

Brent Education Tuition Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134846
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	341539
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	John Kennedy HMI

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	5–17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Narindra Nathan
Headteacher	John Dowling
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with staff, the school council, local authority representatives and the vice chair of the management committee. They spoke informally with pupils, including some at the hospital or being educated at home. They observed the service's work at its three sites, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including its self-evaluation and development plan, a range of policies, external reviews, analysis of pupils' achievement and attendance, and a sample of pupils' files. Inspectors also consider the views expressed in 14 pupil, 26 staff and 10 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of pupils' learning and progress
- the impact of the service on pupils' attendance and levels of punctuality
- the impact of accommodation and the physical environment on the curriculum and pupils' development
- how well the needs of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are met through the curriculum
- the effectiveness of the management committee, particularly in promoting pupil's well-being and community cohesion.

Information about the school

Brent Education Tuition Service, known as BETS, is part of the local authority's wider provision for those who are unable to attend school for a variety of reasons, including medical, social, behaviour or attendance related issues. Some young people are referred because they do not yet have a school place. There are currently five teenage mothers on roll and a few of the pupils are looked after by a local authority. BETS operates on three sites and also provides home tuition. Key Stage 4 pupils can access full-time education at the tutorial centre. The majority of pupils at the centre do not return to school. Pupils of all ages receive a limited number of hours of home tuition which is delivered in a variety of settings, including at home and at a local library or similar facility. BETS provides education to children and young people who are in-patients at Northwick Park Hospital's paediatric ward, most of whom will only be there for a short time. The Key Stage 2 unit provides full-time education for up to eight primary-aged pupils who have been excluded from school. Numbers on roll vary considerably and pupils may be with the service for a few days or weeks or for longer periods. BETS pupils come from a wide range of ethnic, social and economic backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the local authority. All have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and most have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Many pupils also experience significant barriers to learning because of their disrupted education. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Over the course of the last academic year BETS had provided education for 116 pupils, and an additional 157 children and young people were taught at the hospital.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

BETS is very successful in providing a safe haven for its pupils so that they can improve their attitudes towards education, regain their self-confidence as successful learners, and for some, so that they can continue to learn as they receive medical support. It has aptly been described a service of 'last resort', and for many the service is the last chance they have to get back on track. Many of the pupils at the centre and on tuition experience successes in learning for the first time, and pupils rightly feel safe in this exceptionally caring place where the staff give them their undivided attention. Pupils thrive there, and the service is valued highly by parents and pupils alike. One pupil summed this up by writing to inspectors, 'If it wasn't for them I would still be at my house with no education and not socialising. They kind of saved my life.'

Improvements have been made since the last inspection, particularly in broadening the curriculum, making better use of assessment information to inform the quality of care, guidance and support, and in developing the roles and responsibilities of staff. Leaders and managers are determined to continue this trend of improvement and have the capacity to succeed. They provide the very experienced and dedicated team of staff with a wide range of opportunities to further develop their skills. Staff are led well by senior and middle leaders and a strong and determined headteacher whose driving motto is 'Don't sell the pupils short'. The success of this is evidenced not only by the good progress pupils make in their learning but also the considerable, and in some instances exceptional, progress they make in their personal development. Support at transition enables pupils to continue on this road of success. Virtually all of the pupils who left in 2009 went on to education, training or employment. Given their circumstances, this is a significant achievement in itself.

Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses and are determined to eliminate any inconsistencies which remain in teaching and embed the use of assessment to support learning. With equal determination, BETS is determined to improve further the rate of overall attendance of pupils at the centre. While most pupils have conquered previously entrenched absenteeism, there remain a number of pupils who, despite the best efforts of the staff, attend irregularly. This is largely because of their personal circumstances, but the centre has not yet fully explored the range of tools available to improve attendance which have proved effective in similar settings.

