

Newbridge House PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112098
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357040
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie

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	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lorraine Thompson
Headteacher	Mrs Elise Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Six lessons were observed taught by five teachers and one teaching assistant. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the management committee and staff. The inspector observed the unit's work, looked at documents including those relating to safeguarding and the curriculum; and scrutinised 16 parental questionnaires.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the unit's work. It looked in detail at the following key areas.

- How well teachers use assessment information to challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.
- To what extent the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to prepare for returning to mainstream schools or move on to the next stages of their lives.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in using targets to maintain high standards and improve the unit.
- The impact of the attendance and absence of pupils on furthering their future economic well-being.

Information about the school

Newbridge House pupil referral unit is located on one site in Barrow-in-Furness. It serves the extensive area of South Cumbria and provides support for pupils who have been excluded from their mainstream schools or are at risk of permanent exclusion. Almost all experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very few are referred as a result of the exceptional circumstances of their lives. The mobility of the pupil population is very high because most return within a year to full-time mainstream education. The majority are dual registered with their home schools and attend the unit for only part of each week.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the staffing structure and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. Two new classrooms and a gymnasium have been added and a forest school facility located about two miles from the unit is now regularly utilised. Newbridge has achieved the National Healthy School status which was revalidated during 2010.

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

This good pupil referral unit is highly valued by parents and carers and the local authority. The care, guidance and support provided by staff are outstanding. Almost all pupils arrive having experienced disruptions to their mainstream education. For most, their attainments upon entry are low. Nevertheless, all groups make at least good progress in their learning and sometimes progress is outstanding. For example, all in Key Stage 4 gain qualifications, and their progress in this key stage is outstanding. Consequently, the majority of pupils leave or return to mainstream having closed the gap with their peers in other schools.

Pupils learn to engage and enjoy their lessons. They trust staff. Consequently, the overwhelming majority feel safe. Their behaviour is good. Thus, pupils' achievements overall are good. Most attend only part time but the unit makes every effort to encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyles. For example, they eat well at lunchtime. Their uptake of exercise is outstanding. Younger pupils work out of doors in the forest school. Others enjoy activities such as rock climbing in outdoor education.

Attendance for most improves rapidly following entry and becomes broadly average compared to other schools. However, more could be done to encourage the few persistent absentees to attend. Through great improvements in their attendance, most pupils become confident enough to make good contributions in lessons and to improve the skills they need for the future. Pupils demonstrate outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and despite their difficulties begin to understand about right and wrong. They learn to work together, have respect for others and apply the social skills essential for moving on to the next stages.

Teaching is good and assessments are used effectively to demonstrate pupils' progress. The records for Key Stage 4 are detailed and highly effective in showing how well pupils meet their academic targets. However, for the younger groups this is not yet always the case and the unit is now considering a more consistent system.

Managers have implemented good changes since the last inspection, for example, in developing the curriculum. Through effective regular review and good-quality self-appraisal they know their strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning is based on realistic targets. Consequently, there is good capacity to improve. The outstanding management committee is highly supportive and includes members who are experienced in education. Some members help secure the outstanding links with the agencies and partnerships utilised by the unit. Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. One parent or carer reported: 'There is good communication between us and the school and prompt notification of any problems.' Safeguarding is a model of outstanding practice because of the great experience and high levels of training evidenced by staff and members of the management committee.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work cooperatively with the local authority to ensure that, through maintaining contact with families, acceptable levels of attendance are upheld for the majority and improved for the few persistent absentees.
- By September 2012, enable younger pupils to make even better progress by extending the highly effective practice in recording assessments in Key Stage 4 so that information can be gathered equally efficiently and used to best effect in other key stages.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

From their low starting points pupils make at least good progress in the short space of time for which most are placed. Through excellent staff support in small class groups they learn to settle quickly into lessons and undertake tasks willingly. Many report that they enjoy learning for the first time in their educational careers. Interesting lessons encourage them to achieve well. Consequently, although most continue to attain below the national averages, they begin to catch up with peers in mainstream schools and most are soon successfully reintegrated.

