

Highfields Inclusion Partnership

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134623
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	381700
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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	88
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Andy Simpkins
Headteacher	Lesley Persico
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith
Stephen Helm

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons taught by 13 teachers or other staff. Meetings were held with students, representatives of the Management Committee and local authority, other partners and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's evaluation of its performance, the current development plan, minutes of meetings of the Management Committee and safeguarding documentation. The responses to the two questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also analysed.

Information about the school

A new headteacher was appointed to this average-size pupil referral unit (PRU) in September 2011. At this point responsibility for the Secondary Behaviour Support Service was removed from the management of the PRU by the local authority and the management committee approved the change of name to Highfields Inclusion Partnership. The PRU now caters for Key Stage 3 and 4 students who are either permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. Until one week before this inspection, provision was delivered on three sites but now it is on two, as the provision for 15 students involved with the youth offending team named Alternative Curriculum Experience (ACE) and provision for 16 students who are attending from day six (Day Six) of their exclusion from other schools are co-located but kept separate. Most students stay at the centre for two terms but students who arrive in Years 10 and 11 stay longer and the usual length of stay in the Day Six provision is eight weeks. The majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The PRU is an approved centre for Open Awards: Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA); Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC); Edexcel and Oxford Cambridge; and RSA Examinations (OCR).

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory pupil referral unit and enables students to gain a wide range of accreditations and secures good progress in social development and satisfactory progress in academic development for the majority of pupils. It is not yet good because not enough students are making this progress. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Students' attainment on entry to the PRU is low because their prior learning has been disrupted. Although attainment remains low for most, by the time they leave the majority settle quickly and narrow the gap between themselves and their peers in levels of attainment.
- The majority of teaching results in satisfactory progress. Some teaching is good and there is also some exemplary practice. However, this best practice is not consistently the norm. Consequently, some students do not take part fully in lessons, which slows their progress.
- The majority of students make rapid improvements in behaviour and personal development and most try hard to behave as well as they can. Students are usually polite and respectful, and bullying is rare. Attendance is low.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the majority of students well. It gives priority to the development of English and mathematics skills and gives students access to a range of accreditation, although alternatives to following accredited courses are not as extensive. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The new headteacher is collecting a wide range of assessment data. However, the use of this information to analyse and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes is at an early stage of development. Leaders at all levels are now working as a team and the management committee provides clear challenge and support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by always:
 - planning activities which challenge and enthuse students
 - ensuring that students always know what their individual learning target is
 - providing pupils with information about what they need to do to be successful
 - allowing students to work without close adult support more often.

- Improve attendance by:
 - more consistent use of reward systems to help those students who need to manage their behaviour, and to improve attendance.

- Ensure that monitoring has a greater impact on school improvement by:
 - rigorously analysing and evaluating the good information collected
 - using the outcomes of the analysis to precisely inform priorities for development.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students arrive at Highfields with low attainment in English, mathematics and other subjects. This is usually because their education has been disrupted and there are gaps in their learning. Students in the short-stay Day Six provision begin to improve attainment in English and mathematics immediately because attention is given to filling in those gaps. Students in Alternative Curriculum Experience (ACE) begin to achieve because staff analyse carefully why pupils have not been able to engage with learning previously, and begin to tackle the reasons for this. Records show that, on entry, students' self-esteem is often low and personal and life skills are not well developed. During their time at Highfields, the majority of students make satisfactory progress in academic development and narrow the gap slightly between themselves and their peers with the same starting points. A small minority narrow the gap well between themselves and their peers in English, mathematics and core skills and this enables them to successfully re-engage with learning. A few students make some remarkable achievements in personal development. Assessment data about students' progress are used to track progress and identify when they are ready to return to mainstream, especially for those in Key Stage 3. However, targets set for progress in English and mathematics are not sufficiently challenging. Progress in reading has been monitored more closely recently and interventions have been put in place but it is too early to see an impact on standards as yet. Learning in lessons is promoted energetically by support staff and this has a good impact. However, sometimes students are happy to let someone else do what they could do themselves. Students make progress in developing a healthy lifestyle and are increasingly optimistic about their future. Although students make satisfactory progress, attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 remains low overall.

