

# The Study Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131753
<b>Local Authority</b>	Ealing
<b>Inspection number</b>	328639
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stuart Charlton

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>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	53
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Tracie McNeil
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Compton Close Ealing London W13 0LR
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8991 8570
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8991 8571

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Study Centre is a pupil referral unit for students aged 11 to 16 who have been permanently excluded from school. The vast majority of students are accommodated in the Group Provision at a purpose-built facility opened in December 2006, with a small number at another centre in Southall. The Study Centre is part of Ealing Local Authority's provision for Education Other Than At School (EOTAS). Students come from a wide range of backgrounds; the majority are of White British, Black Caribbean or Black African origin. About three quarters are boys. All students have experienced considerable disruption in their education. Most have learning difficulties, mainly associated with social, emotional and behavioural issues. Very few have a statement of special educational need. Virtually all students are eligible for a free school meal.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The Study Centre provides a good education for its students. A very good range of experiences is provided and, linked to the excellent support and guidance from staff, this means that students' personal development is outstanding. The Centre is held in high esteem by students and their parents. As one parent commented, 'Keep up the good work, it's people like you who catch the kids that fall.'

The headteacher has a very clear vision of how the provision should develop. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Between them they have established an ethos in which all students are given a second chance, to enable them to obtain qualifications which will prepare them extremely well for the future. This pervades all the work in The Study Centre and contributes significantly to raising students' self-esteem. A cornerstone of the work of The Study Centre is the teamwork which has been established and the way in which the senior leadership team works with all staff to build a real sense of purpose and confidence. There are very good systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision across the Centre, so that the headteacher and the senior management team have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they have drawn up a comprehensive development plan. The management committee has a very wide remit covering The Study Centre and all the other areas within the local authority's EOTAS provision. Although the committee is very supportive of the Centre, there have been several recent personnel changes and these new members are only just beginning to come to terms with their roles and responsibilities. As yet, their monitoring of The Study Centre's provision does not have the precision needed to be sure that it is performing as well as it can.

In the June 2008 public examinations nearly a third of Year 11 students attained Grade A\* to C in a range of GCSE subjects and several gained five or more good GCSE grades. This represents at least good progress for these students given their starting points and for some their progress was excellent. The inspection findings show that the students presently at The Study Centre are on course to achieve similar success. Attendance overall is good, with over half of the students achieving 90% or better attendance. This is a radical improvement over their performance at their previous schools. The Study Centre has excellent systems to monitor teaching and its impact on students' learning, and is particularly successful in helping and supporting teachers to develop their practice. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously, and focus very clearly on the challenging targets that are set for students' personal development. Clear targets are also set in each academic subject. However, because these systems are relatively recent, The Study Centre does not have sufficient historical data to be certain that all students achieve as well as they can. In lessons these targets are not always used consistently enough to ensure that students are clear about what they need to do to improve their grades. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for students to develop their skills both within The Study Centre and through out-of-school activities. The main focus for those students in Years 7 to 9 is on preparing them for reintegration into mainstream schools. In this The Study Centre is very effective because most students make a success of their reintegration placements. The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 has a good balance between academic and vocational programmes. The Study Centre is actively working with its college partners and others to develop a wider range of work-related opportunities. There are excellent systems in place to monitor students' behaviour and to challenge them to improve. Consequently, behaviour is exemplary and all students make significant changes for the better in their attitudes to

learning. As one student said, 'The Group Provision is gradually helping me to improve my behaviour and I am now a less angry person.' Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is excellent.

A significant feature in the success of The Study Centre is the sense of purpose that has been established. This is a very significant factor in the excellent relationships which have been developed with other agencies such as the police and the Local Authority Adolescent Team, and with other schools and colleges. Middle managers are well supported and are quickly developing the confidence to move their areas forward. The arrangements for safeguarding students and ensuring their safety are robust. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the leadership has clearly demonstrated that it has good capacity to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Embed the systems for tracking students' progress and ensure consistent use of students' targets in lessons, so that all achieve of their best.
- Ensure that the management committee analyses information about The Study Centre with greater precision, so that it is certain that the Centre is performing as well as it can.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