Pupils learn about literacy and numeracy in all areas of the curriculum and begin to apply these skills successfully. Consequently, they feel better prepared for whatever the future might bring. In Key Stage 4, a greater proportion of pupils are permanently placed. These older pupils are successfully undertake courses of study that lead to qualifications such as the Award Scheme Development Network (ASDAN), Entry Level Certificates and GCSEs. All gain qualifications and for some these are at higher levels of GCSE or their equivalents in, for example, Adult Literacy and Numeracy, and Key Skills. Some undertake valuable vocational education and work placements. Overall, pupils' development of workplace and other skills is good.

A very few pupils reported through questionnaires that they do not feel safe in school but despite extensive discussions with pupils this was not substantiated during the inspection. Indeed, through accessing aspects of school life such as the forest school, outdoor education and practical lessons pupils have good opportunities to understand about taking risks and keeping themselves safe. This learning is supported by personal, social and health education (PSHE) where they learn to consider the risks of drug taking, alcohol abuse and smoking.

Although the great majority of pupils experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, their behaviour quickly improves upon entry and becomes good. Similarly, pupils develop outstanding social skills and moral understanding that enable them to be successful in groups during rock climbing or when working in the forest. This broad range of physical activities leads to an outstanding acceptance of aspects of healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, throughout the school day and during break times many take advantage of the outside play areas and the new indoor gymnasium to play physical games. These activities help reduce stress and maintain levels of fitness. At lunchtimes almost all take-up the opportunity to eat the well-balanced school meal provided; and through studying food technology and PSHE they become aware of the different qualities and values of food.

Pupils gain confidence in their ability to succeed and they consequently begin to make good contributions by answering questions and engaging in class discussions. Throughout

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the unit they play their part by supporting charitable events and joining in with communal activities such as Red Nose Day. Despite most attending part time some undertake school trips and residential visits. These activities help them to see how others work and live and bring pupils into contact with people from other religions and cultures. For most pupils attendance is average, although a few remain as persistent absentees.

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	1
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	1

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 is good overall. In the best lessons pupils have very clear targets and expectations and tasks are matched to their ability. This enables pupils to get on with their work and behave well. Here, teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' prior attainments. The use of assessment to support learning is good overall. However, while assessment records in Key Stage 4 are very helpful in showing how well pupils meet their academic targets, they are less well developed in this regard in Key Stages 2 and 3. Senior leaders are now considering how to improve assessment records with the younger classes so that information can be gathered more efficiently and hence used to optimum effect. Teachers work hard to find ways of engaging pupils and maintaining their interest in lessons. Classroom assistants are effective in providing help to complete tasks and consolidate learning. For example, in practical subjects pupils are supported to carry out investigations, consider risk and learn how to stay safe.

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The good curriculum has some exciting aspects. For example, the forest school provides an appropriate environment for younger pupils to gain confidence in their own ability and to improve their self-esteem. For older pupils the number of courses available has extended. Programmes are individualised so that they can gain qualifications to help them to move on to the next stages. Throughout, there is a focus on developing the skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of computers. Thus, pupils make good gains in developing their key skills in preparation for returning to mainstream education.

The outstanding care, guidance and support are great strengths of this provision. Staff know the pupils very well indeed and all pupils are allocated with a key teacher who engages with them as individuals to ensure that the curriculum is well matched and that they are making the most of the opportunities provided. Key teachers liaise very effectively with pupils' home schools to ensure that sound preparations are in place for reintegration to mainstream education. Where pupils are dual registered, the teachers work closely with the home schools to ensure that information about assessments and progress is shared. Furthermore, staff provide training and advice concerning the behaviour management of some particularly challenging pupils to staff in the home schools.

