

The Latimer Education Centre Pupil Referral Unit

194 Freston Road, London, W10 6TT

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The centre has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. Strong, determined leadership has resulted in faster rates of progress for the students because of good teaching.
- Well-structured partnerships with alternative provision academies in adjacent boroughs have supported the shift in focus of the centre, since the last inspection, from behaviour management to ensuring that the students learn successfully and achieve well.
- Intensive work by staff has improved attendance and sustained progress in how students manage their behaviour and engage in learning. Relationships throughout the unit are excellent and students' behaviour is good. Students feel safe within the unit. Parents report that they are pleased with their children's progress.
- Members of the management committee ably challenge the unit to maintain high expectations in all aspects of its work. For example, the rate at which students are re-integrated into mainstream or other special schools has doubled since the last inspection.
- Students' aspirations have risen as a result of positive changes to the curriculum and clear systems for tracking their progress. They are encouraged to study a broad range of courses that provide a good balance of academic and vocational courses. Students are particularly successful in GCSE examinations in art.
- A well-kept environment, stimulating displays and good on-site nutrition contribute much to students' enjoyment of school and sense of well-being. Leaders and managers are supported effectively by the whole staff team.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although students are helped to catch up in literacy and numeracy, there are missed opportunities to support extended writing and develop their mathematical thinking.
- Lesson planning does not take enough account of students' reading ages in matching work to earlier learning.
- Too many students are late for school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited six lessons, all of which were joint observations with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Informal discussions were held with students in lessons and around the school. Discussions also took place with the Chair of the Management Committee, the executive headteacher, the head of school, and staff in charge of teaching, pastoral care and the curriculum. There was a telephone interview with a local headteacher as well as a discussion with a local authority representative, both members of the management committee. The inspector also listened to students reading and took account of a number of case studies to explore the impact of the centre's work on individual students.
- There were no recorded submissions to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, but the inspector took account of the school's own surveys for parents at the end of the last academic year. Questionnaires from 14 staff were also considered.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents and samples of students' work. These included the school's own data on students' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents related to safeguarding.
- The inspector also made a brief visit to the on-site Golborne Centre which deals with six-day plus exclusions and with students in need of intervention for up to five weeks.

