

Harrow Tuition Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102180
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	323596
Inspection date	2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Goodchild

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	58
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Ms Claire Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
School address	82 Gayton Road Harrow HA1 2LS
Telephone number	020 8863 9149
Fax number	020 8861 5076

Age group	5–16
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Introduction

An Additional Inspector carried out this inspection. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the service and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' achievement and how well their learning needs are met at each site;
- the quality of teaching and how the service uses assessment information to inform teaching and learning;
- how rigorous and effective self-evaluation and monitoring are in driving improvement.

The inspector gathered evidence from performance data, observations of teaching at each of the four sites, samples of pupils' work, scrutiny of records and monitoring information, parents' questionnaires, discussions with staff at each of the sites and with a representative of the local authority adviser who is also a member of the management committee. Other aspects of the service's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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

Harrow Tuition Service provides for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. It also supports pupils who have a range of physical and/or mental health problems. The service operates on four separate sites and employs a wide range of professionals. The primary pupil referral unit provides for a small number of pupils who have been excluded from school and offers preventative support, including respite sessions, work in schools and training for mainstream staff. The secondary pupil referral unit makes full-time provision for pupils in Years 8 to 11 onsite or through alternative placements. The Helix Centre, which opened in September 2007, provides early intervention programmes to prevent exclusion and supports a small group of vulnerable pupils who are school refusers. All pupils at the Helix Centre remain on roll at their mainstream school or are in transition from one school to another. The education service at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital School provides teaching for children and young people admitted as patients on a short-term, medium-term or recurring basis, and home tuition for sick children who are still on roll but unable to attend their own school. In the last academic year, the service provided education for 99 pupils through the primary and secondary pupil referral units, the Helix Centre and home tuition, and for 298 at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Harrow Tuition Service has sustained and built on the good quality provision found at the last inspection. The headteacher provides good direction to the service's work and responsibilities are delegated well to other senior leaders across the four sites. The service has a stable, experienced staff who work effectively as a team, with a shared commitment to meeting pupils' diverse needs. The local authority in its governing body role, and the management committee, oversee the service's work well. There is a clear strategy for the service's work and development, and the local authority has put in place some very good structures to ensure that it is able to succeed. In particular, the holistic nature of the service provides maximum flexibility, enabling staff to place pupils in the element of provision most suited to their needs. For instance, school refusers begin by having one-to-one tuition, then staff gradually encourage them to work in a group at the Helix Centre in preparation for an eventual return to school. As well as providing part-time support for primary-age pupils who are experiencing difficulty in school, staff work increasingly alongside mainstream teachers to prevent exclusions occurring. The success of this work is evident in the decreasing numbers being referred to the primary pupil referral unit. Outstanding links with local schools result in a very high proportion of pupils, currently 80%, successfully reintegrating into mainstream schooling. The very good transition arrangements also mean that few pupils fail in their new placements.

Good teaching and a curriculum matched closely to pupils' needs ensure that they achieve well. Standards are below average but progress is good, given pupils' low starting points and a history of underachievement for many pupils before joining the service. Effective procedures are in place for checking pupils' prior attainment in literacy and numeracy when they join the service, and identifying their personal and behavioural needs. Teachers take these needs into account well when planning lessons. Some outstanding teaching was observed, including an English lesson at the secondary pupil referral unit and a lesson at the bedside of a pupil who has profound and multiple learning difficulties at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. In both instances, teachers showed excellent sensitivity to pupils' needs, displayed communication skills of a very high order and were extremely skilled in engaging pupils' interest. Across the service, teachers nearly always manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and convey high expectations. On the few occasions where teaching is only satisfactory, planning lacks the depth found in most lessons and staff do not use the sanctions available to them to deal firmly with inappropriate behaviour.

A satisfactory range of accredited courses is offered within the service, including GCSE and key skills courses. These opportunities are supplemented exceptionally well through the outstanding partnerships the service has established with colleges, training providers and local businesses. The extent of these links ensures that courses and activities can be matched very closely to the learning needs of individual pupils. As a result, the positive experiences pupils have in Years 10 and 11 contribute considerably to the high proportion who go on to further education, training or employment when they leave the service.

Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. The service meets safeguarding requirements and works exceptionally well with a wide range of agencies to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils develop increasingly positive attitudes to learning as they build trusting relationships with the staff and gain greater self-awareness. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They make appreciable improvements in their behaviour and generally behave well. Behaviour is outstanding in the

best lessons and only a minority of pupils behave at times in ways that are likely to disrupt learning. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and know the importance of keeping safe. At the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, short-stay pupils help teachers to identify their learning needs, and pupils at the secondary pupil referral unit are encouraged to reflect on their personal qualities and set themselves targets, for instance identifying skills and achievements in their progress file achievement planners. The service gives many pupils a chance to succeed where previously they faced certain educational failure and, thus, prepares them well for future economic well-being.

The service has recently put in place a number of measures to improve attendance and punctuality, which has brought about a distinct improvement in punctuality and some improvement in attendance. The attendance rate across the service is satisfactory overall and most pupils attend regularly. However, the unauthorised absence of a minority of pupils, mainly at the secondary pupil referral unit, reduces their achievement. Staff seek to build relationships with parents through home visits and regular communication, and most parents have positive views about the service's work.

The service promotes community cohesion well. Pupils make a good contribution to the extended community that makes up the Harrow Tuition Service. For instance, pupils in the primary pupil referral unit have created a magazine for children at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and older pupils take it in turns to prepare refreshments for everyone to share. Through its links with a range of external agencies, the service encourages pupils to play a positive role in society and seeks to connect with hard-to-reach members of the community. Visits by a range of organisations teach pupils about choices and consequences, death and bereavement, animal rights, the environment, disability, life choices, respect and social responsibility. Twenty pupils from the Harrow Tuition Service successfully took part in a week-long course, run by local firefighters, to raise their awareness of issues within the community, and one pupil gained a Jack Petchey Achievement Award as a result. Through the youth service, pupils learn to cooperate with others beyond the Centre, undertaking a variety of challenges, such as problem solving and orienteering. Pupils at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital have some very good opportunities to expand their horizons by working, for instance, with visitors from the National Gallery, the Imperial War Museum and the Bethnal Green Toy Museum.

The service is generally accurate in judging its own effectiveness and identifies the right priorities for development. During the self-evaluation week that is held each term, the views of pupils are gathered to complement senior leaders' own monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. When observing lessons, leaders use helpful criteria provided by the local authority on what makes for good teaching, but they do not always analyse the findings closely enough to identify the impact of teaching on pupils' academic achievement. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are carefully tracked, and staff regularly assess and record pupils' attainment. The service has begun to seek ways of collating information about the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils within the many different strands of its provision. It is at an early stage, however, in developing a coherent system that evaluates the impact of academic, vocational and work-related opportunities on pupils' progress. The complexity of the service makes this difficult but it is a necessary development if the service is to fulfil its intention of becoming outstanding. Based on a good track record of improvement since the last inspection, the service is well placed to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take further action to improve pupils' attendance, especially at the secondary pupil referral unit.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by developing more coherent methods for measuring the progress pupils make academically, in vocational courses and work-related learning.

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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	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	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?	1

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**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harrow Tuition Service, Harrow, HA1 2LS

Thank you for making me welcome when I came to visit the tuition service to find out how well you are getting on. I enjoyed my time there, visiting the primary and secondary pupil referral units (PRUs), the Helix Centre and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.

The tuition service provides a good education. For those of you who attend the PRUs and the Helix Centre, the service helps many of you to avoid permanent exclusion from school or prepare for a successful return to mainstream school. It helps those of you in Years 10 and 11 to get qualifications and vocational skills so that you can go on to further education, training or work when you leave. For those of you who are patients at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital or who receive home tuition, it helps you to continue with your education until you are well enough to be back at school.

You make good progress because the teaching is good and the staff provide you with a lot of support. This helps you to make very good improvements in your behaviour and to see learning in a more positive light. Most of you attend regularly but a few of you, especially at the secondary PRU, miss some sessions and this means that you make less progress than you should.

All the adults in the service, including the headteacher, teachers and support staff, work hard to make things as good as possible for you. I have asked them to:

- take further steps to make sure everyone attends regularly, especially at the secondary PRU;
- find ways to measure the progress that individuals and different groups of you make as a result of all the different parts of the service's work.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at Harrow Tuition Service and that you remember to keep working hard and attend regularly.

Yours faithfully

Ms M J Goodchild

Lead Inspector