

Leicester City Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Dudley Avenue, Thurnby Lodge Primary School, Leicester, LE5 2EG

Inspection dates 15–16 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The teachers in charge, other senior staff, members of the management committee, and the local authority have worked well to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- The unit has made good improvement since the last inspection and it is well placed to improve further.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress, especially in reading and in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good and systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very thorough.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. The highly skilled behaviour mentors make an excellent contribution to improvements in pupils' behaviour and to changing their attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is varied and interesting. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their awareness of British values well.
- The unit meets with a good level of success in reintegrating pupils into mainstream schools, or finding a suitable special school placement for those with the most complex needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not all make as much progress in writing as they do in other subjects. Teachers do not always provide as much support as they could for those at The Phoenix site who lack confidence in writing.
- Occasionally, tasks in mathematics lessons are not challenging enough for the most-able pupils and the least-able pupils do not always have access to practical equipment when it would help them.
- Teachers with responsibility for subjects other than English and mathematics are at an early stage in developing their leadership skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 10 lessons across the two sites. In combination with looking at pupils' books, displays of their work and their academic and personal targets, the observations provided a balance of evidence on teaching and learning over time. The inspector also observed lunchtime arrangements, sampled outdoor activities, and focused on support provided by the behaviour mentors.
- Meetings were held with the two teachers in charge, teachers with specific responsibilities, including for English, mathematics and special educational needs, and informal discussions took place with some other members of staff. A meeting was held with two representative of the local authority and with the Chair of the Management Committee.
- There were no responses to the online survey, Parent View, but the inspector took into account the findings of the unit's own parental survey. She also considered the unit's survey of pupils' views and some written evaluations received from parents and from mainstream schools.
- The inspector observed the unit's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included: the unit's self-evaluation and development plan; records of pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour, and attendance; and systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The pupil referral unit provides for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or who are at risk of exclusion.
- At any given time, a small number of pupils are dual-registered with their mainstream school, which they attend for part of the week, and the remainder attend the unit full time. Pupils, typically, spend between two and four terms at the unit, before reintegrating into mainstream schools or moving on to a special school. The majority of pupils currently on roll joined the unit at the beginning of this academic year.
- All the pupils have special educational needs because of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and some also have mental health issues and/or additional learning difficulties.
- The unit is based at two separate locations, six miles apart, both on a shared site with a mainstream primary school. The Arc provides for a small group of pupils in Years 1 to 5, most of whom have more complex difficulties such as autistic spectrum disorder, or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. The Phoenix provides for a larger group of pupils from Years 3 to 6 who have mainly behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, although some also have mental health issues.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the unit receives pupil premium funding is high. This is additional governing funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language.
- Most pupils are boys.
- The unit does not make use of any alternative providers. However, pupils at The Arc take part in Forest School activities, which enable them to learn in a woodland setting for part of the time.
- Since the last inspection, the position of acting teacher in charge at The Phoenix site was made permanent in January 2014. There is currently an acting senior teacher and a temporary teacher in one of the classes at The Phoenix.
- At the time of this inspection, the unit was in the process of recruiting a headteacher to oversee the work of both sites. In the meantime, the local authority's head of services for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties provides regular oversight of the unit's work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
 - making greater use of resources to support pupils who lack confidence in writing
 - making sure that all pupils who would benefit from intensive literacy support have regular opportunities to work on those skills that they find difficult, especially at The Phoenix site
 - ensuring that teachers always set work in mathematics that is challenging enough for the most-able pupils
 - providing the least-able pupils always with practical equipment to assist in calculations in mathematics where it is likely to help them.
- Develop the leadership skills of teachers with responsibility for subjects other than English and mathematics, so that they play a full part in further improving the quality of education.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The teachers in charge provide good leadership. They have a clear vision for the unit and share their high expectations with the staff. On both sites, leaders have established a culture in which relationships are positive, where teaching can flourish and pupils are expected to behave well.
- The senior leaders, local authority, and members of the management committee have been determined in tackling the issues for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a result, there is now much greater consistency between work on the two separate sites.
- The leadership of teaching is good and systems for checking teachers' work are extremely thorough. There are rigorous arrangements in place for setting and reviewing targets for teachers as part of the management of their performance. Leaders make clear exactly what staff need to do to improve and ensure that they receive the support they need, including through training. There is good support for temporary teachers, so that they are able to succeed.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in the way leaders collect and use information about pupils' attainment and progress to judge the unit's effectiveness. Leaders track the progress of different groups regularly and meet with teachers to check the progress of individuals. This enables them to make sure that all pupils receive equal opportunities and are not subject to any discrimination.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' academic and personal development well. The focus is on developing pupils' social and behavioural skills, together with their literacy and numeracy skills, and on increasing their enthusiasm for learning. Interesting themes, such as 'circuses and fairgrounds' and 'underwater creatures', combine with regular educational visits and residential trips to motivate pupils. At The Arc, pupils have the opportunity to sample different languages, for example, they are focusing on German and Punjabi this term.
- The unit promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It provides pupils with a range of experiences to make them aware of British values, such as respect and tolerance, and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The unit uses its pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. It provides individual tuition in literacy and numeracy and support in small groups. It has also used some of the funding to finance educational and cultural events.
- The unit makes effective use of its primary physical education and sport premium to increase pupils' physical skills and to extend their participation in physical activities. Involvement in Forest Schools activities enables pupils at The Arc to learn woodcrafts and to do environmental work outdoors. Pupils on both sites go swimming regularly and there are opportunities to learn abseiling, canoeing, and archery. These activities contribute well to pupils' health and well-being.
- The unit works well in partnership with parents, mainstream schools and other agencies. Parents are kept well informed, including through regular telephone calls, and those who expressed their views, mostly, speak highly of the unit's work.
- The local authority head of services for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties provides valuable support and challenge for the teachers in charge and helps to bring about coherence between the two sites. The unit has also received valuable advice from the local authority in developing literacy.
- The unit has thorough and effective systems for keeping pupils safe and protected and these meet statutory requirements. It carries out careful checks on all adults who work with the pupils and makes sure staff are well trained so that they know how to respond quickly to any cause for concern.

