

NEW DIRECTIONS KEY STAGE 4 PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

The Storey Centre, Woodman Street, Stratford, London, E16 2 LS

Inspection dates 25– 26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 school has sustained good provision between successive inspections. This is because leaders and managers have worked steadily, despite changes to the structure of the unit, to develop teaching and maintain high expectations of the students.
- Teaching is consistently good. As a result of enthusiastic teaching and warm working relationships, students make at least good progress in their basic skills although their attainment remains below average. They achieve well overall.
- Positive changes to the curriculum are doing much to raise the students' aspirations, and those who can, are encouraged to study for accreditation beyond that offered previously.
- Students who lag behind in their reading, writing and mathematics are helped effectively to make up lost ground.
- Because all adults manage behaviour well, students feel safe and make rapid progress in their social skills over their time at the unit. This translates into good behaviour in all lessons and around the site.
- The intensive work by teams of staff to enhance each pupil's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is very effective in helping them to attend school more regularly and to willingly join in the many stimulating activities open to them, both in and out of lessons.
- Strong partnerships with mainstream schools and other agencies make sure that students are placed on the best pathways to help them get back on track with their learning and their personal development.
- There has been good improvement to the school environment since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching, although good, does not always fully enhance literacy and numeracy across all subjects nor always note the small daily steps in students' learning. Updates on reading ages are not always available or used by staff.
- Despite the best efforts of the unit and some outstanding progress in many students' attendance, the overall rate of attendance remains too low. Checks on punctuality are not as rigorous as those on attendance.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection covered only the provision on the two sites where students are taught by the full-time staff of the unit.
- Inspectors observed seven lessons, all of which were joint observations with a senior leader. They also made a number of short visits to classrooms and other activities before school and during breaks. They observed feedback to staff by senior leaders following lesson observations.
- Discussions were held with students and a recent survey of students' views considered. There was a telephone discussion with the Chair of the Management Committee. Discussions took place with a number of senior managers, including the headteacher, the new deputy headteacher and the senior leader in charge of teaching.
- There were no recorded submissions to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors took account of the unit's own exit surveys of parents and carers at the end of the last academic year. Returns from 20 staff were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own data on students' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sheila Nolan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This large pupil referral unit is a diverse service providing for a wide range of categories of need. Although groups include those Year 11 students new to the country, many of whom are at the early stages of learning English and students from Years 10 and 11 who follow vocational and GCSE courses, these groups were not part of this inspection as they attend out-sourced provision.
- Provision for two groups of Years 10 and 11 students whose disaffection with mainstream schooling has led them to attend and/or behave poorly and who wish to pursue a more vocational style of curriculum was the focus of this inspection. Students include those who are vulnerable and have difficult histories as well as those who have been unable to cope, for whatever reason, in mainstream education.
- Of the on-site students, only one has a statement of special educational needs but all others are designated as at school action plus. Currently, a quarter of the students are eligible for free school meals. The unit has not been in receipt of the pupil premium. The roll and make-up of the population of the unit fluctuate because of the transient nature of the students.
- The cohort reflects the local authority area with a wide mix of cultures and traditions.
- The current headteacher has been in post for four months and the deputy headteacher since the start of the academic year.
- There has been a recent review and restructuring of the unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the currently good teaching so that there is much that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all subjects regularly support the development of the students' literacy and numeracy skills
 - developing the way teachers keep records of daily learning in order to capture small steps in learning
 - making updated reading ages readily available to staff so that they always focus on the development of the students' vocabulary through a better use of key words
 - insisting that teachers' presentation of work on boards always models the best practice in presentation skills.
- Work even more closely with external agencies, families and students to further improve attendance and punctuality by:
 - strengthening checking and recording of punctuality to both lessons and to school
 - reviewing how breaks and lunchtimes are organised
 - making full use of the new planned family support service.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' times of starting at the unit and their academic standards vary significantly in any year. Generally, they begin with basic skills that are much lower than that expected of their age group. This is mostly because of previously disrupted schooling.
- Most students make good progress and achieve well with some attaining close to average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. All but a very few gain at least entry level qualifications. Those who are able to do so also study for other worthwhile forms of recognised accreditation.
- The unit is very successful in helping students to develop, in particular their literacy skills, but also their numeracy skills. Reading and writing improve markedly because students are carefully guided to success and engage increasingly well in learning in lessons.
- For some students the improvement in literacy is as much as the equivalent of two years after two terms at the unit, and up to two years in numeracy over an academic year.
- Students' progress is tracked individually so that teaching staff are aware of where intervention is needed. However, although staff use initial reading ages to plan work for students, these are rarely explicitly revisited to demonstrate just how well students have developed.
- The longer the students attend the unit, the faster their progress becomes. For many, their achievements provide a secure pathway into further education and training, often breaking cycles of disaffection and failure.
- Students make good progress in individual lessons. They regularly fill in gaps in earlier learning and gradually build up new concepts and understanding. Most take pride in their work and begin to develop their handwriting skills alongside their other practical skills, including life skills such as preparing meals or making products in their weekly work placements.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is regularly good and is demonstrated by the at least good progress that the students make over their time in the unit. Students say they really are beginning to 'learn the harder stuff' and are pleased with the help staff give them during and outside of lessons.
- Most teaching is lively and energetic and manages to engage well previously disaffected students. Behaviour is well managed and working relationships are respectful and considerate.
- The teaching of literacy has many outstanding features but although teachers know and use initial reading ages to plan work, at whole-school level further checks on reading ages are not collated or used consistently in tracking students' progress. Although many staff plan to enhance numeracy and literacy across the range of subjects, there are still missed opportunities throughout the day to bolster students' skills. Some teaching does not always model the best practice in presenting work, for example key words are not always highlighted enough to support the long-term recall of vocabulary.

