

New River College Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Dowrey Street, Islington, London N1 0HY

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

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 teaching is almost always good and occasionally outstanding. As a result of robust monitoring by senior staff, standards of teaching have consistently improved.
- The rates of pupils' progress have steadily improved, especially in literacy and numeracy. This is of significant benefit in promoting the pupils' successful return to mainstream schools.
- Teachers know their pupils well and are skilled in helping them overcome the barriers to their learning caused by their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are well cared for. Parents confirm that they feel secure and happy at school.
- The staff manage behaviour well; pupils generally respond positively and make rapid progress, when they join the school, in taking responsibility for their own conduct. There are good relationships between adults and children and pupils soon start to enjoy school. Attendance is above average for the type of school.
- The executive headteacher and head of centre lead the school effectively. Senior staff have rigorously monitored and improved on the standard of teaching. Leaders are challenged consistently by the knowledgeable and experienced management committee to provide the best for the pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable outstanding achievement.
- Teachers sometimes do not record each small step in learning which pupils make. As a result, they do not plan each pupil's next activity with sufficient focus to ensure they always make the best progress possible.
- On occasion, pupils are not made aware clearly enough, of how to improve their work and how to reach their learning targets.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 6 lessons, all of which were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with teachers, support workers, senior staff, members of the management committee and representatives of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) to be counted. The school's regular surveys of parental opinion were taken into account as well as the 16 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including self-review documents, development planning and management committee minutes. Records of pupils' progress, behaviour and well-being were scrutinised as well as monitoring reports on the quality of teaching. Attendance records were checked as well as procedures relating to the safeguarding of the pupils.

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary pupil referral unit (PRU) is part of a group of four PRUs which together form primary and secondary pupil referral provision for the borough of Islington. There is an executive headteacher in charge of the whole group. The primary PRU is managed on a daily basis by the head of centre. The PRU is smaller than average.
- The executive headteacher has been in post for almost two years and the head of centre has been in post since September 2013.
- Pupils join the provision at any time during their years in primary education, either because they have been permanently excluded or are at risk of being excluded. Currently most of the pupils are dual-registered with their primary schools with the intention of returning the pupils to full-time mainstream education as soon as they are able to cope academically and socially in a mainstream classroom. On occasion, pupils leave to go to alternative provision or to schools for pupils with special educational needs.
- Four pupils are in possession of a statement of special educational needs, mainly for social, emotional and behavioural needs. Currently there are 11 boys and one girl on roll. The pupils are predominantly White British and Black Caribbean in origin. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- All the pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, because either they are entitled to free school meals and/or because they are in the care of the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of teaching further by:
 - ensuring teachers always carefully record their assessments of each individual pupil's progress to sharpen their planning for the next small steps in learning.
 - ensuring that pupils are always made clearly aware of what they need to do to improve their work and reach their individual learning targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overwhelmingly, pupils enter the provision with low levels of attainment and with substantial gaps in their education, because of their troubled relationships with previous schools. From these low starting points, the pupils make good progress, especially in basic skills. A large minority of those pupils who remain to the end of Year 6 reach levels of attainment expected from mainstream pupils and almost all pupils narrow the gaps in their attainment successfully. This progress opens the door to the pupils' eventual successful return to mainstream schools.
- Pupils in different ethnic groups, boys and girls and those with a statement of special educational needs, make equally good progress. Every pupil is currently entitled to Pupil Premium funding and this has been used appropriately to buy in specialist support for the pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties. There has been a clear, positive impact from this initiative in raising the pupils' performance as they are helped to overcome the barriers to their learning. The school is committed to ensuring the equal opportunity and well-being of each pupil. There is no discrimination.
- The pupils make good progress, in most cases, in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. The recently introduced intensive teaching of letters and sounds of letters has been very successful in raising levels of attainment, and regular reading practice in most lessons and many times during the structured daily routines have helped pupils to develop their reading proficiency and shown them the value of reading in everyday life. For example, in the whole school 'singing' assembly the pupils sit together and with adults, read and understand the words of songs which they greatly enjoy singing. In a mathematics lesson, the pupils made good progress as they combined literacy with measuring. They measured and graded the length and discussed the content of a range of different sized reading books.
- The pupils' good progress is underpinned by their rapid progress in personal development. Through skilful teaching, they gain positive attitudes to their activities. They quickly begin to develop confidence in their own ability, show curiosity and gradually extend the length of their concentration. As a result, their interest in learning is revitalised and they discover to their delight that they can and want to achieve well. The overwhelming majority of pupils thrive once back in mainstream education or in alternative placements.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved consistently, particularly so since the executive headteacher took over in 2012. This is because of a now well-established regime of rigorous and regular monitoring accompanied by high levels of focused support and mentoring for teachers joining the school. Teaching is almost always good with occasionally outstanding examples. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs, both academically to enable them to catch up with mainstream pupils and in helping them overcome their challenging behaviour and lack of confidence in their ability to learn. They have high expectations of the pupils' success. Lessons are well planned and taught enthusiastically and they proceed at a brisk pace which maintains the pupils' interest and concentration. Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide valuable support for individual pupils. They are skilled in helping pupils to stay on task and in asking questions which reinforce the pupils' understanding and challenge them to take the next step.
- Teachers are effective in teaching reading and writing skills. These skills are emphasised in almost every lesson. The pupils' communication has a high profile and teachers plan coherently across all subjects to help pupils improve their speaking and listening skills, their reading and

ability to express themselves in print. As a result, most pupils make good progress which in turn boosts their self-confidence and desire to learn.

