

# Thurrock Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114702
<b>Local Authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	382269
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Mitcheson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Boyles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Millard (interim executive headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10-11 March 2010
<b>School address</b>	The Culver Centre Daiglen Drive Essex RM15 5RR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 853781
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<b>Age group</b>	5-16
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. He observed five lessons and five teachers during two learning walks carried out jointly with senior leaders. He held meetings with senior leaders, the Chair of the Management Board, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. He looked in detail at the progress made by the school in addressing the following areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.

- Improve the learning and progress of primary pupils by strengthening teaching and assessment, providing a broad and balanced curriculum matched to pupils' abilities and the requirements in their statements of SEN and ensuring they receive their entitlement to a full-time education.
- Improve attendance for the majority of pupils so that they spend more time in learning.
- Improve leadership and management by establishing clear roles and lines of responsibility, ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of provision and outcomes are rigorous and used well to plan improvements, and developing strong partnerships which will aid pupils' quick return to school.

## Information about the school

Thurrock Pupil Referral Unit was inspected in March 2010 and was placed in special measures. Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the unit on three other occasions prior to this inspection to monitor its progress. Since the previous inspection, a number of significant changes to the unit have taken place as part of the local authority's strategy for inclusion. Key Stage 1 and 2 provision has been relocated to the Phoenix centre. Key Stage 3 and 4 provision remains at the Culver centre. Pupils receiving home tuition, including those with specific medical needs who were based at a third site, have relocated to the Culver centre this year. The headteacher of the Culver centre retired in August 2011 and was replaced by an interim executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. A new, permanent assistant headteacher has led the Phoenix centre since January 2011.

The unit provides education for primary and secondary aged pupils that have been permanently excluded from schools or whose families have recently moved to the area. Pupils join and leave the unit at different times throughout the year. The vast majority are White British. All pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and a large proportion of them have a statement of special educational needs. Seven pupils are looked after by the local authority.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Significant progress has been made in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection and the school now provides pupils with a satisfactory education. Clearer strategic leadership provided by the local authority has enabled senior leaders on both sites to instigate a range of improvements to strengthen provision, increase the time pupils spend in learning and provide them with a safe, caring and supportive environment. Currently, senior leaders are demonstrating good capacity to drive further improvements. However, until permanent appointments are made to build upon and sustain these improvements, capacity to improve further remains satisfactory.

Good leadership and management at the Phoenix centre has provided much needed stability and vision to drive improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment, and ensure that the individual needs of pupils are fully met. Consequently, the number of pupils' reintegrated back into mainstream and special schools has risen. The combination of pupils' low attainment and very challenging behaviours on entry to the unit is addressed through intensive care and support for them and their families. Regular assessments provide teachers with a clear picture of how well pupils are progressing. Improved teaching, often on a one-to-one basis enables them to make satisfactory progress and meet the expectations of them in national tests at the end of Year 6.

At the Culver centre, increased curriculum time and improved procedures to monitor the quality of teaching are enabling pupils to progress satisfactorily. Expectations of pupils are higher; a new school uniform has been introduced, behaviour is satisfactory because it is managed more consistently, and pupils say that it is a safe, healthy and enjoyable place to be. Overall attendance remains low. Improved monitoring procedures are helping to increase the attendance of pupils who regularly visit the Culver centre for lessons. However, procedures take too long to apply to ensure a swift return to school and are having little impact on reducing the ingrained, persistent absence of a small minority of pupils taught off-site. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community by fund-raising for local charities and welcoming local people into the unit. Fundraising for a pupil in the Gambia makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which is satisfactory.

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Lesson observations carried out jointly with senior leaders confirmed their views that the quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. It ranges from outstanding to inadequate. Decisive action has been taken to eradicate these inadequacies but some remain. Relationships are very strong and pupils understand what is expected of them. Learning is less effective when staff teach the same content to all the class rather than work alongside individual pupils or small groups to help them succeed.

A satisfactory curriculum includes regular English, mathematics and science lessons and a small but increasing range of enrichment activities to capture and retain pupils' interest in school. Innovative planning and good partnerships with other providers ensure that the vast majority of pupils receive 25 hours of tuition weekly, mostly a blend of GCSE and vocational qualifications taught at the centre or off-site. The majority of pupils have an experience of work which makes a satisfactory contribution to their future economic well-being. The good care, guidance and support provided at the centre does not reach all pupils on extended work placements or learners at off-site venues because procedures to regularly check their attendance, progress and well-being are not yet routine or systematic.

In a short space of time, senior leaders have gained a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The amalgamation of services onto the Culver centre site has led to an increase in staff absence and a reliance on temporary staff. Senior leaders are working with the local authority to resolve these issues and relocate Key Stage 1 and 2 provision onto a suitable site, but no clear timescales for this are set. The management board makes a satisfactory contribution towards improving the unit and has strengthened its wider role with other schools in the area. They ensure that all statutory duties, including safeguarding, are met and satisfactory value for money is achieved. The unit is fully inclusive; it welcomes all pupils regardless of their backgrounds and strives to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to access a broad curriculum. Good engagement with parents as pupils arrive at the unit ensures that they all receive the personalised care and support they need to re-engage in learning.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve overall attendance throughout the unit so that by the end of 2012 it is much closer to the national average by:
  - setting realistic targets and milestones for raising attendance and holding middle managers with responsibility for monitoring it fully accountable for meeting them
  - streamlining monitoring procedures so that regular absence is identified early and actions to address it are instigated within one week to facilitate a swift return to school
  - instilling a dogged, determined approach to pursuing each incident of

