

Hambleton/Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135850
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	360764
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	John Farrow

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	CLlr Tony Hall
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Dodgson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Nine lessons were observed, taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the management committee and members of the local community. The inspector also held telephone conversations with parents and carers and staff from a local secondary school. He observed the school's work, talked to students and looked at their work, examined school policies and documentation, external reports and 11 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which students with different abilities and needs are making the progress they should.
- The impact of the school's efforts to reduce absence and improve attendance.
- Whether actions taken by the school's leaders are leading to sustainable improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for students.

Information about the school

Hambleton and Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service provides education and support to students experiencing a complex range of difficulties that prevent them from attending their local mainstream school. The service is smaller than other comparable provisions and at the time of the inspection 28 students were on roll, 11 of whom are taught in collaboration with their mainstream school at alternative centres or in their homes.

It is a member of the Hambleton and Richmondshire Collaborative of local secondary schools and serves a very large, predominantly rural area of North Yorkshire. The new service was established in September 2009, following a major reorganisation of earlier services for children and young people educated other than at school. About half of the students on roll have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their local school due to behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The remainder are experiencing temporary health-related problems, typically following protracted illness, injury, or anxiety-related difficulties. Admission to the service is overseen and controlled by the local authority, in partnership with schools in the collaborative. Students are admitted to or transfer from the service at various times throughout the year and numbers on roll fluctuate accordingly. The service is housed in high quality refurbished former school premises, where the majority of students are taught.

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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Hambleton and Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service is a good short stay school and outreach service. It was established just over a year ago to provide support to students experiencing a complex range of achievement limiting difficulties. In a remarkably short period of time, its senior leaders, now actively supported by other staff at all levels, have established a successful, cohesive school and service. They have effectively addressed weaknesses in teaching and have established a good capacity for further sustained improvement. As a consequence of the headteacher's determination to provide consistently good quality learning opportunities, the students have begun to achieve their underlying potential. Achievement is good. Although attainment is low, by the time students leave it has improved significantly when compared to their starting points. Parents and carers value the work of the school in discussions and in their responses to the parental questionnaire. One comment, typical of many, said 'This school has solely the child and parents in mind. Nothing is too much trouble and they are always there with understanding help and interesting education'.

Once settled into their new school or off-site support arrangements, students are keen to do well and most strive to make up for lost ground. Good, intensive and highly individualised teaching and good quality care, guidance and support complement each other well. As a result, students begin to assume greater responsibility for their own learning and personal development, after which they begin to thrive. This allows the majority of them to make rapid progress and manage a successful return to a mainstream school; those unable to do so, complete their education at the school, leaving with a satisfactory range of appropriate external qualifications. Many students are admitted to the school with an already entrenched history of persistent absence, or health related difficulties, that make the potential for more regular attendance at school less certain. This legacy continues to impact on some students' subsequent attendance. However, in almost all cases, once settled into their new arrangements, their attendance improves dramatically, despite the schools overall attendance remaining low in comparison to the national average.

Despite this impressive beginning, leaders and managers and the management committee expect more. They remain determined to drive forward further improvements in the quality of provision, within the service and through its effective links with parents and partner schools in the collaborative. Senior leaders have adopted a rigorous, outcomes-based approach to self-evaluation. This has led to an astute understanding of the services strengths and weaknesses and is informing their focus on where further improvement is required. The headteacher has already taken decisive action to strengthen teaching, which is now much more consistently effective in ensuring that students are well motivated and engaged. However, school leaders recognise that many students enter with particularly weak language, communication or literacy skills in relation to their underlying ability. Gaps

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in these basic skills continue to limit their rates of progress and level of attainment, especially when working towards higher level external qualifications. The school has begun to plan how to further develop teachers' knowledge and skills in addressing these specific areas of teaching in order to help such students achieve even better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the level of absence amongst the small minority of students still reluctant to attend regularly, by working even more effectively with other agencies, parents and carers and the students themselves.
- Improve learning and teaching for students with significant weaknesses in basic literacy, language and communication skills, by extending teachers knowledge and use of the range of interventions available to help maximise the progress of such students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, take full advantage of the purposeful opportunities for a fresh start to their education. The school's relentless focus on promoting the learning and progress of each individual, regardless of their different starting points, means there is no noticeable variation between the outcomes of different groups. Students achieve well and enjoy their time in the school; they apply themselves conscientiously in lessons and work at a brisk pace. They usually appear interested in what are invariably well planned lessons, which are lively, challenging and well matched to students' individual abilities and interests. As a result, students respond thoughtfully and with enthusiasm, have fun and begin to take great care and pride in their work.

While standards attained at the end of Year 11 remain low, most students make good and occasionally outstanding progress in lessons and show a rapid improvement in their levels of attainment. While this is usually from low starting points, such rapid progress allows the majority of younger students to gain the confidence, knowledge and skills needed to achieve a successful return to mainstream provision. Older students, completing their education at the school, are successfully entered for an appropriate range of valid and high status external qualifications and awards, and completion and pass rates are high.

Most students say they feel safe and even enjoy coming to a school where they know they are expected to work hard and make good progress and where they can gain the confidence and skills needed to face up to their futures. They say adults always demand a lot from them, but that they also show they care and always make time to listen to students who feel angry or upset. These high quality, firm but friendly relationships underpin students vastly improved attitudes to learning, which in turn actively contribute to their own, and others' good behaviour and progress in lessons. When things go wrong, as they occasionally do, students respond quickly and well to any additional guidance or direction required and are quickly back on track. Students have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle; they enjoy active participation in vigorous physical exercise in the local gym or in pursuit of indoor climbing awards. Some, although not the majority, have shown they want to take action to improve their own health. For example, some students have participated successfully in smoking cessation classes organised by the school, and all now accept the need to observe the school's strict non-smoking policy.

