

# 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>	338428
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Lemon

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

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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>	67
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Glasby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Durston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	The Culver Centre Daiglen Drive Essex
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 853 781
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 853267
<b>Email address</b>	rdurston@thurrock.gov.uk

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

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at teaching and learning. Eight lessons taught by eight different teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the pupil referral unit's work, and looked at a range of policies, reports, analyses and 12 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the pupil referral unit's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the pupil referral unit is raising the achievement of pupils
- whether the pupil referral unit successfully promotes good behaviour and attendance
- how effectively lessons are planned and taught
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels.

## Information about the school

Thurrock Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provides education and support for primary and secondary school pupils. There are 15 pupils of primary age and 52 secondary-aged pupils on roll. These pupils have either been permanently excluded from their schools or are without a school place because their families have recently arrived in the area. Most have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A few have additional difficulties such as mental health problems or autistic spectrum disorder. Fourteen pupils have a statement of special educational needs, the majority of whom are primary-aged pupils. In addition, four pupils are undergoing assessment for a statement of special educational needs. The very large majority are White British.

The leader of the primary department is on leave and the department is being managed temporarily by the special educational needs co-ordinator from the local authority's pupil support service. Until very recently, the PRU's primary and secondary departments shared a site. A month ago, the local authority closed the primary department's building for health and safety reasons. The primary pupils are currently split temporarily into three groups, taught at separate sites. One is next to the secondary department; two are adjacent to primary schools, one is a few miles away in Little Thurrock, and the other is in Stanford Le Hope about six miles away.

**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?**

**4**

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

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Since the last inspection, leaders have lacked a clear vision and determination to secure improvement. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress that they should during their time at Thurrock PRU. While its aim is to re-integrate pupils into mainstream school, few are returning because the support structures to aid this are not effective. The PRU has suffered difficulty in recruiting well-qualified and experienced staff. The effectiveness of leadership has gone through peaks and troughs due to frequent changes of staffing. As a result, improvement has been erratic. Leaders are not currently demonstrating the strengths and qualities needed to move the PRU forward decisively. Self-evaluation is not sharply focused and does not contribute systematically to planning nor drive developments. This leaves the PRU with very limited capacity to sustain improvement.

Achievement and enjoyment are inadequate because the outcomes for primary pupils are unsatisfactory and attendance across the whole of the PRU is poor. Primary pupils are not learning effectively or making enough progress in lessons. The PRU's data indicate that their progress over time has been too slow. Many primary pupils spend too long in the PRU before returning to school. Those with a statement of special educational needs are not having their learning difficulties catered for effectively in lessons. The progress of secondary pupils is often good, and shows in the increasing number passing GCSE examinations. The poor attendance of a minority means that they make inadequate progress and this has an adverse effect on overall achievement by the end of Key Stage 4.

Teaching and assessment are inadequate, mainly because primary lessons are not planned and taught well. In the secondary department teaching is satisfactory. The primary department's move to three separate sites has not been managed effectively, and has had a negative impact on the curriculum and classroom resources. Its curriculum is based on short-term planning and is not adapted to meet pupils' needs. The total amount of teaching time for primary pupils is far too little. Staff and pupils have no easy access to computers. Secondary pupils have more time for learning and their work is balanced satisfactorily between interest, enjoyment and relevance to their future needs, especially in the offer of GCSE courses at Key Stage 4.

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Throughout the PRU, pupils are supported satisfactorily in their emotional and social development. They are helped to improve their behaviour and attendance. Procedures to keep them safe are satisfactory.

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

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

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**4**

As primary pupils are offered too few hours of education, sometimes less than half of that to which they are entitled, their opportunity to make progress is greatly reduced. While pupils are encouraged and supported in lessons, learning, especially in literacy and numeracy, is too slow. Secondary pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time and in lessons because teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum has been adapted appropriately to meet the needs of different groups. For those who attend regularly in Years 10 and 11, progress is good. The headteacher has focused her attention on the secondary department, and has succeeded in raising expectations and increasing the number of pupils passing GCSE examinations, including a few who gain higher grade passes. As a result, standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly average.

The good quality of support provided by the primary and secondary staff and their good relationships with pupils mean they stay safe and learn to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Staff involve pupils in the life of the PRU and in decisions that affect them. Behaviour improves as a result of the support pupils receive; it is generally satisfactory and in Key Stage 4 it is often good and promotes effective learning. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. While attendance is improving it is still too low. However, the majority of pupils are regular in their attendance and are soundly prepared with the skills, personal qualities and work-related experiences they need for the future.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
<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?