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- prolonged absence and ensure that parents and carers are made fully aware of the consequences of poor attendance
  - securing further support from the local authority and other partner agencies to target the persistent absence of a minority of pupils who rarely attend.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all key stages by:
    - accelerating actions currently being taken to eradicate inadequate teaching so that all teaching is satisfactory or better by the end of Summer 2012
    - embedding new arrangements for monitoring lessons and targeting further support and challenge towards those who need it most
    - sharing best practice to model the most effective ways of teaching individuals and small groups of pupils.
  - Build on the significant improvements made to the unit over the past year by clarifying the long-term strategic plans for inclusion in the local authority, including the future relocation of the Phoenix centre to accommodation that is fit for purpose and securing the permanent leadership of the Culver centre.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils join the unit having missed significant amounts of schooling. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are weak. Attainment is low in all key stages but evidence shows that learning and progress are improving. Procedures to monitor progress are well established at the Phoenix centre and aid pupils' satisfactory learning and progress. In the Culver centre, assessment data is collected regularly but detailed analysis and use of this information to accelerate pupils' progress is under-developed. In lessons, pupils make good progress in English because the teacher is skilful at interacting with individual pupils to promote their speaking and listening, and making lessons fun and enjoyable. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory. The use of the interactive whiteboard to illustrate how to calculate interior angles helped to extend pupils' learning.

Behaviour is generally satisfactory. The number of pupils excluded from the unit has fallen over the past two years. In the Phoenix centre, teachers show great tolerance and understanding when dealing with episodes of extreme behaviour displayed by a small minority of pupils. The unit promotes healthy lifestyles by providing regular physical education, off-site sports activities such as gymnastics and swimming, and through regular opportunities for pupils to cook food and learn about nutrition. Success is celebrated through noticeboards and assemblies, and pupils respond positively to the rewards for good behaviour and attendance.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Closer monitoring of lessons has led to some improvements to the quality of teaching. The most effective teachers plan tasks matched to the needs of individual pupils. They facilitate group work well and are adept at maintaining pupils’ attention and encouraging them to complete their work. Despite additional training and support for all staff, some inconsistencies remain. For example, progress slows in information and communication technology and in preparation for working life because teachers are not well versed in working alongside pupils to prompt and encourage them to think for themselves and they tend to spoon-feed knowledge to pupils. Improved assessment procedures on entry to the unit and home visits by the family inclusion officer provide an accurate overview of pupils’ prior learning and their personal needs so that a personalised curriculum can be designed for them.

Partnerships fostered with other local colleges and commercial providers enable most pupils to pursue a blend of GCSE and vocational awards matched to their ability and interests. Additional studies, such as the Prince’s Trust award, help to promote their self-esteem and improve their social skills. This is having a significant impact on maintaining the engagement and regular attendance of the majority of pupils, but has little impact on those who choose not to attend. Good advice and guidance provided by the Connexions service and other local agencies ensures that pupils are suitably prepared for the future. Last year, most Year 11 pupils progressed into further education or training. Well-established partnerships with health promotion agencies provide effective advice to those susceptible to the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

<sup>1</sup> 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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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, in conjunction with the local authority, have given the unit a new impetus and clearer vision for the future. They recognise that further actions are needed to ensure that all pupils benefit from the recent improvements made, and that regular attendance remains its top priority. In the Culver centre, other priorities have absorbed senior and middle leaders' time, so they have not been fully focused on raising and maintaining the regular attendance of all pupils. Safeguarding is satisfactory but the poor attendance of some pupils compromises the school's ability to monitor their total safety and well-being.

Self-evaluation is largely accurate and suitable plans are in place to deliver further improvements. Reintegration rates in both centres have improved. The recent promotion of an experienced teacher provides additional capacity for further improvement in the Phoenix centre. Plans are in place to promote community cohesion but they have not been evaluated to gauge their impact.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for an inspection conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



8 December 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Thurrock Pupil Referral Unit, Thurrock, RM15 5RR**

When I recently visited your school I found that it no longer requires special measures because it is providing you with a satisfactory education. Thank you for engaging with me around school and in particular the two pupils who met with me, you represented your school well. Throughout the inspection, you behaved yourselves and made me feel welcome.

This was the fourth time I have visited the unit. I found that further improvements have been made and currently most of you are making satisfactory progress. I found that you are kept safe, lead healthy lifestyles and receive good care and support to help you achieve and enjoy school. Your attendance is low but is improving. However, the small minority of you that are persistently absent are unable to benefit from the improvements being made by your teachers.

Your senior teachers have worked hard to drive improvements but there is still some way to go, so I have asked them to make the following improvements.

- Improve attendance throughout the unit so that it is much closer to the national average by the end of 2012.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in all key stages by making all teaching satisfactory or better and asking the best teachers to help others.
- Share plans to relocate the Phoenix centre and appoint permanent leaders of the Culver centre.

This is an exciting time as your school joins together with other pupils from the Jack Lobley centre. You can help your senior teachers by sharing your views with them about the improvements you would like to see.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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