Since the last inspection, The Study Centre has become more focussed in motivating the majority of its students to participate in education through being able to obtain a much wider range of GCSE and other nationally recognised qualifications. The standards which students attain are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This represents good achievement and progress, because these students had missed significant parts of their education through absence or exclusion. The inspection findings show that the students presently at The Study Centre are on course to attain similar standards.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Students have responded well to the healthy food options available at lunchtime and break. A good number have taken advantage of information about tobacco and drug abuse to change their lifestyle. Most have improved their fitness through timetabled physical education lessons and out-of-school activities. Nearly all students have made significant improvements in their attendance and attitudes to school. Students are very effectively challenged within a safe and secure environment to manage their own behaviour. Across the Centre, even for those who are newly arrived, behaviour is excellent. Parents are keen to point out that the interest of their child in education has successfully been reawakened, so that they now enjoy coming to school. Students confirmed this, saying that 'I like being at The Study Centre because it is much easier to learn and now I want to learn in school.' Students make an extremely positive contribution to the community through fund-raising activities and through older students helping their younger peers. The highly valued reward of meeting the headteacher for lunch is very effective in giving students an active and vocal role in decision-making. Students not only gain literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications, but also make excellent improvement in the personal skills need for life after they leave The Study Centre.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. All staff develop very good relationships with the students in their classes. These are strengthened through individual mentoring and tutorial sessions and form the basis upon which staff are able to challenge students successfully to manage their own learning and behaviour. An excellent lesson was seen in English where the teacher very effectively challenged a group of Year 11 boys to produce a piece of high-quality analytical writing. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and set high expectations. Teachers' planning is good and clearly indicates the targets which are set for behaviour, attitudes and attendance and how these will be met. However, less consistent use is made of academic targets to ensure that all achieve of their best.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well tailored to meet the needs of individuals. A good range of subjects is available to students in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has a very good mix of academic and vocational opportunities which interest and motivate students. These can be further extended if necessary, through the excellent links established with local colleges. At present, however, there are insufficient opportunities for work-related learning. A strong feature of the curriculum across the school is the way in which it is supplemented by the EOTAS provision to provide flexibility to meet the needs and aspirations of students. These opportunities are very well supported by a wide range of out-of-school activities and visits, as well as visitors to school. Good examples are the soccer consultancy football coaching at Chelsea FC and 'Wise Up' to empower female students. These opportunities enable students to extend their interests and become involved in new ventures.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support given to promoting students' personal development is outstanding. This is based on the commitment and time which all staff devote to the personal mentoring system, which is such a strong feature of the provision. Students are quick to acknowledge the difference this has made, not just to their performance in school but in their home lives as well. Many are able to explain the challenges they face and their response in trying to implement the ethos promoted by The Study Centre in their life outside of it. Students are given very good guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the Centre. The Centre's systems for guiding students' academic progress are very good but, as yet, not quite as effective as those for personal development. The regular one-to-one opportunities provided for students to review how well they are doing in relation to their targets are much appreciated.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very clear vision and direction about how the provision needs to develop. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and together they form a powerful team to drive forward improvement. They have developed a strong senior management team who work well with staff. This teamwork is a real strength and enables good communications across The Study Centre. Support for teachers new to the school is very good and enables all staff to quickly develop their practice and give of their best in identifying and addressing the needs of the students. Rigorous and robust internal systems have been established to monitor and evaluate The Study Centre's provision and these give a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. The management committee ensures coherence and consistency in placing students at the Centre and enabling them to reintegrate into mainstream schools. However, its wide remit covering the whole of the EOTAS provision means that its monitoring of The Study Centre's provision lacks the precision needed for the management committee members to be sure that all students are achieving of their best. The Study Centre is very effective in promoting community cohesion through its very good work with parents and other agencies in promoting students' welfare and their image in the community.

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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	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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
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**

08 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Study Centre, London, W13 0LR

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I inspected The Study Centre. I greatly valued my discussion with some of you during the headteacher's lunch and the clear and thoughtful way in which you presented your views. You were all very clear that The Study Centre is a good place to be and that it has enabled you to have a second chance in education. You also added that this second chance was much better than the first because staff were always ready to help and support you, not just with your lessons, but in your lives outside the Centre. I agree with you that The Study Centre is good and consider some aspects of its work with you to be outstanding.

You were particularly supportive of the Centre's rewards system and you told me how it was a real incentive in helping you to improve your work, behaviour and attendance. You were keen to tell me that teachers made lessons fun and that the smaller groups made it much easier for you to concentrate and 'understand stuff', as one of you said. Several of you also helped me to appreciate the challenges which you face in putting the skills you have learnt in the Centre into practice in your outside lives. The ways in which the Centre works to support your personal development I consider to be outstanding. I have asked teachers to make sure that they make better use of the targets you have been set to help you to improve your grades even further. I have also asked the management committee to ensure that The Study Centre becomes even better by carefully analysing how well you are doing. It is very clear that those of you who attend regularly will gain qualifications that will be of great help when you leave school.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead Inspector