- Support staff are generally very well deployed in lessons and contribute much to the students' progress. Their involvement in the many practical activities encourages the students' engagement and perseverance when tasks become difficult. This was clearly seen in a mathematics lesson where a skittles competition was skilfully used to provide information for two-way statistical tables. A student, frustrated at not being able to score, was discreetly prompted to treat the situation with good humour and persevere until successful. The high level of adult support in classrooms means students feel very secure and are able to be themselves and admit to needing help.
- Lesson planning is detailed and usually thorough with work regularly matched to the individual needs of the students. The small numbers in each group allow staff to focus carefully on previous gaps in learning.
- Staff check students' learning better than previously. In a very successful English lesson, because of the well-considered build-up of activities, the students were able to evaluate each other's work against the planned learning targets. Marking is mostly regular and helpful, guiding students on how to improve as well as rewarding them for good effort.
- Teachers do keep records of students' attainment at regular points but do not always keep daily records of progress to underpin future lesson planning.
- Teaching promotes the students' personal development well through carefully orchestrated programmes that strive to encourage not only their social and moral development but also their spiritual and cultural awareness. The planned link to promote personal development through the breakfast club resulting in students discussing the pros and cons of being a celebrity, reading a newspaper article, and clarifying their ideas of role models.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students consistently behave well in lessons and around the school site. Those who previously had behavioural problems manage themselves well because of the high levels of support and attention provided when they join the unit.
- They are generally courteous and polite, even offering visitors a share of their fruit sundaes which some had made in their first ever food technology lesson. There is a very positive, calm ethos within the unit with students understanding the importance of seizing this opportunity to make up for previous negative experiences.
- Students feel very safe and secure within the unit and particularly well shielded from the pressures outside of school. They understand what constitutes the various forms of bullying and racist incidents. They are confident that if anything occurs, adults are there to support them. No racist incidents have been recorded and students from the many different heritages that make up the unit get on well together. They understand how to keep safe outside of the school day.
- Fixed-term exclusions fell to almost zero in the summer term last year. Increasingly, the students enjoy coming to school, seeing it as worthwhile, particularly their vocational placements. They regain a sense of pride and self-confidence through their success both in school and in the work place.
- Most students make vast strides in improving their attendance. Nevertheless, their overall attendance is too low, despite the very best efforts of the staff who are planning how to make an even greater difference to the persistent non-attendeers.

- The views of parents and carers as recorded in the last exit survey reveal that the overwhelming majority are very satisfied with the progress the students make in managing their behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- Despite a period of some uncertainty occasioned by the recent restructuring review, the unit has overcome staffing difficulties to sustain the good practice seen at the last inspection. The current headteacher, together with the new senior team, has made a positive difference to the success and direction of the unit. Self-evaluation is rigorous and the monitoring of staff performance is robust. Training needs are closely aligned with the issues arising from the evaluation of teaching, as seen in individual lessons.
- An overhaul of the curriculum is ensuring that students have a wider range of accreditation options to suit the needs of all groups. The impact is seen in the good engagement of the students with their programmes of study and with their work placements. Critically, the gains in literacy and numeracy are doing much to prepare the students for their next steps in education or training.
- All staff regularly search for ways to ensure equality of opportunity for their already disadvantaged charges. The unit tackles any discrimination immediately be it within or outside of the education programme. Staff are very successful at fostering good relationships between different minority ethnic groups.
- The leadership and management of teaching are a strength of the unit and are reflected in the consistency in the quality of the teaching observed. Staff are eager to know how to improve.
- A notable feature of the unit is its very strong partnerships with local schools and other external agencies. It works tirelessly to find the best pathway for the students so that they can achieve. In this it is helped by a strong management committee which includes a number of other local headteachers. This encourages not only mutual support and exchange of staff but also ensures genuine challenge to the unit on its choice of options for the young people in its care.
- The local authority has provided good support for the unit through its behaviour and attendance partnership, through help with referral routes and pathways to education, and through the school improvement service.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- is provided by a strong management committee that is able successfully to support but also to challenge the unit to account for its work. It has a clear understanding of the strengths of the unit and its future development needs. Staff bring detailed and thorough reports to the well-informed committee who are able to question leaders and managers robustly on the information provided
- contributes well to the planning for and securing of the future direction of the unit. This is a particularly strong feature as a number of local headteachers are management committee members and have a good understanding of the area's needs.

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 pupil's 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 pupil's 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	134919
Local authority	London Borough of Newham
Inspection number	402653

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	n/a
Headteacher	Jackie Hewison
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 September 2009
Telephone number	020 8430 2900
Fax number	020 8430 2381
Email address	NewDirections@newham.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 123 4234, 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 information 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'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

