

Tower Hamlets PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100889
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	354910
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Bill (William) 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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Wendy Forrest
Headteacher	Mr Steven Pugh (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
School address	110 Globe Road London E1 4DZ
Telephone number	020 77905170
Fax number	020 72658544
Email address	ISC@pru.towerhamlets.sch.uk

Age group	5–16
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2010
Inspection number	354910

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons each taught by a different member of staff and looked at other evidence relating to the quality of learning. Meetings were held with the management committee, staff, students and other stakeholders including parents and carers and staff from schools that work in partnership with the service. The inspectors observed the service's work and looked at its self-evaluation documentation, policy documents, minutes of meetings held by the management committee, external reports, school publications, and questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 16 parents and carers.

They reviewed many aspects of the unit's work, looking in detail at the following:

- If the service is boosting overall achievement for different groups of students successfully.
- If the service is boosting overall achievement for different groups of students successfully.
- How well the curriculum is tailored to meet individual needs and is boosting levels of attainment and overall achievement.
- The effectiveness of the service in tackling the complexity of issues faced by the students so that when they leave they can proceed with their education, or can secure a placement in training or employment.

Information about the school

Tower Hamlets Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) offers wide-ranging provision, based on five sites, for students who are permanently excluded; at risk of permanent exclusion; chronic school non-attenders; pregnant schoolgirls and school-age mothers; sick children requiring home or hospital tuition; and vulnerable students subject to multi-agency concern. The service also supports students on fixed-term exclusions from the sixth day of their exclusion. In addition to the students based in the PRU, about 40 students are supported in mainstream school or at other locations. The Royal London Hospital is the only site which makes provision for primary-aged pupils. Most pupils and students spend a very short time in the hospital and, where necessary, continue to receive tuition at home while recuperating. At the time of the inspection, there were a very small number of short-stay primary-aged pupils at the hospital school. It was not possible to observe their work. About half of all students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half speak English as an additional language, although few are at the beginning stage. Nearly all students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, most frequently involving behavioural, emotional and social needs or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. A very small proportion of students have a disability usually as a result of their medical condition. A few have a statement of special educational needs. The service has been awarded a Gold ArtAward.

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

Tower Hamlets PRU offers a good education. Aspects of this provision, including the care, guidance and support for students and its work with parents and carers and a plethora of agencies and partners, are outstanding.

The good outcomes for students illustrate the dedication and commitment of the staff. Most students join the service with exceedingly low levels of prior attainment, frequently reflecting significant disturbances in their education and low self-esteem. In these highly exceptional circumstances, the progress they make in their education and their social and emotional development is impressive. Most make at least good progress; some, especially students in Years 10 and 11, who frequently have behavioural and emotional problems, make outstanding progress. This is reflected in their GCSE and other examination results and their progression rates to college or to the world of work. Outcomes for all groups of students are well in excess of what might be expected given their starting points.

Excellent partnerships with a wide variety of specialist agencies play an outstanding part in overcoming barriers to learning and accelerating students' progress. Activities, such as various sports events and work with the London Fire Brigade, provide excellent value for money because they benefit students in ways which might not be provided otherwise. Students adopt safe and healthy lifestyles.

Students' good, and occasionally outstanding, progress reflects the quality of the curriculum, especially the way it is personalised to meet their individual needs, and the service's good work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. For many, the service provides life-changing experiences. Progress is accelerated by good teaching and learning; a few lessons seen were satisfactory but some were also outstanding. The service does much to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills, as reflected in their improved examination results. Nevertheless, levels of literacy and numeracy remain below average. Staff endeavour to set challenging targets but the use of assessment data to inform lesson planning and to help teachers gauge progress is variable. Senior managers acknowledge that more reliable information needs to be provided to teaching staff.

Since the previous inspection, the service has continued to improve. It is successful in reintegrating students back to school, as well as promoting opportunities in further education or work. Leaders' understanding and vision for the service are strong. Their self-evaluation is good. Senior managers know where strengths lie and where improvements are required. A track record of sustained improvement illustrates the ambition and drive of the good leadership team, reflecting a good capacity to improve

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

further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve levels of attainment by ensuring that all staff are provided with accurate assessment data and that such information is consistently used to set challenging targets so that students' progress can be more rigorously measured against the targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, students usually behaved well and responded to the challenges set. Students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress because classrooms are settled, staff are prepared well, and the students usually enjoy the work that is set. Outstanding learning was seen in a Key Stage 4 science lesson where the students' understanding was challenged and they were given opportunities to work independently.

Prior to joining the provision, many are predicted to gain few or no qualifications. Data clearly show that those students who are reintegrated into full-time education return with improved records of attainment and are better equipped emotionally and socially to cope with the demands of mainstream school. All students who stay until the end of Year 11 leave with some qualifications. Many, including those with a statement of special educational needs, gain GCSE accreditation, including grades at C or above, with some gaining five GCSE grades or more (including English and mathematics) at Grade C or better. Such outcomes are impressive given the starting points and their past educational histories. The service has a proud and improving record of enabling Year 11 students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to progress to further education or the world of work.

