

The Priory Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130981
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	381285
Inspection dates	5–6 October 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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Appropriate authority	The Management Committee
Chair	Ros Lund
Headteacher	William A. Carpenter
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Four lessons taught by four teachers were observed as were some off-site field study arrangements. Key documents concerning the work of the unit were scrutinised. Meetings were held with parents and carers, senior staff, a member of the management committee and a local authority adviser. Less formal talks were held with a local high school headteacher, students and staff during lessons, in the unit and during the field trip. The inspector observed the work of the unit and looked at seven inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which the unit encourages the best possible progress and attendance.
- Whether the students gain appropriate improvements in their attainments before moving back to mainstream schools or on to the Key Stage 4 unit.
- The degree to which the curriculum provides equal opportunities for all to be included in learning.
- The effectiveness of arrangements made for the care, guidance and support of the students.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in setting targets, improving the unit and encouraging high standards.

Information about the school

The Priory Centre provides for boys and girls in Key Stage 3 who live in Wakefield and have been excluded from local maintained secondary schools. It also provides support for those who are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. All students are currently identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities under the Code of Practice but currently very few have a statement of special educational needs. Most students have experienced great disruption to their education, often associated with behavioural issues and low attendance. A higher proportion than average is known to be eligible for free school meals. The mobility of students is high with the majority staying at the unit for short periods of time before returning to a school or transferring to the Key Stage 4 unit.

Since the last inspection the provision has been reorganised and the local authority has provided additional resources and support to the unit and its management committee. The senior team has changed with the headteacher appointed from January 2011. At the time of the inspection, six students were involved in a residential field study trip to the Yorkshire Dales and were visited by the inspector.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Following a period of reorganisation, The Priory Centre provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education for students and cares for them well. Parents and carers value the unit's work and one reflected the views of many when writing, 'All the staff are brilliant!' The local authority speaks highly of the unit as do local schools with which it works in close partnership. Students' attainment on entry is usually well below that of their peers in mainstream schools but, for most, attainment improves strongly while they are at the unit. Overall, progress is satisfactory but rapidly improving and for some students it is good. The good guidance and support provided by classroom staff help students to engage with learning and to make the most of their chances to improve. They quickly come to behave well and contribute in lessons. Consequently, by the time they move on to their next placements, while their attainment remains low, almost all students can demonstrate significant improvement in academic standards.

Priory has developed and maintains good partnerships with others to support the learning and well-being of students. These processes are overseen by the effective leadership and management of the headteacher. One particularly positive consequence of this work is that from previously high rates of absence, students' attendance is now broadly average overall. Nevertheless, a very small number of students remain persistently absent and contacts with their families and the local authority have not resulted in improved attendance. The senior team is determined that rates of attendance can be improved further for the current group of students. Exclusions from the unit and the supported mainstream schools have diminished. Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. This is because of the exemplary practice of the experienced staff and managers who work diligently for the protection of students.

The curriculum is good; it is well matched to the particular needs of individual students. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but is improving rapidly. This is because school leaders, through increasingly rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, have ensured that teachers are assessing students' work regularly. School leaders recognise that consistently using assessment information to match tasks to students' abilities is the next step in improving progress further. Students do not always learn as quickly as they could because individual learning targets are not used well enough in lessons.

The sense of shared purpose engendered by the headteacher has increased staff morale following a difficult period of reorganisation for the unit. Members of the management committee are active in encouraging the unit to improve its systems and implement changes. Consequently, Priory has greatly improved recently so that the majority of outcomes for students are good and much of the provision is good. However, while monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders is having a strong impact on improving teaching, occasionally it focuses more on the quality of teaching activities than on the quality of learning outcomes for students. School leaders have an accurate view through self-evaluation of Priory's strengths and weaknesses and have undertaken good quality reviews upon which improvement planning is based. As a result, Priory has good capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of students' progress so that it is at least consistently good and hence raise attainment further by:
 - ensuring that teachers make accurate use of assessment information in their planning to consistently match tasks to students' abilities.
- Increase the proportion of good or better lessons by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan and use lesson targets for individual students
 - making sure that leaders' monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning always focus sharply on outcomes for students.
- Consolidate and improve further the rate of attendance by:
 - working even more closely with the local authority and the harder-to-reach families to encourage the very few persistent absentees to attend regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Through their attendance at the unit, many students experience their first successes in education. All groups begin to enjoy learning and become more confident about contributing to classroom activities. For example, in a science lesson, students were observed discussing their findings from the practical work. Despite overall attainment remaining low, students' achievement is satisfactory because of the strong improvements to their levels of attainment through the satisfactory and rapidly improving progress they make. Many are quickly and successfully re-integrated into mainstream education.

Lessons generate sound opportunities for literacy and numeracy skills to be developed and consolidated. Consequently, and supported through their very largely regular attendance, students gain skills in English and mathematics that are helpful to their re-integration into mainstream settings. For those who transfer to the Key

Stage 4 unit, this satisfactory development of skills allows them to consider vocational and educational courses that can lead to qualifications.