Lessons in the primary department are not planned and taught effectively to promote learning. Pupils are supported sensitively which helps them to co-operate and behave satisfactorily. However, assessment information is not used to plan work that challenges them. Insufficient consideration is given to how lessons will start and finish in order to engage pupils' interest and allow them to evaluate their learning. Leaders have identified the key qualities of teaching they wish to see in lessons. However, these are not embedded fully right across the PRU. Teaching and assessment in the secondary department are satisfactory. The teaching of GCSE subjects is good as a result of the subject expertise and skills of the staff. In Years 10 and 11, pupils engage well in learning, making good efforts and working independently.

The curriculum in the primary department includes literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education and some variety in work and activities. However, it does not achieve sufficient breadth because of the lack of time and resources. Pupils' work and activities are not planned so that learning takes place systematically. In the secondary department, pupils' work and activities reflect satisfactorily a mainstream

<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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curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 with emphasis on basic skills, vocational experiences and work-related learning.

Staff and pupils across the PRU strike up good relationships. This helps pupils to settle and gain self-confidence. Staff deal sensitively with pupils' feelings, manage their behaviour skilfully and are a source of continuous encouragement and guidance. Sound links with agencies make available expert and specialist support for pupils and their families. The PRU's sustained efforts with pupils and their parents have a positive impact on reducing absences. However, a structure of support between the PRU and schools for assisting pupils to reintegrate into mainstream school is underdeveloped with the result that too few pupils succeed in returning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The overall leadership of the PRU is not clear and, in particular, the lack of clarity over accountability for the primary department has impeded improvement. Leaders have not ensured that pupils' equality of opportunity is protected. While assuring the health and safety of primary pupils precipitated the use of alternative temporary sites, the move was not managed so that an adequate standard of education was maintained.

Several elements of strong management are missing across the PRU. A reasonably broad range of monitoring and evaluation activities includes teaching and learning, but does not serve to drive improvement strongly enough. Priorities for improvement are neither crystal clear nor set out in systematic plans for development. While the desired qualities in teaching are explicit, there is insufficient ambition and drive to embed them. The management committee does not provide sufficient challenge and support for the PRU. While it is strengthening its role, for example in having a stronger say over the PRU's budget, the impact of its work has yet to be felt.

A variety of partnerships assists in broadening the secondary curriculum, but has minimal impact on returning pupils to schools. The headteacher shares a clear vision with senior staff, although this has not been spread effectively at other levels. The PRU has a sound knowledge of the area it serves, which it uses satisfactorily to steer its work with parents and in its partnerships. This helps the PRU to promote community cohesion to a satisfactory extent. The roles of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils are clearly defined and staff are appropriately trained. Safeguarding arrangements are monitored satisfactorily with the result that some policies and procedures which were out of date

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have been rewritten.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<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>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</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>4</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The few parents who responded to the questionnaire provided mixed views of the PRU's effectiveness. Just over a half of those who responded say their child enjoys school and believe the PRU is well led and managed. The same proportion reports that they are kept well informed and are helped to support their child at home. Most believe teaching is good and that their child's behaviour is managed effectively. However, more feel their child is not making enough progress and many of these are the parents of primary pupils. Inspection findings support this concern.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thurrock Pupil Referral Unit 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 inspector received 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	17	6	50	1	8	3	25
The school keeps my child safe	4	33	2	17	3	25	3	25
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	25	4	33	4	33	1	8
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	33	1	8	3	25	4	33
The teaching is good at this school	3	25	4	33	3	25	2	17
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	25	4	33	2	17	3	25
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	8	4	33	5	42	2	17
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)	3	25	1	8	4	33	3	25
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	25	3	25	3	25	3	25
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	33	3	25	1	8	4	33
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	33	1	8	4	33	3	25
The school is led and managed effectively	4	33	3	25	2	17	3	25
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	42	2	17	2	17	3	25

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"><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 pupil's 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.**



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thurrock Pupil Referral Unit, Essex, RM15 5RR

Thank you for your welcome and friendliness during my visit to your school. You may know I was visiting to judge how effective the school is in providing you with an education and preparing you for the future. Your school is effective in several ways:

- you all enjoy much of what your school offers and are keen to do well
- most of you are prepared to work hard and get on well with staff, which is helping you to behave appropriately and contribute positively in school
- staff are concerned to support you and help prepare you, in every way they can, for leaving school or for moving to a new school
- pupils in Years 10 and 11 who attend every day make good progress and achieve good results in GCSE examinations.

There are several ways in which your school could be more effective and I have judged that it needs 'special measures' to help it improve quickly. I have asked the headteacher and the management committee to:

- make sure primary pupils achieve more as their progress is unsatisfactory
- strengthen teaching, assessment and the curriculum in the primary department
- make sure primary pupils spend more time in school than they do at present
- work to improve attendance and increase the opportunities for you to return to mainstream schools
- strengthen the leadership and management of your school in order to do these things.

Inspectors will visit the school again to check the progress it is making. You can all help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and coming to school as often as you can.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector

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