Responsibility and enjoyment are actively encouraged. Through their own council, the students have a say in improvements and make a contribution to the wider community. The work done as part of the ArtsAward scheme is especially impressive. It shows that students work with interest, enjoyment and a high degree of skill and application on a range of exciting projects covering visual and performing arts. The service is the only PRU in the country to have been awarded a Gold ArtsAward. Students make good efforts to pursue healthy lifestyles with a high number participating in physical activities as varied as badminton, kayaking and Thai boxing. Attendance is below average but this outcome fails to reflect the hard work being done to reduce absence. Most students now have vastly improved attendance records, with a significant number attending almost all of the time. The students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. This is promoted in many ways including regular assemblies and especially through the ArtsAward scheme. The work seen on Mexican masks was especially impressive and themes like this do much to promote their creativity and understanding of other cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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	2

How effective is the provision?

Most lessons are interesting and succeed in engaging and motivating the students. Their learning is good because they are consistently well taught by staff who have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach and they challenge students well. This was evident in a good Year 9 mathematics lesson when students were encouraged to use their knowledge of averages to criticise reports in a newspaper. Staff motivate students and have effective behaviour management techniques. The working relationships between staff and students are good. Activities are well planned to meet students' individual needs. The curriculum is good. Students enjoy following programmes that have been carefully structured to meet their own requirements. Curriculum innovation, especially the thought given to extra-curricular activities, has boosted attainment, confidence, enjoyment and self-esteem. This can be seen through the residential visits undertaken to places such as Dorset and the Highlands of Scotland, where the students, and sometimes their parents and carers, tackle demanding outdoor pursuits.

The service provides an outstanding caring and supportive environment. There are excellent trusting relationships with parents and carers. The individual needs of all students have high priority. Families and carers, even from difficult-to-reach groups, are fully involved in their child's education and care. Outstanding work with an array of agencies greatly enhances the students' learning, confidence and social well-being. As one parent commented, 'I would like to express my gratitude to all the staff for being

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

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

dedicated teachers, who really care about their pupils so they can continue their education in a positive manner.'

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 strong leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, plus the committed and dedicated support of all staff, results in a clear focus on successfully driving improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels are ambitious for success, are fully committed and involved in securing improvements. The management committee has some new members and a new chairperson.

When the new leaders joined, they found that safeguarding arrangements were not as robust as they should have been. Immediate action has been taken to strengthen systems and safeguarding procedures are now securely satisfactory. Leaders and staff are keen to sharpen their practice still further and strengthening links with the local authority have helped lift the overall quality considerably. For example, leaders are improving their monitoring of safeguarding requirements and development planning. Outside agencies and the local authority work in unison with the headteacher and his staff for the benefit of the students; they are keenly working to lift the service from being good to outstanding in the future.

Students make at least good progress because the management of teaching and learning is appropriately focused on raising attainment. An emphasis on respect, rights, boosting confidence, self-esteem and encouraging responsibility underpins much of the service's work. This makes a good contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination. Good efforts have been made to promote community cohesion. The students make a good contribution to their own community and they support various charities at home and abroad, sometimes in interesting ways. For example, design and technology students made a bench and bird boxes for a local centre for senior citizens. Students know about other faiths and cultures, they show respect.

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	2

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	
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
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

16 parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire. All responses were positive. The overwhelming message to emerge is that parents and carers believe that the service makes a significant contribution to enhancing life chances by helping the students to overcome their problems and anxieties. Though the response to this questionnaire was small, the service's own surveys confirm extremely high levels of satisfaction. The highly positive views expressed by parents and carers reflect the inspectors' judgements that the service offers a good and potentially life-changing standard of education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tower Hamlets 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	31	11	69	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	63	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	56	6	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	63	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	81	3	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	63	2	12	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)	9	56	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	56	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	69	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	69	4	25	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



23 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Tower Hamlets PRU, London, E1 4DZ

My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed our recent visit. I wish to thank you for making us so welcome. We have fond memories of our visit. We enjoyed talking to you and learning about your views. You told us about the quality of education you receive and we are pleased to say that our visit confirmed your opinions; you receive a good education. Many of you are making significant strides in your education and personal development. The staff help you to do this but you also help by behaving sensibly in lessons and in the social areas. Your service has many strengths. You particularly benefit from the outstanding care, guidance and support provided and the work that is done to involve your parents and carers. We were also most impressed by the art work we saw, especially your Mexican masks.

We believe that, although you make good progress and achieve well, there is room for further improvement. In order to achieve this, we have asked the leaders to work on the following important point.

- Make sure that even more use is made of the information staff have to continue to set you challenging targets and to measure your progress against such targets.

You can all help by keeping up your hard work. Well done for improving your attendance and please keep this up!

Thank you again for making us so welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.