

# The New Vision PRU at The Learning Trust

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	134612
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	295313
Inspection dates	20 - 21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Berger (HMI)

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

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Type of School	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	14-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	107
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Tonge
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
School address	The Learning Trust 1 Reading Lane Hackney E8 1GQ
Telephone number	020 8820 7279
Fax number	020 8820 7208

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Age group	14-16
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## Introduction

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

## Description of the school

The Hackney Learning Trust provides education services for the local authority and The New Vision student referral unit (NVPRU) is part of this Trust. It is an entity in its own right with a headteacher, but parents and students describe it as 'the Learning Trust' and so, where appropriate, it will be referred to in this way within this report. The NVPRU contracts provision from 14 providers including colleges and voluntary and community groups who bid to provide a wide range of services to different groups of students aged between 14 and 16 years.

About 20% of students have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school and another 30% have had poor attendance or face other issues in their lives that make attending mainstream provision difficult.

A large number of students are placed on the roll of the NVPRU because there is no mainstream provision available in local secondary schools. Many local schools are reluctant to admit students newly arrived in this country in Year 11, as the students will have missed half the GCSE course. In addition, there are very few unfilled places in Hackney schools. Currently 30% of students are new arrivals from overseas and the vast majority speak little English. Where students come from previous schools there are seldom records provided of their past achievements.

Overall standards on entry are below what is expected for students' ages. Almost 20% of the students have learning and/or other disabilities and eight of these have a statement of special educational need. There are generally twice as many boys than girls attending the unit. The socio-economic and ethnic background of students reflects that of the local community and is very varied. Students from Black Caribbean heritage represent the largest group where students have been permanently excluded from schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 3**

Inspectors agree with the judgement of the Learning Trust that overall effectiveness, teaching, learning and the students' achievements are now satisfactory. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Although new systems are relatively recent, it is already clear that the provision lives up to its name. It is new, innovative and visionary. It is exceptionally flexible in its approach. The very good initial assessments make sure that each young person receives an effective personalised curriculum and placements are speedy. The improvements in this provision since being made subject to a 'notice to improve' are impressive and a tribute to the cohesive team who direct all their energies to making sure that every young person gets the best deal they can.

The management model is complex and unusual but it works. The NVPRU has successfully advertised for tenders to make provision for certain groups of young people and providers are held to account by means of a detailed and helpful contract. The central team are very effective in checking that the agreement is put into practice. Where weaknesses are identified, the team offer good support. If the provision is not up to standard, the contract is swiftly terminated and better placements are found. The agreements include rigorous quality assurance systems and the regular observation of lessons has ensured rapid gains have been made. All are striving to deliver a greater proportion of good teaching.

These systems have been fully in place for a term. Already the impact can be seen in improvements in attendance, behaviour and learning since the last inspection in March 2006, when the provision was judged to require significant improvement. This has all been possible because of the outstanding clarity and vision of the Learning Trust and the headteacher. She, in particular, has introduced structures and systems that have maximised the effectiveness of the providers. The partnerships are outstanding. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and the regular provider meetings offer suitable support and training as well as challenge. All commented on the helpfulness of the provider handbook which lays out the expectations and quality assurance systems very clearly. Communication between all those involved is outstanding, as are the very positive relationships which have been established.

The students make good progress in their personal development. Many make major improvements in their behaviour and engage well with the courses they are offered. Inspectors agreed with the sentiments expressed by one young person when he told us, 'My mum thought I was robbed of my education, but now I have it back'.

For many, this placement is their first experience of education in this country and their disappointment in not being placed in a mainstream school is swiftly overcome. They receive very good language support alongside a broad and suitable range of courses in a college setting.

Nevertheless, the new contracting systems still require further development and embedding. The arrangements for setting targets for students are good but some of the targets are too general and their achievement is therefore difficult to measure. The Learning Trust as a whole monitors the achievement of students in relation to the qualifications they gain but this does not take sufficient account of the fact that most students are in the provision for a fairly short amount of time and move prior to sitting examinations. Clear ways of measuring the progress these students make has not been agreed and so the management committee is less able to monitor the performance of provision overall.

Finally, the handbook and contract do not give a high enough profile to ensuring equality of opportunity. Although there was no evidence that equality was not promoted, there was also nothing that showed clearly that information about the provision and outcomes for different ethnic groups was analysed fully.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Set clearer academic targets for students.
- Agree a wider range of performance indicators against which the work of the NVPRU can be evaluated.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching.
- Develop the contracts to ensure providers promote equality of opportunity in their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 3**

The service works hard to swiftly settle students and ensure provision is matched to their needs. As a result many go on to achieve success in a range of accredited courses, including GCSE and vocational qualifications. Others are reintegrated into mainstream provision. The students make at least satisfactory progress in their learning in lessons and, where the teaching is good, many catch up for lost time. Particularly good progress is made in the acquisition of English by those who have recently arrived in this country. All the students have individual learning plans but some of the targets are not specific enough to know whether or not they have been achieved.