- The teachers in charge receive good support from other staff with senior leadership responsibilities. Teachers with responsibility for English, mathematics, and special educational needs make a good contribution to the unit's development. They are providing coaching to other subject leaders, for instance in how to write an action plan for their subjects, but the other subject leaders' skills are not yet fully developed.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective and the local authority, in its governance role, is very well informed about the unit's work. The local authority checks pupils' progress and the quality of teaching regularly, including making sure that the most-effective teachers are rewarded for their effectiveness and that any underperformance is tackled. Clear local authority arrangements for the referral and reintegration of pupils help the unit to succeed. Having a number of mainstream headteachers on the management committee assists the unit further in this process. The work of the management committee has been strengthened since the last inspection through the establishment of an achievement and teaching sub-committee. Its members look very closely at achievement data and conduct detailed visits to gather information. They check closely on the use of pupil premium funding to ensure it is effective and make sure that all statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils soon settle in and follow the routines well, developing trusting relationships with the staff.
- There is an orderly working atmosphere on both sites. In nearly all of the lessons seen, pupils concentrated well and remained on task throughout. Having group targets, as well as their individual ones, encourages pupils to work together effectively. A thorough system of rewards gives pupils the incentive to behave well.
- The unit is very thorough in assessing the emotional and behavioural needs of its pupils. Expectations for behaviour are consistently high at both sites. Staff are quick to remind pupils if their behaviour slips and to praise them when they behave in a courteous way. This was particularly evident when pupils and staff sat down to eat at lunchtime at The Phoenix site. Pupils were polite, saying 'please' and 'thank you', and everyone enjoyed a calm and sociable occasion.
- The work of the behaviour mentors is of especially high quality and the pupils have great respect for them, looking up to them as inspirational male role models. The behaviour mentors convey very high expectations to pupils, as well as providing them with well-judged guidance and support.
- All pupils make significant improvements in their behaviour. The unit enables pupils to develop the right attitudes and learning skills in preparation for return to mainstream school or, in a few cases, transfer to special schools.
- Pupils' attendance also improves significantly during their time at the unit. The attendance rate is close to the national average for mainstream schools, which is very good, - since many pupils have a history of poor attendance.
- Just occasionally during the inspection, an individual pupil went out of a lesson briefly to refocus or caused a slight disturbance by their behaviour, but staff, always, dealt with such occasions instantly, so that the disturbances did not disrupt others' learning.

Safety

- The unit's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and, through the personal, social and health education programme, they learn about the importance of making safe choices for themselves.

