

Hartlepool Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131294
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	360248
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline O'Neil
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Hanson
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons, observing five staff teach and visited alternative provision off-site. Meetings were held with an officer of the local authority, the Chair and representatives of the management committee, staff, groups of students, parents and carers. The inspector sampled students' work and looked at documentation including policies on safeguarding, the unit development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of former and present students' progress, including their individual 'information passport'. Staff and students completed questionnaires and three questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also read and analysed.

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

- How well students achieve, re-engage with their learning, whether at school or in the unit, and how well they are reintegrated back into mainstream school.
- How far the students' behaviour and attendance improve while at the unit.
- How effective assessment procedures are in helping to shape activities to meet the individual needs of students and provide clear guidance of improvement.
- The impact of the senior leaders on the quality of provision.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and practice.

Information about the school

The Pupil Referral Unit was established in May 2008 and relocated to the current site as part of the Educational Development Centre building in October 2009. Recent changes have resulted in more settled staffing. The unit provides statutory provision for three groups of Key Stage 1, 2, 3 and 4 students. Phase 1 are referrals supported in their mainstream schools to help to prevent exclusion, Phase 2 referrals attend the unit for half-a-term for intense academic and personal development support, because they have been or are on the brink of permanent exclusion, and Phase 3 consists of continuous, negotiated off-site support for students who have returned to mainstream. The Key Stage 3 focus is on close collaborative school-based working with the school in all three stages to help prevent exclusion. All students are White British. Boys significantly outnumber girls. Many students have involvement with other agencies including youth offending, family and social care. Currently, no student has special educational needs and/or disabilities and there are no Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils on roll. Most students have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties but occasionally moderate learning difficulties.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in all students' outcomes and, as a consequence, the unit offers a good education for its students. The staff provide good teaching and an interesting curriculum that offers students opportunities to continue their school subjects and choose from a variety of enrichment and vocational experiences. The excellent care and good support and guidance are evident in the way staff are sensitive to the needs of students. Consequently, most students overcome many of the significant barriers to their development and re-engage with learning, whether during school-based preventative action or full-time placement in the unit.

On arrival in the unit, many students have had a disrupted pattern of learning in their schools in view of their unacceptable attitudes and an uneven pattern of attendance. As a result achievement and attainment are sometimes below expectations. After arrival, most students soon see themselves in a more positive light and begin to thrive. Overall, students make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Progress is quickest when expectations of what can be achieved are high, approaches lively and assessment information used imaginatively to personalise activities and challenge students' thinking. For example, in the teaching of Spanish and in the use of animation, which effectively enrich the practising of communication literacy skills. However, there are lessons when not enough is demanded of students and assessment information is used inconsistently to plan activities and give students guidance for improvement. As a result the rate of progress slows, especially when opportunities are not fully exploited to practise literacy and numeracy skills. There is a good range of specialist options off-site, tailored to engage students, boost confidence and self-esteem, such as Right Trax where students learn how to repair and maintain motorcycles. Students' personal development is good with students encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour and set their own boundaries. Their developing maturity and sensible approaches to personal safety add to the effectiveness of their return to school and make them better equipped for the future. They show a good grasp of the benefits of keeping fit and staying healthy and do not regard bullying as an issue.

Concerted action by the service manager and the management committee, strongly supported by the local authority, has systematically improved the quality of teaching and learning. The refreshing, calm approach of the service manager has galvanised staff approaches. Increasing rigour in monitoring and evaluation ensures accuracy in self-evaluation judgements. Excellent relationships with schools and support agencies, for example, the education welfare and the youth offending service, enhance the quality and effectiveness of provision. All these factors contribute to the unit's good capacity of continued improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of students' progress in order to boost achievement and attainment by:
 - raising the expectations of what all students can achieve
 - making certain all tasks are interesting and challenging
 - ensuring all students practise their literacy and numeracy skills continuously across the curriculum.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning so it is consistently good or better by:
 - making certain all learning has a constant focus on raising achievement
 - ensuring marking consistently informs activity planning and provides students with clear steps for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry to the unit is broadly average but varies considerably from term to term. Most students respond quickly on arrival, as anxieties are overcome in the safe and supportive unit atmosphere, to make good progress and achieve well. In lessons, students gain confidence rapidly and enjoy the interesting and enjoyable activities provided. Their appetite for doing well is rekindled and increasingly students take pride in their achievements. For many, attainment is at least average by the time they return to school. Significant improvements in the level of students' attendance are achieved while in the unit and most are able to sustain improved levels on the return to their school. Although average overall, the gains in attendance are a positive indicator of students' successful engagement in learning. The information passports, completed on referral to the unit, set challenging targets which encourage all students to aim high in all aspects of their learning and development. Progress information reveals that the majority of students achieve at least in line with expectations and successfully complete their courses, including GCSE, on return to their schools. Progression beyond Year 11 is strengthened as an increasing proportion of students continue in education, employment and training, beyond Year 11.

