and managed. So are all the outreach services and individual departments. The staff are very keen to do their best for you and are always evaluating their work to see how to develop it further. There is just one thing we have asked the leaders and managers to do, and that is to strengthen the support they give to students who enter the PRU with little or no English.

I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Yours faithfully

Judith Charlesworth

Lead Inspector