



New Directions Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134919
Local Authority Newham
Inspection number 294219
Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Rathbone Education Centre
School category	Pupil referral unit		190 Barking Road, Canning Town
Age range of pupils	14–16		London E16 4DD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8430 2900
Number on roll (school)	217	Fax number	020 8430 2381
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Mr Kevin Brailey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
14–16	18–19 September 2006	294219

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

New Directions is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which offers a variety of educational programmes and alternative provision to mainstream school. Development has been based upon well established partnership work with a range of providers. There are three programmes that address the different needs of students:

- Newham Late Admissions Programme (NewLap) for Year 11 students who are new to the country and the UK education system. Eighty percent do not speak English as a first language and thirty percent have no functional spoken English at all.
- New Steps Programme for Year 11 students with a record of poor attendance, behaviour and general disaffection. This programme is commissioned from Newham College of Further Education (NCFE). The majority of students have low levels of literacy on entry.
- Turnaround and L2S Programmes designed for Year 10 and Year 11 students who include school refusers, non-attenders and excluded students. The majority have low levels of literacy on entry.

The PRU operates across 16 locations. There are roughly twice as many boys as girls. Students come from a broad socio-economic background and there are significant groups of pupils from the Asian community and the Black British, African and Caribbean communities. Around 75% of students have some level of learning difficulties and 15% of these have statements of special educational needs. There has been no previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

New Directions Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) meets the different needs of a wide range of students and is effectively planning to improve its provision and increase the achievement of all its students. The PRU judged its current effectiveness as satisfactory and the inspectors agree. The principal has a clear vision for improvement and an understanding of the importance of Every Child Matters. Leadership and management are of a good quality and the recently restructured senior management team have clear responsibilities and work well together. All staff are committed to supporting students' welfare and personal development. Planning clearly illustrates the link between improved provision and increases in student achievement and inspectors agree with the outcomes of the PRU's overall self-evaluation. The PRU is aware of its weaknesses that include, insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning and underdeveloped curriculum planning and assessment procedures. These underdeveloped areas are preventing student achievement being better than satisfactory. The PRU clearly demonstrates it has a good capacity to improve. Currently the PRU provides satisfactory value for money.

Students make satisfactory and sometimes better progress as a result of the quality of teaching, support and guidance they receive. Students enjoy their learning and many improve their attendance and behaviour as well as making gains in their personal development and communication and language skills. Students are well prepared for their next stage in learning or employment. The curriculum across the different programmes meets the needs and interests of all students. Further education colleges and specialist providers offer a range of opportunities that are delivered by knowledgeable tutors. Curriculum planning in the core subjects is not sufficiently developed. The provision for students' care, guidance and support is good and one parent wrote, 'I get phone calls when things have gone well and I see a lot of improvement in my daughter'. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all that the PRU does and are grateful for the support and communication they receive. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good and students get on very well together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Systematically monitor the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that the best practice is extended across the various programmes.
- Establish ongoing assessment and monitoring procedures to ensure that students' progress is tracked and they are clear about how to improve.
- Develop schemes of work in the core subjects which ensure that all teachers across all programmes are able to plan lessons to meet students' learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although overall standards in Year 11 are below the national average, student progress and achievement is satisfactory. Some groups of students make good progress: for example, those attending local colleges. In these groups some students can reach levels that are in line with their mainstream peers as they gain GCSE grades as high as B and C in mathematics, English and science. Other students for whom English is a second language make good progress in literacy skills where courses are especially planned to enable them to gain competence and confidence in English and make a successful transition to the main sixth form courses. Last year one past student was successful in embarking on a university course. Other students, with sufficient aptitude, progress to A level courses.

The majority of students arrive with academic standards that are well below those expected nationally as a result of the various interruptions to their learning and their personal difficulties. Nevertheless their achievement is satisfactory as they gain ground in literacy and numeracy skills, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Their achievement could be improved if the curriculum planning and assessment of their progress gave them clearer guidance on how to improve during the next stage of their learning. Many students improve their attendance and behaviour significantly and this enables them to make better progress in their studies. Recent development planning clearly demonstrates that the PRU is aware of how to improve provision in order to boost students' achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The PRU evaluates the personal development and well-being of its students as good, and inspectors agree. There is a clear understanding of the Every Child Matters agenda and of what is needed to further improve opportunities for students to achieve in these areas. Students understand the importance of leading healthier life styles and adopting safe practices. They consistently demonstrate their understanding of health and safety issues in practical, work-related sessions. Students feel safe and secure in their learning, but there are few opportunities for them to seize initiatives for themselves. Attendance is variable across the different groups and although overall attendance figures are below national expectations, when considering pre-admission and early admission data, many students make excellent improvement in their attendance and punctuality. One student remarked, 'I sometimes really enjoy coming here and my attendance has improved'. Social development is good and students are encouraged to work together and to respect one another. Behaviour is satisfactory overall with many examples of good behaviour, particularly in practical working groups. Those students with more severe behaviour and social difficulties struggle to maintain their improved behaviour over the course of the day. Students have a good sense of community and through their attendance at college and at the various external

