

New Horizons Learning Centre (PRU)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131626
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	381378
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	6–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	John Antill
Headteacher	Tania Craig
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
School address	Charborough Road Filton Bristol BS34 7RB
Telephone number	01454 868600
Fax number	01454 868601
Email address	Tania.Craig@southglos.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were seen, taken by seven different teachers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including pupils' books, the school development plan, school self-evaluation, assessment data and policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils. They analysed questionnaire returns from eight parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How assessment data are used to track individual pupils' progress.
- The quality and range of vocational opportunities for older pupils.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures on the three different sites.

Information about the school

The New Horizons Learning Centre Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) changed its name in September 2011 from the Cotswold Education Centre because it is now part of a federation with a new local school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The PRU also manages the local authority behaviour support service. It is based on three different sites across South Gloucestershire, each one delivering educational programmes to students who are not attending mainstream schools. The sites are:

- The Severnside Campus, based at Filton, for secondary-aged pupils in Years 7 to 9 who are excluded from mainstream schools for a short period and for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are permanently excluded from mainstream schools
- The Mangotsfield Campus, at Mangotsfield, which caters for medical referrals and/or school-aged pupils in Years 7 to 11 and for primary-aged pupils who are excluded from their schools and require support for their behaviour
- The Barbara Russell Children's Unit, based at Frenchay Hospital, which provides for hospitalised children and young people.

The New Horizons Learning Centre Pupil Referral Unit serves 15 secondary schools, 100 primary schools and three special schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are a very few girls. A small minority has additional special educational needs, mainly specific learning needs. The executive headteacher and the executive deputy headteacher, as well as the governing body, are all new to their current roles and have been in their posts for three weeks. The local authority has delegated responsibilities to the new governing body.

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?**4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****4**

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this centre requires a notice to improve because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to arrangements for safeguarding which are not robust and systems to maintain and update them are ineffective. Significant improvement is also required in the quality of leadership, management and governance.

The New Horizons Learning Centre (PRU) currently provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory and, as a result, pupils' achievement and personal development are satisfactory. However, overall effectiveness is inadequate because leaders and managers have yet to establish a shared ambition among staff and have yet to ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place and are consistently applied.

Although the quality of teaching and learning at the PRU is satisfactory overall, it is significantly better at the Mangotsfield site and the Barbara Russell Unit, where it is good. At The Severnside Campus, tasks sometimes lack variety and marking does not regularly help pupils to improve their work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, although variable, and depend very much on the quality of provision that they experience and the quality of support that they receive. Most pupils make satisfactory progress and some, particularly those at the Mangotsfield site, make good progress. The majority of pupils across the PRU take accredited courses in Years 10 and 11. They attain GCSEs in a range of subjects, with a few at the higher grades. Pupils also have opportunities to experience a range of vocational courses and accreditation in conjunction with local colleges. For example, they learn about life at work as they study hairdressing, car mechanics and construction. Some pupils say they would like more choices and a more interesting range of activities. A small minority of pupils say they do not feel safe at the PRU. Parents' and carers' views of the PRU are variable although only a very few responded to the inspection questionnaires.

Leaders have ensured sufficient progress towards targets set at the previous inspection to improve assessment, record achievements and increase the amount and quality of vocational experiences for older pupils. The new executive headteacher, executive deputy and governing body are working to develop all