The large majority of pupils previously failed to attend regularly at their mainstream schools but upon entry to Newbridge attendance rapidly improves. This is because staff work very hard and in cooperation with the educational welfare service to liaise with families. Furthermore, Newbridge employs an attendance officer to maintain close links with pupils' homes and to encourage pupils to attend regularly. However, a few pupils remain persistent absentees.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads the unit well and has successfully encouraged a good sense of shared purpose. As a result, staff are keen to do well and provide the best opportunities for pupils. Since the last inspection senior leaders have instigated changes that have improved the service, such as in gaining better outcomes for pupils in Key Stage 4 and extending the curriculum to include elements such as outdoor education. A significant recent development is the instigation of key teachers who liaise with families and take responsibility for the welfare of pupils. Consequently, care, guidance and support of pupils have improved to outstanding since the last inspection. The outstanding management committee has members who work with other local educational and welfare services that

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provide for pupils. Therefore, the committee is very knowledgeable and highly supportive of the unit.

Safeguarding practice in the unit is outstanding. This is because of the great experience of senior staff and some members of the management committee. Furthermore, very high levels of safeguarding training have been undertaken by a wide group of staff. Very good relationships exist with the officers of the local authority responsible for safeguarding who, for example, review the unit's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding annually. The outstanding engagement with parents and carers is the responsibility of all staff. It is supported by the attendance officer and the education welfare officer of the local authority. This high level of rapport with parents and carers helps to ensure that most pupils attend regularly and that any potential difficulties are quickly resolved.

Management of the inclusive curriculum by the senior team helps ensure that no pupils are discriminated against and that all have good opportunities to succeed and achieve their potential. Equality is further ensured by the good work undertaken by the key teachers who support individual pupils. Newbridge staff promote good community cohesion within the unit through encouraging pupils to recognise and come to terms with their differences. However, the promotion of community cohesion beyond the unit is at an earlier stage of development and, hence, community cohesion is judged to be satisfactory overall. Through the effective use of the building and resources available, including new technology and personnel, Newbridge represents good value for money.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The 16 questionnaires from parents and carers was a higher than expected return from a provision of this nature. Returns were all extremely positive with only a very few negative responses to the individual questions. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers

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indicated that they are kept informed about their child and that their own suggestions and concerns are taken into account. This reflects the findings of the inspection with regard to the unit's engagement with families.

Where parents and carers offered comments it was usually in relation to the high quality of pastoral care in the provision. Several mentioned positive changes in the behaviour and attitude of their children since starting at the unit. Others praised the efforts of the staff. For example, one parent or carer commented: 'Outstanding is the only word to describe the school. All staff have taken account of the problems my child has and they have worked extremely hard to help him.' These comments are in line with the findings of the inspection in relation to the outstanding care, guidance and support.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newbridge House PRU 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 46 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	31	9	56	1	6	1	6
The school keeps my child safe	4	25	12	75	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	50	6	38	1	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	38	9	56	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	56	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	31	9	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	19	12	75	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)	4	25	11	69	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	31	9	56	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	50	8	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	31	9	56	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	50	8	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	63	6	38	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newbridge House PRU, Barrow-in-Furness, LA13 9HU

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited Newbridge recently. I very much enjoyed meeting with you in your classes and during break times. I was particularly impressed with your good behaviour, manners and politeness.

Newbridge is a good unit because you make good progress and achieve well. Most of you appreciate the new opportunities that it provides. Older pupils obtain good qualifications and the gains that you make in your personal development are impressive. Your improved social skills help you to return to mainstream schools or move on to the next stages of your lives. Newbridge provides you with outstanding opportunities to experience activities such as working in the forest school or enjoying outdoor education. The staff work very hard and provide you with good lessons and outstanding care, guidance and support. The leaders and managers are good and you have an outstanding management committee that helps with accessing the high quality partnerships that the school enjoys with outside agencies. Your parents and carers greatly appreciate the very high levels of engagement and communication that takes place between home and the unit. You are protected very well by those who administer the exemplary safeguarding practices at the unit.

Mostly, you attend school regularly but a few of you are persistent absentees. For you, your opportunities are being wasted and I have asked the staff and local authority to work harder together to try to engage you. I have also asked the headteacher to improve the systems for recording assessments for you younger pupils to help you to make even greater progress in your lessons.

Thank you for your interest in the inspection and I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McKenzie

Lead inspector

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