Inspection team

Sheila Nolan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Latimer Education Centre, based on one main site, provides for up to 40 students. Currently, there are 28 students on roll. These are mainly students who have been excluded from mainstream schools, those on managed moves to prevent exclusion, and those who have been out of school for significant periods. A few students have a statement of special educational needs and most are deemed to be at school action or school action plus, mainly for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The centre is intended to be a short-stay unit preparing students to move back into other mainstream or special schools, further education or training. Students who join the centre in Year 11 are likely to remain to the end of the school year. Presently, no students are at the early stages of learning English.
- The centre is part of the tri-borough alternative provision across Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster local authorities. It also hosts the Golborne Centre for very short-term placements as well as for initial assessments and induction of the students to the tri-borough alternative provision.
- There are many more boys than girls and students come from across a wide range of ethnic heritages and traditions. At present, the largest groups are White British, Black African and Afro Caribbean students. Those eligible for the pupil premium make up over half of the present cohort but the student population fluctuates greatly, with students joining the centre throughout the school year. Eight students have joined the school in the last two weeks. Year 11 students were no longer in school at the time of the inspection. There are no Year 7 students and none from service families.
- The Latimer Centre presents students for examinations and other forms of accreditation at times most suitable for them. The centre also uses a range of alternative provision and the take-up of courses offered varies from year to year. Local colleges that offer alternative provision include the College of North West London, Kensington and Chelsea College, and Hammersmith and West London College. The unit also places students on other courses and in schools as needed across the tri-borough provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the good teaching is improved still further by:
 - making sure that staff have up-to-date information on students' reading ages
 - insisting that they use this information when they plan work and check that specific text and vocabulary are well understood by all students
 - encouraging more opportunities for students to write at length in lessons across all subjects
 - ensuring that planning in mathematics concentrates systematically on developing students' understanding of how they reach solutions
- Intensify efforts to improve the students' punctuality to school, particularly for Key Stage 4 students, by:
 - exploring ways in which to vary the structure of the school day
 - finding further incentives to motivate students to get to school on time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The unit's induction information and students' previous school histories indicate that most have starting points much lower than that expected for the age range. Some have not attended school for long periods and others have lost ground because of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many students have reading ages and writing skills well below those of their peers nationally.
- The attainment of the students also varies markedly depending on their individual starting points. Nevertheless, most make good progress and achieve well during their time in the unit. Students from Years 8, 9 and 10 are typically able to hold their own on return to mainstream schools.
- In 2012, all Year 11 students gained at least two or more GCSE grades and around a half of the students gained five or more. Higher grades are common in art and predicted grades for 2013 suggest that this trend is set to continue. Almost all Year 11 students leave the unit with a recognised qualification in English and mathematics because of effective reading support and effective provision to promote listening and speaking skills. They also receive helpful individualised support in numeracy.
- A wide range of vocational qualifications is available to the students at both Level 1 and Level 2. Each Year 11 student successfully gains at least one nationally recognised qualification that provides a pathway into further education and training.
- The centre has efficient systems for identifying the progress not only of its longer-term students but also for those who are able to re-integrate quickly into mainstream school. Groups are often too small to allow for valid analysis but trends show that the small number of girls regularly make faster progress than the boys. There are no marked differences in the progress of different minority ethnic groups.
- The pattern of attainment and progress does not include planned checks of students' up-to-date reading ages even though students do make significant progress. For example, one student has made up the equivalent of two years in reading after seven weeks at the centre. The lack of up-to-date information on reading ages has a negative effect on lesson planning.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium achieve as well as others and very often make faster progress in English and mathematics than others because of the very intensive all-round support that is individually tailored to their needs. This is the case for those eligible for free school meals and for the few students who are looked after by the local authority.
- Progress in lessons is generally good. Most take pride in their work, although a number are hampered by poor handwriting and too few opportunities for extended writing or to communicate their mathematical thinking in writing. Students with statements of special needs make equally fast progress, again because of excellent pastoral care and good educational support.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection and is now regularly good. There is sensitive coaching for any member of staff whose practice is less than good. The impact of this work is seen in how well students engage with their academic work in class.
- Collaborative learning is a strong feature of many of the lessons seen, fuelled by the very positive working relationships between staff and students. Staff manage the students' behaviour well. This success is built on the willingness of students to cooperate and try to make up for earlier underachievement. Students are demonstrably pleased with the support for their learning and proud, for example, of their excellent art work and reflections displayed around the school, the result of cooperation across a range of subjects. Year 11 leavers were very keen to show

their 'hoodies' exhibits and explain their approaches to making the products shown in the school gallery as well as their thoughts about the project.