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aspects of the provision. They are fully aware that some aspects of evaluation and monitoring have lacked rigour, particularly in relation to some of the centres, and that as a result there has been too positive a view of the impact of some of the PRU's work. Self-evaluation carried out prior to the start of this term lacks sharpness about what the PRU needs to do to improve. As a result, there is no shared understanding across the centres of what is required. At this stage therefore, the PRU's capacity to improve is inadequate. However, the new leadership team is providing stable management and a much better understanding of what urgently requires attention. The team is fully supported by the local authority and has made a strong start. For example, as a result of a recent focus on attendance, there have been improvements this term and, although there is more to do for older pupils, attendance is now above average for younger pupils in particular.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding and care by:
 - ensuring that procedures meet current government guidelines
 - helping all staff to understand safeguarding policies
 - monitoring provision rigorously to ensure compliance to agreed policies and procedures
 - ensuring that all pupils feel secure.
 -
- Improve teaching, particularly at The Severnside Campus, so that pupils make good progress by:
 - varying tasks to fine tune them to the different needs and abilities of pupils
 - embedding the marking policy so that all pupils know how well they are doing
 - regularly monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in all the centres.
 -
- Improve attendance for the older pupils by:
 - working closely with pupils, parents and carers, and support agencies
 - ensuring that pupils' interest is engaged when they are at the PRU
 - building on the improvements made to the vocational experiences.
 -
- Develop a shared understanding and commitment by staff across all centres.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils, including those with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress. There are differences in the amount of progress made by pupils at the three different sites. It is more rapid when activities are fully matched to their individual needs and where staff plan exciting tasks and deliver lessons at a fast pace. As a result, pupils start to show enthusiasm for learning and stay on task for long periods. For example, at the Barbara Russell Unit, three pupils of different ages and abilities made good progress as they learned about the difference between Greek and Aborigine cultures. They showed good levels of interest in the artefacts and pictures provided and enjoyed making some pictures themselves using the different techniques that they had learned about. The exciting activities and content engaged them well and contributed to their good learning. Similarly, at the Mangotsfield site, pupils benefit from mostly good teaching resulting in their good achievements. Two pupils in Year 6, for example, were able to develop clear understanding of characterisation because the teacher planned practical tasks, pictures and cartoons to excite and engage them. As a result they were able to describe their character clearly to visitors and annotate a picture accurately. Where work is not sufficiently targeted to abilities and when expectations are too low, behaviour deteriorates and some, particularly at the Severnside site, fail to complete their tasks and very occasionally walk out of lessons.

Most pupils recognise the importance of eating healthily. They know that fruit is good for them, for example, but not all make healthy choices. They also know that smoking is not good for them and understand the dangers of smoking when pregnant. However, several admitted that they still smoke despite the dangers. Younger pupils adhere more readily to healthy lifestyles and all pupils enjoy physical activities. There are examples of the PRU going beyond what is required in order to engage pupils in exercise. One pupil at Severnside, for example, told inspectors that his teacher has arranged for him to play badminton at a local centre because he did not like other sports. A majority of pupils contribute appropriately to the school and community. For example, a few have responsibilities to help to clear away after lessons and lunch. Most pupils say they feel safe. A very few pupils said they feel insecure because of some challenging behaviour from others. Behaviour seen during the inspection both in lessons and around the different sites was satisfactory. Given the improvements in their behaviour and the qualifications that pupils achieve, the majority are prepared appropriately for their futures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

3

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

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

How effective is the provision?

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

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Teachers have mainly positive relationships with their pupils. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan tasks that are well matched to abilities and interests, helping to engage pupils in learning. Disruptions in learning are rare and are mainly evident where older pupils find it difficult to cope with a situation or task. However, in a few lessons teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information when planning activities for their pupils. When work is not pitched at the right level for them, pupils still make progress because very high levels of support are provided but as a result they do not learn to work independently. The disruptive behaviour of a few pupils at Severnside is not always managed well and, as a result, some pupils' progress is more limited.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with some exciting opportunities planned for younger pupils. A key strength is the quality of morning assemblies which successfully focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Some pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefited from a calm and productive start to their day by reviewing their own attendance and points charts. Each pupil was asked to explain any drop from the previous week. Pupils reflected on their own performances and enjoyed their certificates. A good range of sports activities, including team sports, swimming and cycling are planned and help to keep pupils fit and healthy. Food technology focuses on healthy ingredients and pupils are encouraged to cook their own lunches.

