

New Directions KS4 PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134919
Local Authority	
Inspection number	341572
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

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	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	NA
Headteacher	Glyn Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
School address	The Storey Centre Woodman Street London E16 2LS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of the management committee, the local education authority, senior staff and students. They observed the service's work, and looked at a range of evidence, including assessment procedures, some off-site provision, documentation on policies and procedures, six questionnaires conducted by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by students and staff.

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

- the effectiveness of leadership and management in coordinating such a diverse service and raising levels of student attainment
- how well the service worked in partnership with other organisations to improve the students' educational and employment opportunities
- how the service endeavours to improve the students' skills in literacy and numeracy
- the effectiveness of the service in improving responsibility and contributions to the school and wider community.

Information about the school

New Directions is a large pupil referral unit providing for Key Stage 4 students. It is a diverse service providing for many different needs but these can be grouped under three distinct headings. Each group has its own structured programme which attempts to address the needs of the identified students.

Newham Late Admissions Programme (NewLAP)

This is provision for Year 11 students who are new to the country and the UK education system. It includes refugees and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors in care, and the children of economic migrants. Around 80% do not speak English as a first language, of whom about 30% have no functional spoken English at all. These students are taught mainly in partnership with two local further education providers. The number of students in this programme tends to grow significantly as the academic year progresses. As this inspection was undertaken close to the start of the academic year, this service had not started because needs were still being identified.

New Steps Programme

This is for Year 11 students who show they possess the necessary learning and behavioural skills to cope in a learning institution but who are currently expressing their dissatisfaction with school through poor attendance and behaviour and general disaffection. These are students who have expressed a desire for a full-time work-focused curriculum offer. This programme is commissioned from Newham College of Further Education.

Turnaround and L2S programmes

This provision is designed for students in Years 10 and 11 who have multiple barriers to learning, including a social and economic background of deprivation. These are two separate services but they share the same entry criteria and have similar student

profiles. These include school refusers, non-attenders and excluded students, who have all had negative learning experiences and generally suffer low levels of self-esteem. These are students who are currently unable to prosper and develop in a full-time structured learning institution.

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

New Directions PRU provides a good quality of education. Some aspects of this provision, including the care, guidance and support offered and its partnership work, are outstanding. The service has a good record of helping vulnerable students, including some who are new arrivals to the country, to gain confidence and grow in their self-esteem so that many proceed to the next stage of their lives with greater confidence. Since the previous inspection, the service has undergone some changes in its leadership and management structure and has moved location three times. Nevertheless, the current leadership team has established high levels of staff and student morale, has overseen a consistent improvement in academic performance and provides a clear vision for moving the service forward. Furthermore, the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been tackled well. All these points indicate that the service has a good capacity for further improvement. It also represents good value for money.

Student outcomes are good. In relation to their often very low starting points, most students achieve well and make good progress in their learning and personal development. The progress students make toward their personal targets, especially in relation to improving behaviour and attendance, is often at least good. The service has significantly improved its use of data. On entry to the service, all students are tested to establish their levels in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. However, the service's analysis and use of this data are not sufficiently embedded at present to ensure that all lessons are sufficiently challenging. This is most evident in some English and mathematics classes. Consequently, in some classes, more able students often finish their work quickly, while others struggle to keep up.

The service offers a structured and orderly environment in which the students enjoy their education and gain in confidence and improve their social skills. Relationships between students and between students and staff are good. The students say they feel safe and valued and that incidents of anti-social behaviour are rare. The students behave well and have a good understanding of the need to develop healthy lifestyles. Though attendance overall is well below the national average, this outcome is distorted by the high levels of absence of a small number of students. The service has excellent procedures for encouraging regular and punctual attendance and many students have responded well, with a number now attending far more regularly than when they were in mainstream schooling. During the last year, about three quarters showed a significant improvement in this respect.

A good and relevant curriculum is offered. Students are given suitable opportunities to study for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics and the study of home

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languages is encouraged. Many students, however, are not capable of studying at such a high level and the service has been thorough and creative in seeking alternative forms of accreditation. The provision for vocational education is good but much of this work has to be done off site. There is scope for considerably enhancing this provision. The main centre used by the service occupies a large site. The buildings have been well cared for and are welcoming and attractive. The surrounding outdoor areas have mainly been neglected but offer considerable potential to develop aspects of vocational education and leisure. The management committee and the local authority are not ensuring that these areas are maintained to a sufficiently high standard.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, by making more effective use of assessment information to: - ensure that lessons are better planned to meet the needs of different groups of students - ensure that students are set challenging and realistic targets - ensure that progress and achievement are closely monitored.
- Improve the external environment in conjunction with the appropriate authorities and ensure that the appropriate authorities maintain the external environment better so that: - all opportunities to deliver vocational education on site are seized - the site is attractive and welcoming - there are improved social areas which the students can enjoy and manage themselves.

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

Students joining the service often have levels of attainment that are well below average; for some, prior attainment is exceptionally low. This is because of gaps in their learning caused by challenging histories, disrupted schooling and poor attendance. Some of the NewLap students have no recent history of schooling. By the end of Year 11, attainment is still well below the national average, but most students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and new arrivals to the country, make good progress in relation to their starting points. Many gain forms of accreditation that enable them to progress to the next stage in their education or to the world of work. Results have shown a strong trend of improvement over the last three years. Some students readily acknowledge that, had it not been for the PRU, they would have no qualifications and would have been on the streets. Now they feel safe and well supported and many have aspirations to enter college and gain further qualifications.