Students' behaviour is never less than good and almost all become responsible and safety conscious. They show respect to other students and adults, which is reflected in their good relationships. As a result nearly all are able to successfully cope with the demands of returning to their school. They make a good contribution to the daily life of the unit and willingly accept responsibility for setting personal targets. They acquire good life skills to help them in the future, for example, listening carefully to instructions when canoeing and abseiling to avoid danger and risk. Their cultural development is a growing strength with a developing appreciation of cultural differences, for example, learning to speak Spanish and sampling Egyptian food to create the 'mood' to write a travel guide.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	3
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	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

A fundamental ambition of the unit is to ensure students can continue the learning they have begun at school, achieve success, gain qualifications and prepare for the future. As a result a majority of teaching sets high expectations and makes learning interesting, while at the same time providing students with the essential support and encouragement they require, for example, providing positive and constructive marking and guidance. Teachers successfully adapt activities to meet the individual circumstances and needs of students. However, not all teaching is challenging enough, because it does not consistently use the 'information passport' effectively to plan activities and sustain interest. This applies to the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities needing to practise their literacy and numeracy skills more intensively.

The good curriculum is successfully matched to students' individual needs. Imaginative approaches are used to provide rich learning opportunities, for example, using animation to enhance students' creative, literacy and information and communication technology skills. This is especially successful with boys. A varied outdoor education programme presents not only tough challenges, but fosters an appreciation for the environment, such as when digging out an old pond. All courses are accredited, including those off-site, to provide clear routes for further learning, employment or training. This is a key element in the rekindling of students' self-belief and raising their aspirations.

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The high priority given to care, guidance and support is evident in the highly-effective initial assessment of need by the family worker, in close collaboration with school staff and support agencies. The good relationships with adults give students the confidence to share a worry or concern with staff. The excellent collaborative working with schools ensures early warning of those students at risk of exclusion and in need of immediate support. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result the move to the unit and the return to school are well managed and provide students with the confidence that they need to succeed.

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 service manager, ably supported by an adroit management committee, is successfully driving forward improvements to realise his ambitious vision for the unit. The good management of teaching and learning by the service manager and a local authority officer has led to several improvements, including to the quality and use of assessment. Staffing is more settled and sharply focused on promoting the well-being of all students to make certain all can fulfil their potential. Positive involvement of parents and carers is good, adds to the sense of belonging and contributes really well to their children's progress and development. The high level of confidence and trust between the local schools, agencies, community providers and the unit lies at the heart of the unit's continued improvement. The staff promote equality of opportunity well for all students whatever their background. This is especially evident in the developing strength in the personalised curriculum and students' improving achievement, enjoyment and attendance. Nevertheless, senior leaders are not complacent and recognise that the consistency and quality of learning in lessons can be improved even more. Safeguarding is given the highest priority with good procedures in place. They meet requirements fully and include high-quality checks on all adults. Good community cohesion promotes respect, tolerance and understanding of other beliefs and cultures, for example, students learn about the diversity that exists nationally and in the developing world. This is well integrated into personal development lessons to encourage participation with diverse community groups.

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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	1
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

All three responses to the parent and carer questionnaire were almost all entirely positive and additional comments endorsed the successful work of the unit. There were no negative comments and the less positive return was followed up during the inspection. In addition, the inspector spoke to a carer and reviewed the unit's, 'Good News Feedback'. The parent and carer views fully support the outcomes, quality of learning, care, guidance, support and leadership and management described in the report. The remark from one carer summarises the views of many, 'The children are all individuals as far as the service manager is concerned.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hartlepool Pupil Referral Unit 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 3 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 7 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	33	2	67	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	1	33	1	33	1	33	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	1	33	2	67	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	67	1	33	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)	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	33	2	67	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



31 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Hartlepool Pupil Referral Unit, Hartlepool, TS25 IHN

I want to thank all of you for the friendly welcome that you gave me when I inspected the centre. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you, including my visit to Hartlepool Marina.

I was impressed by your sensible attitudes and good behaviour in lessons. When outdoors, I was struck by how safety conscious you were. The unit provides a good quality of education where the staff take good care of you. As a result you obviously feel relaxed and safe at the unit and when off-site. You are clearly aware of the importance of managing your own behaviour successfully and the benefits that staying healthy can bring. You take pride in your achievements and appreciate the efforts that staff make to ensure learning is interesting. You make good progress in your work and obviously enjoy lessons that are practical and appealing. Some good use is made of the excellent links with your schools, specialist support staff and the off-site providers.

I have asked the service manager, staff and the management committee to look at ways of improving the quality of your learning by: making certain that all activities are carefully planned; challenging your thinking; and ensuring that your literacy and numeracy skills are practised frequently so that your progress speeds up. This will enable you to achieve more and make a return to your school easier. I have also asked your staff to give you clear direction as to how you can improve the quality of your work.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope your unit will continue to improve.

I wish you a bright future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Clive Petts
Lead inspector

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