Many of the pupils at the PRU experience difficulties that may make them vulnerable but procedures to track and protect pupils are not rigorous enough and senior staff recognise this. Recent procedures to improve attendance are beginning to work. Transition in and out of the PRU is well managed and staff work closely with a wide range of agencies and professionals to support pupils and try to prevent them from drifting into trouble and out of the education system.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The federation of the PRU in September 2011 with the new local school, under joint leadership, has resulted in many changes to the way the PRU is now led and managed. The staffing structure has changed and many staff have taken on different responsibilities. However, not all staff are supportive of the changes. Monitoring and support of teaching and learning have been effective on some sites but have not been as rigorous or regular in others. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent.

There is also a lack of rigour in some other procedures and a lack of consistency in the way the PRU fulfils its responsibilities, particularly in relation to safeguarding. These procedures are not underpinned strongly enough by a comprehensive range of policies that can be strictly adhered to. Child protection training for staff meets requirements and the PRU makes appropriate links with other agencies to help keep pupils safe. However, records are incomplete, there is no clear overview of the safeguarding process and staff are unclear about lines of responsibility.

There are suitable arrangements for promoting community cohesion and, as a result, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for life in the modern United Kingdom. Partnerships with local colleges successfully help to extend vocational experiences. The effectiveness with which the PRU promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is satisfactory. Governance is inadequate because of the weaknesses in safeguarding. The new governing body has recently taken over responsibility for managing the PRU from the local authority and is improving its systems and effectiveness. It is supportive of the new executive leadership and governors are already formulating plans to monitor provision and pupils' outcomes more rigorously.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	4

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met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Very few parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaires. Of those who responded, almost all said that their children enjoys school. Two parents of pupils at the Barbara Russell Unit wrote about their children's successes. 'I am very pleased with the school as my daughter missed a lot of time when she was in hospital. When she came home she had caught up and her grades were very good,' wrote one parent. Another commented, 'The staff at the hospital school are endlessly patient, understanding and kind.' A small minority of parents and carers do not feel that the school keeps their children safe and the inspection evidence shows safeguarding procedures require improvement. About half of the parents and carers who responded said that the school does not meet their children's needs or prepare them well enough for their futures. Inspectors found that the school meets pupils' needs appropriately and prepares them satisfactorily for their futures.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Horizons Learning Centre (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 inspection team received 8 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	38	3	38	0	0	1	13
The school keeps my child safe	3	38	1	13	2	25	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	38	2	25	1	13	1	13
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	25	2	25	2	25	1	13
The teaching is good at this school	3	38	3	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	38	2	25	1	13	1	13
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	38	2	25	2	25	1	13
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)	3	38	1	13	3	38	1	13
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	38	1	13	3	38	1	13
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	50	2	25	1	13	1	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	50	0	0	4	50	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	50	3	38	1	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	38	2	25	2	25	1	13

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of New Horizons Learning Centre Pupil Referral Unit (PRU),
Bristol BS34 7RB**

Thank you for your help in our recent visit. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during our inspection.

- Your PRU gives you a satisfactory education, which means you make the progress expected of you.
- Many of you told us that you enjoy your time at the PRU. We are pleased to see that some of you, particularly younger pupils, attend more often now.
- You achieve appropriately in your lessons and courses and some younger pupils make good progress.
- You told us that you try to be healthy. Some said that you smoke even though you know it is unhealthy. We know you try to do lots of exercise.
- Most of you behave appropriately.

We found, though, that some things are inadequate. For example, things that should be done to make sure you stay safe are not happening. Also, not all staff are yet working as a team with the new management. For this reason we have given the PRU a 'notice to improve' and inspectors will come back to check how much the PRU improves. We are asking your leaders to do these things to help everything work better.

- Make sure you are being kept safe.
- Help you all to make better progress and engage with school by making sure that tasks are interesting and your work is marked regularly and helpfully.
- Work with you and your parents and carers to make sure you all attend regularly, particularly those of you in Key Stage 4.
- Help staff in the different centres to work more as a team.

You could help too by doing your best to come to the PRU every day and trying hard to stay in your lessons. Thank you again for your help and good luck for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris
Lead inspector

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