Pupils make such good progress because of the exemplary care they receive, good teaching and the quality of a curriculum that is improving year on year. The quality of the relationships between staff and pupils and the individualised planning for each pupil provide the bedrock of the success of the service, and can be seen in every aspect. The

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empathy and dedication of staff draw out an equally positive response from students in terms of their re-engagement in learning, their behaviour and increasing self-confidence and the good progress they make. The service uses the assessment information it has on individuals and their pupils' wishes to plan an effective and suitably personalised curriculum, which provides a very wide range of academic options with increasing vocational breadth; its flexibility is a real strength. Nevertheless, BETS faces considerable challenges because of the limitations of its current accommodation and the amount of hours it can offer to pupils on home tuition. These restrictions are largely outside its control and it copes well, making use of the good partnerships it has developed to strengthen its provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attendance at the centre by:
 - setting sharper and more measurable targets for pupils
 - working with pupils and their parents to show the correlation between attendance and achievement
 - identifying elements of successful practice in similar settings which can be adapted by the service.
- Work with the local authority to improve the quality of accommodation and increase the range of teaching time available to pupils receiving tuition.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Inspectors observed lessons where pupils were typically enjoying their learning and able to sustain good levels of engagement. Some make excellent progress in overcoming their barriers to learning. In instances where progress is slower, this is largely related to the ongoing medical, emotional or personal challenges that pupils continue to face. Attainment is broadly average but this masks considerable variability in their achievement. In 2009, pupils left BETS having gained a range of GCSE grades and other awards, such as a range of accreditation from the awards scheme development and accreditation network (ASDAN) award, entry-level qualifications in English and first-aid certification.

Pupils make good progress in managing their behaviour because of the positive relationships they have with staff, who have high expectations of them and are sensitive but firm in responding to pupils. In the very few instances where a pupil struggles with emotions, this is managed effectively. Bullying is rare and racial tolerance is a positive feature of the centre. Behaviour seen during lessons was good and this was reflected in positive attitudes to learning. Levels of punctuality are good. The majority of pupils make great strides in overcoming entrenched absenteeism, and in some instances completely conquer their significant anxieties about school. However, some of those attending the centre, despite the transformation in their engagement and renewed self-belief, are not yet attending sufficiently regularly to obtain maximum benefit from

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what BETS has to offer.

The school council meets every fortnight and pupils take whatever opportunities come their way to influence developments at the centre, for instance through helping with the design of the courtyard and the allotment. The allotment adds greatly to the curriculum and provides pupils, especially the more anxious, with an opportunity to develop social, horticulture and enterprise skills as they sell some of their produce to the wider community. The curriculum and the quality of the guidance and support the pupils receive prepare them well for adult life. For instance, all those who took the 'preparation for work' course received accreditation and the majority achieved Level 2.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Almost all the lessons visited at the centre, the Key Stage 2 unit, hospital and in homes were characterised by good teaching from skilled practitioners who display a sensitive and deep understanding of pupils' individual personal circumstances and the challenges they face in their learning. Staff employ a range of relevant and stimulating activities, and consequently pupils show good concentration and ability to sustain their focus. The

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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staff make good use of available resources to develop a positive learning environment. Numbers in classes are low and teachers make best use of the high teacher:pupil ratio to personalise learning activities, knowing when to challenge learners and when to allow more independent working. They are skilled in questioning and use it to check on pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Pupils, for instance, showed the quality of their learning in discussing concepts such as confinement and freedom in the poetry of Imtiaz Dharker. Teachers use assessment information with an increasing emphasis on the quality of pupils' progress and learning, but there is some variability in the opportunities they give to pupils to reflect on and evaluate what they have learnt during a lesson.

The broad curriculum includes up to 17 entry-level and GCSE options and an increasing range of vocational courses. There is also a strong focus on developing basic skills. The limited accommodation at the centre is a challenge, but staff are creative and resourceful in building local partnerships and accessing outside facilities. This enables BETS to ensure pupils have a wide range of activities and experiences such as sport, drama, first aid, e-safety and drugs awareness, and work experience. Highly individualised programmes are provided for those receiving tuition, which ranges from the required minimum of five hours a week up to ten hours for some pupils. The BETS aspiration to offer ten hours to all its pupils is limited by its currently available resources. The hospital school room is well equipped and has the capacity to provide key subjects to its very transient client group across all key stages. The Key Stage 2 curriculum has improved and now has a cross-curricular and thematic focus.

