

Camden Centre for Learning

Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit

Ainsworth Way, Boundary Road, London, NW8 0SR

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

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.

- Students achieve well and make good progress. This is because they quickly catch up with the learning they have missed, with many returning to mainstream schools.
- Teaching is mainly good, with some that is outstanding. The good relationships fostered by adults encourage students to attend regularly and try hard.
- Students have good attitudes in lessons. Their behaviour is mostly good or better around the school.
- Parents and carers report that the unit's work is highly effective in helping their children re-engage with education.
- Staff have created a safe, secure place where students are nurtured and are able to thrive.
- The school's procedures for keeping students safe and secure are good. Students feel safe and valued.
- Good leadership and management have ensured that standards in teaching and learning are good and improving.
- The management committee is well informed about the work of the school so it can ask challenging questions to help it make further improvements.
- The headteacher, senior staff, teaching and non-teaching staff all have high expectations for every student to succeed. As a result, good teaching and achievement have been sustained since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Subject leaders are not fully involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support learning.
- Teachers do not always check carefully that students act on the advice they are given to improve their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 episodes of teaching. All were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with students, the Chair of the Management Committee and another member, senior leaders, a group of students and a representative from the local authority. Telephone discussions also took place with two feeder schools and four parents. The inspectors talked informally to students and staff around the school.
- There were insufficient responses to the online survey, Parent View. The inspector took into account the school's own surveys from parents and carers and 10 staff questionnaires.
- The inspector scrutinised examples of students' past and present work and looked at various documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and planning, information on students' academic progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at a range of other evidence, including displays, the school's website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Camden Centre for Learning Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit caters for students who are at risk of exclusion and those who have been permanently excluded. All students have some level of social, emotional and behavioural difficulty.
- All students are identified as having special educational needs at school action plus. A few students go through statutory assessment while in the school and receive a statement of special educational needs.
- The unit is based on two sites. At the second site, the 'Reach' programme, provides a short term behaviour and learning intervention programme to help re-engage students with their education.
- The large majority of students are boys and are of White British heritage.
- Students are a mix of dual registered (meaning that they remain on the roll of the school from where they came as well as being on the roll of this school) and solely on the roll of this school
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. However numbers vary considerably from year to year. In this school the funding supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or in the care of a local authority.
- Students are not entered early for examinations.
- The school is housed in temporary accommodation but will move to a new building in 2015.
- The school is part of the Camden Centre for Learning which consists of three specialised services: the Key Stage 3 pupil referral unit, the Key Stages 3 and 4 special school for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), and the Key Stage 4 pupil referral unit. All provide support for secondary-aged students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the services are subject to separate inspections.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring students' work is checked to make sure that they act on the advice they are given to improve their work ensuring that teachers guide teaching assistants well, so that they know exactly how to challenge and support the needs of all students they work with.
- Strengthen further leadership and management by:
 - increasing the involvement of those leaders responsible for subjects in checking the quality of teaching and learning and ensure progress for all students is consistently outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many students have had a poor start to their educational experience, with considerable periods of absence and reluctance to participate in lessons. Consequently, there are many gaps in their learning and students enter the unit with educational standards which are below those expected for their age.
- Good teaching and individual support for their emotional, social and physical well-being ensure that for all students, progress is good. Staff and students quickly build-up good relationships. This helps students feel safe and ready to start learning again.
- The most important measure of achievement is the way that the unit is highly successful in enabling most students to return to mainstream schools, specialist provision or the Key Stage 4 unit.
- There is no difference in the progress between different groups of students. This includes boys, girls, disabled students and those who have different special educational needs and students who are eligible for additional government support. This is because of effective support in developing reading and numeracy and in helping students overcome negative feelings about school. Students are keen to learn because they soon see a purpose in learning. This is ensuring good academic progress, and promotes their personal and social development well.
- The school's effective work ensures every student has an equal opportunity to succeed, and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Staff rightly place emphasis on improving and developing students' reading skills across all subjects. Studying challenging texts such as 'Stone Cold' ensures that students are well prepared for a return to mainstream school or to continue their studies in other settings.
- In writing, students learn well because they have regular opportunities to write at length for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students' skills in mathematics are developed effectively across all subjects through many practical activities. These encourage students to solve problems, for example, when developing their understanding of coordinates through rotating shapes.
- Students make good progress in physical education because of specialist teaching. Students enjoy taking part in sporting activities and have a good understanding of how sport contributes to a healthy lifestyle.
- The most able students make good progress because work is set at the right level of difficulty to challenge their thinking.
- Short-stay students in the 'Reach' programme receive high quality support and make the same good progress as their peers.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because teaching assistants do not always support students effectively to ensure they learn at a rapid rate.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice. Checks on students' work over time provide clear evidence of good progress in their learning.
- The vast majority of teachers make learning interesting and fun. As a result, students engage well, often for the first time, and grow in confidence in their own abilities. This reduces the barriers they face and the vast majority make good and better progress.
- An example of this was seen in a mixed Year 8/9 physical education lesson where students made rapid progress in their understanding of sprinting by evaluating how famous athletes run in specific races. Consequently, all students developed their confidence to apply what they had learned to improve their own sprinting performance when competing against their classmates.
- Effective questioning is a key strength of most teaching, helping to extend students' knowledge and to enable them to think for themselves. Students in a mixed Year 7/8/9 class were