Most students reported through their questionnaires that they feel safe in the unit. A very few students indicated that they did not always feel safe but, despite it being closely investigated throughout the inspection, no evidence was found to support this concern. In conversations, students explained that bullying and harassment are almost unknown and any issues are properly dealt with by staff. Students learn about keeping themselves safe in personal, social, and health education (PSHE). Good partnerships with staff encourage them to explore relationships and feelings. If necessary, they can seek good quality advice about issues such as drugs, alcohol and smoking from the school nurse who visits the school regularly. Social skills improve because the adults act as effective role models. Consequently, students learn to behave and respect each other. They begin to recognise the effects of their actions on others. One praised the good work of the staff by describing the unit as having 'a family atmosphere'. Their contributions to the unit's community are good. For example, students have recently helped the headteacher review and revise lunchtime arrangements. In the wider community they participate in inter-school tournaments and have worked with a local special school in planting a garden. The range of visits and other experiences, such as the regular outdoor education activities, allow students to learn about people who live in other places and who have different beliefs. Students learn about healthy eating and respond well to healthy choices which are made available at lunch times. They maintain their physical fitness and reduce their stress levels by taking part in the many physical and enrichment activities such as physical education and outdoor education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. Where it is most effective, students are challenged with small, well-considered steps for learning. Here the tasks are matched appropriately to students' levels of ability, barriers to learning are taken

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

into account and classroom assistants are appropriately directed to support individual students. However, teaching mostly provides opportunities for only satisfactory academic progress to occur. This concurs with recent evaluations of teaching and learning by school leaders and is because teachers do not make full use of assessment information to plan the most effective lessons for all students. Teachers promote students' good personal development and social skills through encouraging good levels of participation. Adults work successfully to make lessons interesting, maintain high-quality relationships and manage inappropriate behaviour.

The work undertaken is linked to the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3. The focus on developing skills in literacy and numeracy benefits especially those students who return to their high schools. Furthermore, staff skilfully adapt programmes of study to the needs of individuals. As a result, the curriculum content is good and is rapidly improving under the direction of the school's leadership. The wide variety of enrichment activities and extra-curricular work is carefully and effectively linked to the rewards systems for good behaviour.

Good care, guidance and support are demonstrated through, for example, the willingness of the staff to accompany students on residential experiences. Here students are provided with good opportunities to live and work co-operatively together. During the inspection, opportunities were generated for students to demonstrate that they could work well together in their residential facility and support each other when using a climbing wall. The mainstream schools working with the unit confirm that Priory helps to reduce the numbers of students who become permanently excluded in their schools. For those who are excluded, there are routes available through the work of the unit and guidance of staff to enable them to return, if possible, to mainstream schools. School leaders ensure that students' absences are investigated promptly. Consequently, there has been a steady reduction in the number of unauthorised absences and a recent rapid improvement in attendance.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new leadership team has started well and has already improved teaching and the use of assessment information. They are working to raise the overall quality of teaching to good so that students can make better progress. They are reviewing the curriculum and encouraging staff to build on the already good aspects of the courses of study and to take greater responsibility for students' progress. Thus, there is a renewed sense of purpose among staff and this is reflected by the views of students, who appreciate the new opportunities being provided for them. Members of the management committee are experienced and competent. They have successfully helped the unit to emerge from a period of reorganisation by providing stability,

support, challenge and expertise. The committee discharges its statutory duties well, such as in ensuring that procedures for recruitment are exemplary and that senior staff have high levels of training in safeguarding matters. Safeguarding practices and procedures at Priory are outstanding because of the very high levels of training and expertise of the staff. Furthermore, excellent relationships exist with safeguarding officers of the local authority and these have led to extremely positive effects on the lives of some students and their families.

The inclusive curriculum helps to ensure that no students are discriminated against or left out of the learning process. Managers gather and scrutinise assessment information to ensure that all are included and are making at least the expected progress. Furthermore, staff know the students very well and quickly become aware of any immediate difficulties that could prevent them from taking part in lessons and this helps all to be included and have opportunities to achieve and fulfil their potential. Community cohesion initiatives are satisfactory because of the active promotion of tolerance and harmony within the unit. However, senior managers have not finalised the action plan to show how this work will be taken into the wider community. Nevertheless, there are many opportunities for students to experience first hand the ways that others work and live.

These are the grades for the 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	1
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

In addition to the seven parents and carers who returned responses to the questionnaire, two asked to meet the inspector in person. Almost all indications from parents and carers were positive and they were keen to express their support for Priory and gave examples of how their children had benefited from the service. For example, one parent or carer explained that without the Priory Centre her child would have had little chance of success in education but can now see a successful future with the prospect of qualifications.

Parents and carers confirmed that their children feel safe in the unit. They believe that, largely, the needs of their children are being met and that any unsatisfactory behaviour is quickly dealt with. These views reflect the findings of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Priory Centre 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 8 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 11 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	63	2	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	63	3	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	38	4	50	1	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	63	3	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	63	3	38	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	50	3	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	88	1	13	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	88	1	13	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	63	3	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	75	2	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	75	2	25	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	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 is 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.



7 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Priory Centre, Wakefield, WF4 1LL

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited The Priory Centre recently. I particularly enjoyed seeing you at the climbing wall. I was impressed with your contributions during lessons and it was pleasing to witness your good behaviour and the good relationships with staff and with each other during the field trip.

The Priory provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of teaching is improving and is beginning to match the good curriculum. The standards of care, guidance and support provided for you by the staff are good. You were keen to tell me that you feel safe and appreciate the work that the adults do for you. Most of you improve your behaviour and attendance. Consequently, you are able to join in with lessons and enjoy satisfactory achievements. Most of you take advantage of the good opportunities to be healthy through exercise and outdoor education. Therefore, you gain the skills and confidence to move on to the next stages of your lives. The way that you are safeguarded and protected is outstanding. The management committee supports the headteacher well. The good leadership team has successfully gained the co-operation of others so that effective partnerships exist with your parents and carers and with important local agencies and other schools.

I have asked the headteacher to make sure that even more is done by the unit and its partners to encourage some of you to improve your attendance even further. I would like Priory to help you all to make even faster academic progress by improving teaching and the use of assessment and the way school leaders check on the unit's work.

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

Yours sincerely,

Terry McKenzie
Lead Inspector

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