Each pupil has a carefully tailored plan to address his or her needs and specialist staff are allocated accordingly. Link tutors provide the day-to-day support for the pupils. The quality of provision is enhanced considerably by partnerships with a wide range of council and health authority services and other external groups. Around half of the pupils access support from child and adolescent mental health services, and there is an agreed protocol which ensures fast track access to therapy. Good support is also provided for those with medical needs, pregnant teenagers and young mothers. Staff respond quickly to attendance issues and make regular contact with home. The attention and targeted support for each individual ensures that even when there are lapses in attendance, these pupils are enabled to catch up so that their learning does not fall too far behind.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher, with excellent support from his deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, provides decisive leadership. They are supported well by effective middle managers and a team of committed and experienced staff. Staff morale is good and they go the extra mile to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. High expectations and targets are set, not only for pupils but also for staff. They are supported and held to account in equal measure for the quality of progress and improvement. However, the quality of formal lesson observations is not sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The senior leadership team has recognised this and is introducing a new lesson format to help sharpen it up. The detailed profile which staff hold on pupils and the regular monitoring of progress help ensure that pupils remain on track. The staff who completed the inspection questionnaire were very positive. One member of staff, summing up the views of many, described BETS as 'an excellent working environment where everyone is valued'.

The management committee provides effective support for the service but there are some aspects of its work, for instance in promoting community cohesion, where it has not asked sufficiently searching questions. BETS is a cohesive community and there are a number of examples where the pupils have made an impact on the wider community. For example, pupils won prizes for taking part in a borough competition to design posters or write lyrics to dissuade youngsters from carrying weapons.

Safeguarding and the promotion of equality are strong features of BETS. Staff are tenacious in following up concerns about pupils who may be at risk or who have suffered significant harm. The attention given to the individual needs of all its pupils is symptomatic of the service's commitment to equalities and is at the heart of its ongoing work with the council and other partners to try and improve the quality of accommodation. Resources are used to very good effect and, when considered alongside the outcomes for its pupils, this represents good value for money.

Partnerships are wide ranging and add considerably to the impact of the service. The staff work hard to cultivate supportive relationships and maintain effective communication channels with parents and carers. Responses from parents and carers, through an annual questionnaire and other feedback over the years, show that they hold the service in very high esteem. One parent perhaps exemplified this best, when writing, 'If BETS did not exist I don't know where my daughter will be now.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A very small number of parents returned questionnaires. The overriding picture is a positive one about all aspects of the service. There were some areas where one or two parents indicated a difference from the majority, particularly around informing them of their child's progress. Inspectors found that the service had a range of mechanisms for keeping parents in touch with progress, ranging from daily calls or contact, in some instances, to more formal termly reports.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brent Education Tuition Service to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 50 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	30	5	50	2	20	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	40	5	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	4	40	5	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	50	4	40	1	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	30	6	60	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	50	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	40	5	50	1	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	30	6	60	1	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	40	5	50	1	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	20	8	80	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brent Education Tuition Service, London NW10 8HE

Thank you for the welcome and help you gave us when we visited you recently. You told us that you enjoy BETS, and you value the care and teaching you receive from staff. We have judged that BETS provides you with good teaching and a curriculum that interests you and helps you to do well. It is particularly successful in helping you develop into mature and confident young people. This is because of the good guidance and support provided by exceptionally caring and dedicated staff. BETS is led and managed well by a very good headteacher and other leaders.

It is not only the staff who make BETS so successful. We were impressed with the quality of your behaviour and attention in lessons. When visiting each of the sites and seeing some of you working at home, we saw how keen you were to do well despite all the difficulties you are facing. The combination of all these factors is at the heart of why you are making such good progress. You said that you like being in smaller classes. Along with the excellent one-to-one support you get, this is another reason you are learning much better now. Those of you at the centre are attending more often, although some of you could improve that even further.

Improvements can be made so that BETS will be an even better place. The two main changes needed are to:

- improve the quality of the accommodation and, if possible, increase the range of teaching time available to pupils
- work even harder to improve the attendance of pupils who come to the centre. You can help by making sure you make the best of the second chance you have been given and by ensuring that you attend as often as you can.

A former pupil wrote that 'because of BETS I now have a future and I will make my aspirations come true'. This is our wish for you all.

Yours sincerely

John Kennedy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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