- Support staff are mostly well deployed in lessons. Their involvement encourages students' engagement and perseverance when tasks are challenging. However, there are times when some learning assistants do too much for students, giving them too little scope for independent work of which they are capable.
- Literacy teaching has many strong features, including provision for those students at the early stages of reading. Oral work is a real strength. However, there are missed opportunities to promote reading, extend vocabulary, write at length and improve handwriting across the curriculum. Lesson planning does not make full use of reading ages to ensure that written materials are accessible to each student. This is partly because up-to-date information has not previously been readily available to all staff. As a result, staff do not routinely check that each student can read, understand and use unfamiliar words.
- The good working ethos in mathematics lessons is not always used fully to support students' mathematical thinking. Although students work diligently and complete a fair body of work, too few demands are made of them in the way that they communicate their mathematics in writing. Misunderstandings and incorrect notation are not always picked up during mathematics lessons because of the individualised nature of some of the work.
- Students' work is regularly marked and often good written, as well as oral, guidance is provided. In the best examples, staff and students share a dialogue on the next steps for improvement. This excellent practice is not yet, however, fully implemented across all subject areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They respect their environment and relate well to those around them. For many, this represents significant progress from their patterns of behaviour in their previous schools. 'We realise this is our chance to start again,' commented a student.
- Much of this improvement in attitudes to learning and to others has come about through the excellent team work of the staff. It is very marked, for example, at lunch time. The staff and students enjoy eating together, not least because of the healthy, nutritious meals provided by the school catering staff.
- A skilled therapeutic team work closely with the teaching staff so that interventions are carefully matched to the students' personal and academic needs. The students genuinely feel that the staff do care about them and what happens to them. As a result, they feel safe in the unit and many are gradually able to modify their behaviour outside of the unit as well as within it. Fixed-term exclusions have halved since the previous inspection.
- For the majority of students, attendance rapidly improves over their time in the unit. Overall, it is still below that expected for special schools. Nevertheless, on the second day of the inspection, attendance stood at 96%, a clear indicator that students considered it worthwhile to come to school. The attendance and safety of students in off-site provision are given high priority by the unit.
- Punctuality to school has improved at Key Stage 3 but is still an issue at Key Stage 4. The unit appreciates that some options such as restructuring the morning sessions or finding new incentives to encourage older students to arrive on time have not yet been fully explored.
- The students have a very clear understanding of the different types of bullying and are able to discuss such issues rationally and maturely. This was clearly seen in a personal and social education lesson for Year 8. Students were able to work together in groups and to prioritise types of response to a scenario. There are few recorded bullying incidents and students are confident that they can leave the outside area pressures behind when they enter the building. They respond good-humouredly to handing over their mobile phones and being checked for weaponry each morning on entry to the school. Encouragingly, no weapons have been found.
- The school's findings on parents' views confirm that they are pleased with the safety of the unit

and the improved behaviour of the young people.

The leadership and management are good

- The integration of the unit into the tri-borough partnership has brought about very positive changes to the leadership and management of the school. This is now good. The head of school and school staff have flourished under the guidance of the determined executive headteacher. Staff have given real assent to supporting the shift in emphasis from behaviour management to learning management that took place following the last inspection. 'We are a school' is the message and this has been reflected in the students' involvement in their work as well as in their personal development.
- Systematic approaches across all of the alternative provision have strengthened the unit's ability and expertise to check on students' progress and improve the quality of teaching. At the same time, the staff team has sustained a high quality of therapeutic care for the students.
- Rigorous quality assurance procedures are in place across the provision. Regular external reviews as well as robust internal monitoring have all combined to improve markedly the performance of staff and the outcomes for the students. There is a very accurate awareness of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff are eager to know how to improve. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed effectively.
- Positive changes to the curriculum ensure that students have access to a wide range of accreditation most suited to their stages of development. As a result, no student leaves the provision without a carefully planned placement for the next academic year.
- A notable feature of the unit that has improved significantly since the last inspection is the unit's partnership with local schools and other alternative provision as well as with local colleges. As a result, re-integration into mainstream schools has become smoother and faster. Despite this, there are a few students who still, over time, find it difficult to sustain their progress in mainstream schools. The centre is actively searching for ways to support such students further so that they can finish their education successfully.
- Very good external support for the unit is provided by the tri-borough organisation. The membership of the management committee includes a number of local headteachers as well as local authority officers. The exchange of staff and students encourages mutual support and challenge. All students are given an equal chance to succeed. Senior leaders are well supported by staff in the drive to eliminate any discrimination for the students and their families.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the managing committee, ably led, are very committed to supporting and challenging the unit. They are fully involved in planning for its future within the tri-borough partnership. They are also very aware of the issues related to identifying how well the unit is doing. Regular visits, case studies of students, and the experience of local schools with students attending the unit, as well as external reports, all combine to give them a realistic picture of the students' progress and of the quality of teaching. The performance management of the executive headteacher and head of school is carried out rigorously and there is a secure overview of how staff's remuneration links with classroom performance. There is a good understanding of the unit's finances and close attention to the safety of the students. Members scrutinise how well the use of the pupil premium funding is working. They are experienced in the processes of safer recruitment, and the safeguarding of students is a high priority.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100476
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	404727

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	N/A
Headteacher (Executive)	Seamus Oates
Headteacher (Head of School)	Tony Meehan
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2011
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