successfully challenged through probing questioning by the teacher to explore moral issues, write at length and use extensive vocabulary through their study of personal health. All students made excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding as they reflected on the consequences of making positive lifestyle choices.

- Teaching of reading is good. Teachers place a high emphasis on students identifying key words and breaking these down into sounds, when necessary, to improve their reading skills.
- Teaching assistants usually make good contributions to lessons. Not all are sufficiently directed by the class teacher to challenge and support the needs of students they work with.
- The marking of students' work is thorough and detailed. Students are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers do not always check that students respond to written comments so that mistakes are not repeated.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Many students arrive at the school having experienced severe difficulty in managing their behaviour in their previous schools. As a result, some have not engaged productively with learning for a long time.
- Parents and carers speak very highly about the unit. They acknowledge the difference it has made to their children's attitudes and behaviour, and their potential to do well in the future. As one parent commented, 'This school has been a life saver.'
- Staff manage behaviour consistently well and help students to work through and resolve their negative feelings about education. Most students quickly see a purpose in learning and become keen to succeed. The lack of permanent exclusions and the decline, over time, of fixed-term exclusions reflect students positive approach and good behaviour.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and students usually continue to attend more regularly when they return to mainstream school or move on. This plays a significant part in their continued success.
- During the inspection, there were some examples of outstanding behaviour when students were openly supportive, caring and helped each other to learn, without prompts from any adult.
- The breakfast club provides a good start to the school day. It is a safe, calm environment and makes sure students are well prepared for learning.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel very safe in the school. They have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of different types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and other media. As a result of a broad and balanced programme of personal education, students are aware of the dangers of alcohol, smoking and drugs. The school works well with other agencies to ensure these preventative measures are in place.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because sometimes students are over reliant on adults for support and guidance.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, director and senior leaders is clear. They set high expectations of all staff and are ambitious for the unit to be outstanding. Leaders are sustaining and continuing to improve students' good achievement.
- Senior staff and the management committee have a good and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Shared senior leadership roles across the Key Stages 3 and 4 units enables the sharing of excellent teaching and this gives staff more opportunities for good quality staff training. It has also improved the transfer of students from the Key Stage 3 unit to Key Stage 4 so that they are less anxious and settle quickly.
- The unit's plans for improvement include very clear priorities and these are acted upon

effectively. Leaders and managers, including the management committee, recognise that staff in charge of subjects are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work.

- Equal opportunities are promoted well because leaders check carefully how well students learn and provide individual programmes in literacy and numeracy to make sure different groups do well. This is helping senior leaders to allocate resources effectively to ensure those students eligible for the pupil premium funding achieve as well as their classmates.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of how effectively teachers are teaching. Targets are set for staff which are explicitly linked to improvements in students' learning. No members of staff are offered salary increases unless justified by their performance, and the progress made by their students. Leaders and managers take robust action to deal with weak practice. They make changes to staffing when teachers do not meet their targets.
- The range of subjects taught have positive impact on students' emotional and social well-being. This contributes exceptionally well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are residential trips, visits, artistic and musical opportunities as well as whole-unit themed events such as Black History month. These activities develop students' communication skills and teach them how to manage their behaviour without adult support.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and highly effective partnership work with parents, carers and other agencies keeps vulnerable students safe.
- The local authority provides good support for the school and has an accurate evaluation of its effectiveness.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because some leaders have not checked the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work regularly enough to ensure all students make rapid gains in their learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the management committee know the school very well and provide a suitable balance of challenge and support to school leaders. Members of the management committee attend appropriate training to help them hold the unit to account for all aspects of its performance. They offer a very good level of support for safeguarding and they check that statutory requirements are met. Committee members understand information about how well students achieve, how their achievement compares with similar schools, and they check to see that the school tracks the progress of students to make sure no one falls behind. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and and make sure that teachers' pay rises are linked to the progress their students make. Members are not afraid to make difficult decisions regarding any underperformance. They set targets for the headteacher of the school and review these regularly.

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	134643
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	439472

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Gabriella Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 May 2011
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