Other improvements are noticeable. Most students have improved attitudes to their academic work and many are developing their sense of responsibility well. The service is strong at encouraging the students to accept responsibility for their own actions and to analyse what impact actions might have on others. The excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme makes a significant contribution to improving behaviour and encouraging responsibility. This was amply demonstrated in work seen in the Fight for Peace Academy, a sports gym backed by the Amateur Boxing Association,

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where the students work with social workers and professional boxers. As a result of this partnership, they make good gains in physical fitness and in developing a good sense of personal responsibility and improved behaviour. This provision also helps students, especially boys, gain confidence and self-esteem. The academy staff present excellent role models that the students can empathise with and aspire to. The emphasis on physical fitness is also helping the boys to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Through their own council the students are involved in improving their own community and their views are listened to. They also support charities in the wider community. Responsibility is encouraged in many ways and the landscaping projects are good example of this. The students have adopted some areas of the school and established environmental areas where wildlife can be studied at close quarters and where students and staff can sit and relax. An interesting development is the link to animal welfare and the imminent arrival of some ex-battery hens will offer the students experiences that they will rarely encounter in their local environment. The vocational curriculum prepares the students well for the next stages in their lives, but many continue to experience difficulties with their literacy and numeracy skills; thus, the overall extent to which students develop workplace skills is satisfactory rather than good.

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	4
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	2
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	3

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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How effective is the provision?

Students learn well because they benefit from consistently good and careful teaching. The working relationships between staff and students are good and rare instances of misbehaviour are dealt with calmly and sensitively. There are some good aspects to lesson planning, such as opportunities for students to work independently and to assess each other's work. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team with the latter being fully involved in the lessons and making a good contribution to learning. Students' progress towards their targets, in relation to their academic performance, behaviour and attendance, is rigorously monitored. The students reported that they believe that they are well taught, though some commented that they wanted to be stretched more, especially in English and mathematics. This is a view that some parents also expressed. The inspectors concur with this. The service gathers much data on the students but, as yet, these are not used with sufficient consistency to ensure that all lessons offer the right level of challenge.

A good and thoughtfully constructed curriculum meets the needs of all students well. Vocational provision is good. The PSHE programme is excellent and really helps to boost self-esteem and improve behaviour. A satisfactory contribution is made to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The landscaping and gardening work makes a good contribution to developing social skills and aspects of spirituality but more provision for cultural, and especially multicultural, development is needed.

The service provides a good, caring and supportive environment for its students. It is especially effective in how it supports each individual, including the most vulnerable. Effective induction methods enable students to settle quickly into the daily routines and to understand the high expectations that the service has of them. All students also receive good advice and guidance for the opportunities that exist beyond the service. Although the service's procedures for reducing absence are thorough and detailed, the persistent absence of a small minority is proving difficult to eliminate.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher and the headteacher have a clear focus on driving improvement based on perceptive self-evaluation and good monitoring. They are well supported by a keen and industrious staff. The current management committee is fairly

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new. Members are developing their role as challenging but supportive friends and are in accord with the leadership team on the key priorities and how further improvements can be made.

As far as is possible, the service involves parents and carers in its work and is keen to keep them informed. A real strength of the service is the excellence of its partnership work. The service maintains very strong working relationships with local secondary schools. Its work with a multitude of external agencies enables significant enhancements to be made to the curriculum, as well as ensuring excellent provision for personal development, especially in terms of promoting personal well-being. The high-quality partnership work also ensures that specific help is available for particular students. This includes those at an early stage of English acquisition, or students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities or social problems. Safeguarding procedures are detailed and thorough. At the time of the inspection they were good, although insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that the open areas adjoining the main centre are properly maintained. A strong focus on respect, rights and responsibilities underpins much of the service's work and this makes a good contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination. Good efforts have been made to promote community cohesion. There has been a detailed audit and some interesting developments have arisen. The students learn about different cultures and religions and are encouraged to develop an understanding of the diversity of their local environment. Of particular note is a project to develop a young persons' guide to the Olympics. As the service is located in the Olympic borough, this is an enterprising project that enables the students extend their learning while helping others.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

Only a small number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The responses received were generally positive and supportive, with parents acknowledging that the service has helped their children. A minority of those who did respond highlighted a need for some of the work, especially in English and mathematics, to be more challenging. This is a view that is endorsed by the inspection team. The overwhelming message to emerge, however, is that the respondents clearly think that the service is making a significant contribution to enhancing the students' life chances and is helping the youngsters to overcome their problems and anxieties.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Directions KS4 PRU 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 six completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	16	4	66	1	16	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	33	4	66	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	60	1	20	1	20	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	33	3	50	0	0	1	16
The teaching is good at this school	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	5	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	16	5	83	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)	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	16	4	66	1	16	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	33	4	66	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	33	4	66	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.



28 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of New Directions KS4 PRU, London, E16 2LS

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome during our recent visit. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your experiences. We have concluded that you are offered a good level of education and were impressed by many aspects of your work. Our findings are supported by the comments you made in your own questionnaire. A few of you have some concerns that lessons might be too easy, a view that we support. We also agree with you when you praise the service and its staff for helping you to move on and to do things you might not otherwise be able to do, like construction work, landscaping and gardening. We were impressed by the way you respect property and by your behaviour. We also like the gardens you have created, though we regret that we were unable to see you looking after your chickens. It was clear that your adopted guinea pigs were enjoying their new lives and all the attention.

We have identified the following strengths:

- The leadership and management of your service are good.
- Your staff have your best interests at heart and work hard to ensure that you are safe and well cared for, and make every effort to ensure that you will do well in the future.
- The overall levels of the care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding.
- The work that the service does with other providers to ensure that your education and care are of the highest quality is also outstanding.

To improve things further, we have asked that:

- there be a greater level of challenge in some lessons, especially in English and mathematics
- the external areas at the main centre be better maintained and that the areas of waste land are better utilised to improve even further the curriculum you receive.

Thank you again for making us so welcome. I would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours faithfully

Bill Stoneham

Lead Inspector

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