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They value belonging to this vibrant community and willingly become involved in activities designed to help others either at home or abroad. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they learn to respect each others' needs or feelings and to make increasingly reasonable judgements on moral dilemmas facing young people their age.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved rapidly since the school was established, and ensures students of widely differing abilities and interests are well motivated by and engaged in purposeful learning. This good teaching encourages students to re-engage with learning and begin to realise their underlying potential. Lessons are carefully planned and consistently taught to meet the unique needs of each student. The resulting highly individualised, intensive teaching allows most students to make brisk progress regardless of their diverse individual starting points. When students' normally good attitudes to learning lapse, quietly-insistent teaching and thoughtful support quickly reshape the learning to allow students to remain engaged, even if the pace of learning slows temporarily. Teachers' use of assessment to set realistic but ambitious targets is another emerging strength; it is used well, frequently involving the students in planning the next steps in their own 'learning journey', or being guided to understand what else they can do to help themselves.

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The curriculum has also developed well, with the pace of improvement accelerating as key staffing appointments have been made. Planning now provides well organised and imaginative opportunities for vulnerable or disaffected students to re-engage with learning. They now have fun in lessons, take risks and have begun to make up for lost ground.

Careful and sensitive assessments of each students' academic, personal, social and emotional needs informs all aspects of the life and work of the school and its partnerships with outside agencies and schools within the collaborative. Well organised arrangements for the care of all students are another key factor supporting rapid improvements in their attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance. The role of the key tutor in particular is critical. These tutors act as a lynch pin for a small group of students, improving the speed and quality of communication between school, home and external partners while embracing responsibility for finding positive solution-focussed approaches to each new 'challenge' as and when they arise.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have quickly and successfully established this new and complex provision. They have also ensured that their high expectations about securing improvement have been effectively communicated to staff, students, parents and carers and other agencies. The headteacher has secured and sustained the active support of the staff, while simultaneously driving forward much needed improvements to learning and teaching; this has been an impressive achievement. Staff in turn have accepted the challenge with enthusiasm, and as a shared vision and subsequent momentum began to build, they too have channelled their efforts to good effect. Much therefore has been achieved in a very short-time, morale is high and belief in the school's potential to improve learning and teaching still further is shared amongst staff at all levels. The school and outreach service promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It is well placed to pursue increasingly ambitious strategies that are helping individual students and groups to close the gap between their current and potential achievements.

Similarly, the management committee has shown a good capacity to influence and shape the strategic development of the school, and the service it provides within the collaborative. It has done so proactively and in effective partnership with the local authority and local schools. The management committee is also fully and systematically involved in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school. Its members are rigorous in ensuring they discharge their statutory duties effectively and that students are

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kept safe. They work closely with the headteacher to make certain that all statutory requirements are met and regularly updated, for example, when working to maintain the school's well-established and effective safeguarding practice.

The school is highly committed to effective and regular dialogue with parents and carers and makes determined efforts to establish honest and purposeful relationships with them. Consequently, most parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's efforts to keep them fully involved in all decisions that affect their children. Partnerships with other schools have also been established quickly and make a strong contribution to the outcomes being secured for the students, including those referred to the outreach service; conversely senior members of the collaborative now have a much better understanding and growing appreciation of what the school and its outreach service has to offer them. This has helped establish the school and its outreach service as a very coherent community where the impact of its work is felt strongly in the school itself and amongst its immediate and wider communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires and those who spoke to the inspector by telephone were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's provision and the outcomes it achieves. Almost all responses were positive, clearly endorsing nearly every aspect covered in the questionnaire. The extent to which students enjoy school was the only area where some contradictory views were expressed. A small minority of students spoken to during the inspection also said they did not always enjoy coming to school, but these views diminished as they settled into the school and began to experience real successes. The inspector concluded that relationships with parents and carers were overwhelmingly constructive and endorsed their positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hambleton/Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service 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 11 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 14 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	27	5	45	2	18	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	55	4	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	55	5	45	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	36	6	55	0	0	0	0
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)	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	64	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	73	3	27	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	73	3	27	0	0	0	0

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 all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



14 October 2010

Dear Students,

Inspection of Hambleton/Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service, Northallerton, DL6 1SZ

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave me when I came to inspect your school. I would particularly like to thank those of you who spent time talking to me during the inspection and in lessons.

I believe that your school provides you with a good education and is helping you to make good progress, catching up with much of the work that you have missed in the past. This good progress is because of good teaching and your own hard work. I thought your behaviour in lessons and your attitude to your work were particularly good and that you can often be conscientious and capable students, taking responsibility for your own learning and well-being. When some of you did not feel like working this hard, your behaviour was managed calmly and your learning carried on without too much disruption.

Many of you arrive with a history of poor attendance and in most cases this improves very quickly. A few of you are still absent too often, others have difficulties reading and writing as well as they could. These difficulties limit what you can and should achieve. I am asking the headteacher to work with you and your families to improve the attendance of those of you who can attend but who are absent too often. I am also asking teachers to develop the range of strategies they use to help those of you with literacy difficulties make even better progress.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr John Farrow

Lead Inspector

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