- Teachers are effective in regularly checking pupils' understanding during lessons and in adjusting activities to take account of the pupils' levels of interest and success. This has a positive effect on learning. The teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' progress. On occasion, however, teachers do not record the small steps in progress which pupils make. This sometimes makes it harder for them to plan sharply for the needs of each individual pupil and can slow down the pace of learning. On these occasions, pupils do not always know how to make their work better or how to take the next step towards their targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school, almost always with a history of severely challenging behaviour and poor attitudes to education. They make rapid progress in developing positive attitudes. They soon begin to show interest in their activities and this has a good impact on their progress. Disruption to lessons is minimal.
- This is because of skilled behaviour management. The school has well-developed systems of rewards for good behaviour and consequences for unacceptable behaviour, which pupils understand well and appreciate. There is an emphasis throughout the day on reviewing and helping pupils to understand their own behaviour. Very regular and structured 'circle time' and personal, health and social education sessions are accompanied by structured breaks and lunchtimes where pupils are supervised and guided into tolerant and friendly relationships with adults and other pupils. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and promoted further by the high levels of adult supervision and the exemplary role models they present.
- The pupils' behaviour is generally good. Pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy their learning. The school operates as a harmonious, calm and cohesive community. When a pupil cannot cope with activities and becomes unwilling to take part or behaviour deteriorates, the high level of staffing ensures that an adult can always give sufficient personal counselling and support to pacify the pupil and to use the occasion to reinforce the right way to deal with a situation. All staff receive clear training in de-escalation techniques.
- Challenging behaviour is dealt with sympathetically and always in the best interests of the pupil. Fixed-term exclusions have decreased significantly over time. The school's decision to buy in professional support for behaviour from the local child and adolescent mental health team, as part of Pupil Premium funding, has been effective in helping reduce incidents of challenging behaviour and in supporting the pupils' well-being.
- There are very few recorded incidents of bullying or racial incidents. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep free from intimidation and who to tell if incidents should occur. The school maintains clear and effective policies to combat bullying and to ensure pupils are safe. Parents report that they feel confident in the school's care and support for their children. They are satisfied that their child enjoys school and feels secure. The pupils' above average attendance and excellent punctuality confirm this.

The leadership and management is good

- The experience and expertise of the executive headteacher have enabled him to build consistently on the strengths of the school and to develop teams of enthusiastic and

committed staff, ably led by the head of centre. There is a culture of high expectations of both staff and pupils.

- School leaders maintain a clear view of the pupils' achievement through effective recording and tracking of their progress. This has a positive impact on their achievement since intervention and further support can be quickly provided should a pupil start to do less well. It has been effective, for instance, in improving literacy standards through focused intensive phonic tuition and guided reading for individual pupils.
 - Senior staff manage the performance of teachers robustly. There are well-established monitoring procedures which are welcomed by staff because they are accompanied by tailored mentoring and coaching, often by outside professionals. These positive features have contributed significantly to the improvements in teaching, with only a few inconsistencies remaining, for instance in using assessment in a more focused way and in ensuring pupils know how to improve their work. Teachers' performance is linked appropriately to salary progression and levels of responsibility.
 - As a result of detailed monitoring of provision, leaders have a good grasp of strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is robust and accurate and this leads to clear and detailed action planning. The local authority provides strong support when requested but has full confidence in the school's direction and leadership. The management committee gives informed challenge and guidance. As a result, the school has a good capacity to maintain improvement.
 - The curriculum is well organised to promote the pupils' literacy and numeracy and to teach them important social and behavioural skills. This emphasis provides a good basis for their return to mainstream schooling. The school has developed an effective programme for physical education. The pupils learn skills and techniques in a variety of sports and games, they swim regularly and the school makes full use of the community linked staff from the local professional premier league football club. Government funding has been used appropriately to enhance the development. Pupils greatly enjoy these sessions. They learn physical skills as well as teamwork, taking turns and tolerance of others.
 - There are positive links with parents who are very satisfied with their child's education and feel particularly pleased with the degree of communication they have with the school. For instance, each parent receives a 'mini-report' each week on their child's progress, attendance and behaviour and the school is exemplary in the support it gives to parents when necessary. Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet all statutory requirements.
 - The school maintains productive partnerships with a range of health and social care professionals and with schools in the borough through liaison in placing pupils back in mainstream and in providing outreach support when requested.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee is well informed about pupils' progress, including school performance data and the performance of teachers. It effectively manages the salary arrangements for teaching and is involved in rewarding good teaching and in managing any underperformance. It maintains clear supervision of Pupil Premium funding and its impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Members self-evaluate their own effectiveness and take part in regular relevant training. They are well informed, for instance, about the safeguarding arrangements for children.
-

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	100388
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	425475

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Catherine McClen
Headteacher	Nigel Smith (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 November 2010
Telephone number	020 7527 5735
Fax number	020 7527 5027
Email address	primary@nrc.islington.sch.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 2013