- Pupils know about different types of bullying and have learnt, for instance, what cyber-bullying looks like in practice and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- There is strong emphasis on teaching pupils about feelings and how their behaviour affects others. Records show that there has been a small amount of bullying, but that it is tackled quickly by the staff.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now consistently good. This is because leaders' expectations are made very clear and the systems that underpin teachers' work have been improved greatly.
- When pupils join the unit, staff find out as much as possible about them and their families and conduct very thorough assessments to identify what they know and can do and what they need to learn next. Throughout their time at the unit, each pupil has a support plan, with precise learning and personal targets that teachers regularly review.
- Pupils learn in a bright, attractive environment on both sites and tasks are varied and interesting. Displays in classrooms and corridors celebrate pupils' work and help to stimulate their learning. Teamwork among the teachers and teaching assistants is strong; they have a shared commitment to supporting pupils and making learning enjoyable.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics enables pupils to make good progress and there is some good practice in the teaching of writing. In a reading lesson at The Arc, the teacher checked carefully whether a pupil knew all the words expected for his age, whether he knew the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, and the meaning of key vocabulary in the text. Other staff working with individual pupils paid similar attention to promoting pupils' reading and also emphasised speaking and listening skills very well. At both sites, staff keep very detailed reading records.
- Teachers take great care also in the books they choose as a stimulus for reading, writing, and personal development. At The Phoenix site, pupils made excellent progress in learning about powerful verbs and nouns and came up with extended lists of examples because the chosen book was full of such examples. Rich texts and traditional stories from other cultures, such as one from Liberia called 'Head, Body, Legs', expand pupils' horizons and stimulate their writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is integrated well with the topic that pupils are following at any given time. For instance, at The Phoenix, pupils learnt about measuring according to stature, cubits, span, palm, and digits in Ancient Egypt. During the inspection, work reflected the circus theme. Individual pupils at The Arc were seen making good progress as they worked with an adult to fill gaps in their understanding of mathematics.
- The teaching of pupils with additional learning needs is good. At The Arc, where most of these pupils are based, teachers make careful use of pictures to assist the development of their communication skills and of specialist equipment to help those who struggle to focus.
- Teachers provide pupils with a clear list of what they need to do to succeed with a given task and then use it as the main focus when marking their work. This helps pupils to be clear about what they are meant to learn and how well they have done. Teachers at the two sites compare their assessments to make sure they are accurate and collect very helpful examples of pupils' work to support their judgements.
- The unit liaises closely with staff in mainstream schools where pupils are dual-registered, so that both settings are aware of any issues that have arisen and both have a clear understanding of the pupils' needs. Teachers from the unit often advise mainstream staff about possible approaches to take to manage pupils' behaviour and share best practice about teaching and learning.
- Teachers usually make good use of assessment information to plan learning that is at the right level for all of the pupils. They set tasks in mathematics that provide extra challenge for the very few most-able

pupils, though it is still not always difficult enough.

- Teachers do not always provide as much support as they could for those pupils who lack confidence in writing and there are more opportunities for pupils to receive intensive literacy support at The Arc than at The Phoenix. Just occasionally, the least-able pupils do not have access to practical equipment in mathematics when it would help them with counting, addition, and subtraction.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Nearly all pupils join the unit with attainment that is well below national expectations for their age, with a history of poor attendance, disrupted education, and negative attitudes to learning.
- Achievement is good and the short time pupils spend at the unit helps to narrow the gap between their actual attainment and that expected for their age. This is because they make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics, and develop a range of essential skills for succeeding in school. All groups of pupils make similar progress, including boys and girls.
- Pupils' books and displays show that they cover a good amount of work, including in the interesting themes which often span a range of different skills. In mathematics, they learn to add and subtract, divide and multiply, and to solve simple word problems. Older pupils make three-dimensional models from nets and work with fractions. Pupils improve their reading skills and learn to identify the features of different writing, and to research information from books and tablet computers.
- As a result of the academic and personal progress they make during their time at the unit, nearly all pupils reintegrate successfully into mainstream schools after between two and four terms. Those who are dual-registered with their mainstream school are enabled to remain in school for part of their time, rather than being excluded.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and mental health issues, make good progress. This is because their needs are assessed carefully and they receive sensitive specialist support.
- Pupils of minority ethnic heritage make similar progress to their classmates. Those who are learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress and benefit from the good amount of individual support available.
- The unit makes good use of its pupil premium funding to meet the learning and personal needs of eligible pupils. In 2014, there were not enough pupils in Year 6 who were eligible for the pupil premium to compare their attainment with that of their classmates without identifying individuals. However, throughout the unit, funding enables disadvantaged pupils to make similar good progress to the rest of the pupils in English and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make good progress over time and they do well in nearly all lessons. In mathematics, they cover a good amount of work and older pupils tackle some challenging material, for instance, learning about isosceles and equilateral triangles. Just occasionally, work is not challenging enough in mathematics.
- The most-able pupils produce some sensitive and carefully constructed writing, especially at The Arc. For instance a pupil wrote, 'I have decided not to tell Mum and Dad about the mysterious pale man in the garage. He is very old with a pale face, skinny hands and swollen knuckles because he has got arthritis.'
- With the exception of the most-able pupils, progress is generally better in other subjects than it is in writing. This is partly because writing is the weakest subject for the majority of pupils when they join the unit and the one where they lack confidence. They make good progress in some lessons, but they do not always receive enough help in structuring their work.

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	132824
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	462012

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Not applicable
Teachers in charge	Christine Pay and Zaheera Omar-Davies
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2013
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