providers, gain confidence and learn skills that will be of benefit when they enter the world of work. Personal development in terms of spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. One student said, 'People from all over the world are friendly and help and support each other'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with examples that are good and excellent across the different providers. The examples of really good practice ensure that students are motivated with challenging activities that have meaning for them and that prepare them for their next stage of learning or employment. There is a strong emphasis on reward and celebration in lessons where learning is made fun and it is made very clear to students how they may improve. The different learning needs of students are carefully considered and supported. Teaching and learning is less effective in core subjects for those students not attending the colleges. This is because the monitoring of progress and individual target setting, showing steps for improvement, is inconsistent. The PRU is aware that lesson monitoring and opportunities to share the best practice require further development and there are clear plans to rectify this. Relationships across all providers are excellent, and staff ensure that students are confident and happy in their learning. Humour is used to great effect: one student remarked, 'I never liked school before, it's OK here, and I learn a lot'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and it focuses clearly on the needs of the students through its emphasis on English, mathematics, ICT and PSHCE. The curriculum is covered by a wide range of providers including the further education colleges and generally meets the needs of the different groups of students. However, comprehensive schemes of work for core subjects are not in place. This makes it difficult for some providers to plan for students' needs and progress over time, particularly for those students whose attendance is erratic and whose social, behaviour and emotional difficulties interfere with their learning. Most students are able to benefit from a wide range of additional areas of learning provided by the colleges and external providers. These include nationally accredited courses in mechanics, engineering, music technology, arts and media studies, design and construction and applied communications. The variety and relevance of subjects is effective in motivating students to achieve. The PSHCE courses help to ensure that students understand the importance of sex education and drugs awareness, as well as learning to build relationships which promote healthy and safe lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The PRU evaluates the personal development and well-being of its students as good, and inspectors agree. Provision is caring, with a good multi-agency approach to providing for the students' personal and emotional development. Students feel that they are well supported and one parent stated that his daughter 'flew' after being admitted to the PRU and after having had a difficult time at her previous school. Students benefit from clear careers advice and have increasing opportunities to participate in work experience programmes. There are appropriate systems and procedures to minimise risk and to ensure the students' well-being. Child protection procedures are well established and clearly understood by staff. Academic guidance varies across the different programmes and is satisfactory overall.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The PRU judges leadership and management to be good and inspectors agree. There is clear evidence of effective strategic leadership and management. Accurate self-evaluation procedures and development planning demonstrate that the PRU knows itself well and how it can improve. Effective coordination across the wide range of vocational and academic providers ensures that the needs of all students are met. The principal is ably supported by his restructured senior management team. There are appropriate initiatives and developments within the improvement plan and these are well known to the recently established steering group, which includes local headteachers and representatives of the local authority and external support agencies. This group provides effective support and monitoring of the quality of provision and student welfare and achievement. Resources are well managed and the personal strengths of all staff are maximised in order to best support students' interests, welfare and achievement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for 'putting up with us' while we were visiting you at New Directions and especially to those students who we spoke to. Overall, we thought you have good opportunities to improve your learning and that New Directions manages to meet your various needs through a wide range of activities. We particularly liked the fact that:

- All staff care and support you very well.
- You are friendly and get on very well with everybody. Many of you improve your attendance and behaviour.
- You are happy in your lessons and enjoy making personal progress.
- You are learning skills that will help you in further education and training or when you go into employment.
- Your parents and carers really appreciate what New Directions does for you.
- The principal and all the staff do their best to make sure you are happy and have everything you need to succeed. They listen to you and have a clear idea how to improve your opportunities and personal achievement.

New Directions knows what it needs to do to improve and this includes:

- Looking at the teaching across all the groups and ensuring that the good practice is shared across all activities.
- Assessing and recording your progress to ensure that you are clear about how to improve.
- Improve planning in the core subjects to ensure it supports the best teaching and your progress and achievement.

We really enjoyed our visit. Keep up the good work and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

M.J. Smith (lead inspector)