Those with learning and other disabilities make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 2**

Students enjoy their education because careful analysis of their needs has been used to place them in effective settings, where they follow suitable courses. They now see purpose in attending school and most have a significant increase in their attendance records, helping to raise achievement.

Students know how to manage risk in their daily lives which enables them to think about safety, for example wearing a hard hat when working in potentially hazardous outdoor conditions. Students are mature and behave well which is having a positive impact on learning and this has contributed to the drop in exclusions.

Students are self assured and confident; they are able to make informed decisions about their lifestyle and benefit from their focus on working toward Healthy Schools' Status especially in the areas of drugs and sex education. However, physical education is an area where space and lack of specialist provision restricts development in a few settings.

The students undertook research into the quality of the provision; this was very effective in identifying areas for further development. The senior team involved members of the local police to address concerns about bullying in the local community. Students newly arrived in the country make equal contributions because translation services help to ensure their views are taken into account. The richness of diversity in the community is celebrated, for example, through the

Swapping Cultures Initiative that promotes greater tolerance and community cohesion. Students develop good entrepreneurial skills through the wide range of vocational and work-related options available. They feel well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

Very good monitoring of lessons is resulting in improvements in teaching and learning. There is a higher percentage of good quality lessons and inadequacies have been eradicated. A particularly strong feature is the good working relationships between students and the teachers and other adults they work with. Learning support assistants work effectively alongside teachers in their support for individual students.

There remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. In the otherwise satisfactory lessons, work can sometimes lack challenge, which limits the rate of progress students make. Students are not always aware of what they are expected to learn. Importantly their work is not always marked well enough for them to know how they can improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 2**

Students are provided with a tailored and flexible curriculum which supports their learning and personal development effectively. Provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills is good. Enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities are wide-ranging and include for example, the work done by young people on film-making. Students are provided with practical skills to support their progress into further education, employment or training. A good example of this is the work with one provider to enable young people to develop work-related skills.

### Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

A particular strength is the pastoral care provided by the central team. Students respond well to very effective personalised care and guidance. Support from partner agencies is also good including, for example, Connexions and the Youth Offending Service. Staff are very responsive to individual needs, many of which are complex, ensuring that provision is identified quickly and well supported so that individual needs are met. Safeguarding and health and safety procedures are good and are reviewed regularly.

Initial assessments are comprehensive and robust. They draw available information from previous providers with clear action points for the next steps in their development. However, some of the targets set for students are not precise enough for them to be able to gauge their progress.

### Leadership and management

**Grade: 2**

The strong leadership and excellent systems and structures have led to the impressive improvements. Everyone takes his or her leadership role seriously and the teamwork is outstanding. Providers are held to account through robust and

regular monitoring of compliance with a particular focus on teaching and learning.

Much of the provision is relatively new and individual performance targets have only just been agreed with providers. It is too soon to judge the extent to which they are achieved. Some require further review to ensure they are precise enough to give a true reflection of the performance of the provider and to ensure equality of opportunities for students.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## 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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	2
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

## Annex B



## Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

30 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The New Vision PRU at The Learning Trust, Hackney, E8 1GQ

We all enjoyed talking to you when visiting the various placements the Learning Trust has arranged for you.

Last year when my colleagues visited we asked the Learning Trust to make some big improvements and they have done this well. The headteacher and her team have worked very hard to make sure you have lots of different types of courses you can follow. They take very good care to help you make the right choices.

You are also doing your bit. We are pleased to see how much better attendance and behaviour are. Lessons are also now much better and many are good. You are working hard to catch up work you have missed. Those of you who are learning English are doing very well in your lessons.

You told us that you enjoyed your education now and were working much harder. We agree with this. We also know that many of you are disappointed that you are in colleges rather school. The Trust has good plans to sort this out next year by having an agreement with one of the local schools as well as with the colleges. We have also made some other suggestions for improvements.

- Making sure even more of your lessons are good.
- Keeping a closer check on the progress you make in the short-term.
- Looking again at your academic targets to be sure they are specific so you can tell when you have achieved them.
- Finding more ways to make sure that everyone is treated equally.

We would be grateful if you would share this letter with your parents if they would prefer not to read the whole report, so they also know what the inspectors have said.

Thank you again for talking with us.

Ann Berger HMI