The majority of students who attend make good progress in developing personal skills, particularly self-management of behaviour. This means that they are better equipped to be successful in their next school or destination that they attend. There is no difference in the progress made by students with special educational needs. Parents and carers who gave their views about achievement agreed that it was satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

During the inspection the full range of teaching quality was observed though the majority was satisfactory. In the best lessons the level of challenge was at the right level and students were clear about what they were learning. They understood what they needed to do to be successful and they were enthused by what they were learning. However, in some lessons the level of challenge for students was too low, and occasionally tasks were not interesting enough. Consequently, the impact of teaching on students' learning and progress over time is satisfactory. Occasionally, students make good or better progress in lessons when expectations are high. For example, in one outstanding lesson students were first challenged to make four formatting changes to a piece of text in two seconds. They went on to achieve this by efficient use of shortcuts on the keyboard. Students continued to learn new skills and consolidate those previously learned. Because of the nature of the text, they were able, at the same time, to develop their knowledge of how to manage risk associated with using mobile phones in public places. When this happens, students' progress accelerates and those who were underperforming make up lost ground.

Schemes of work help ensure that the needs of students are met because they are carefully planned to cover the requirements of the curriculum and to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers plan activities to build on prior learning and build towards the requirements of accreditation. For example, in an English lesson, students identified how to write an article in an exam to achieve the maximum marks. However, sometimes learning about the technique to achieve marks in an exam makes learning dull and means that too much time is spent listening to the teacher. Students' moral development progresses well because it is well attended to in lessons, such as when pupils consider the clip from YouTube showing people pretending to help the student in London during the riots when they were really stealing from him. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire agree that teaching is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

When students arrive at Highfields, their attitude to learning often disrupts their progress. However, after a short time, as a result of the care and patience given to them by the staff, the majority of students begin to settle and are able to spend more time learning. They are helped to understand that they need to improve their behaviour so that they can begin to achieve better and move on. The staff give students strategies to use to enable them to improve their self-control and to modify any unacceptable social interactions. Students mostly try hard to live up to expectations. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the staff to increase students' life chances, and they build up trust in the staff. As a result of this, behaviour improves. There are a few outbursts of challenging behaviour but these are usually well managed. The number of exclusions is reducing. A minority of students say that behaviour is not always good and parents and carers agree that this is work in progress. Some low-level disruption exists in a minority of lessons and when boundaries are not made clear. Students say they feel safe and there is very little bullying of any kind. They strongly agree that the school deals with these rare cases of bullying effectively, and parents and carers agree. Attendance is low and sometimes students on site are absent from lessons. Reward systems are not always used consistently to promote better attendance, however, most students improve their attendance when they attend the PRU and a few do so exceptionally well. Attitudes to work and the response to visitors and staff are usually respectful and conduct around school is orderly and safe.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection, the restructuring of the secondary behaviour support service has slowed school improvement overall. However, over the last two terms progress has been accelerated by the new headteacher. She has cemented the leadership of the school around a strong vision, and the change is very apparent and appreciated by all. The successful relocation of the two smaller separate provisions and restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities have had a positive impact. For example, staff from all provisions have begun to share best practice together. Partnership with careers professionals and mainstream schools has been strengthened further, and arrangements for transition are good. These are having a positive effect on students' success. Self-evaluation involves everybody, and staff now use the tracking system better to monitor pupils' progress. However, data are not informing priorities for action as precisely as necessary because their analysis requires further tuning. Nevertheless, the progress seen in some areas, notably in aspects of students' personal development and the academic progress of some students, shows that the PRU's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Lesson monitoring takes place and is being used to improve performance, although it is not sharply focused on the progress made by students in lessons and targets set for improved performance are not followed up sufficiently rigorously. Strengths of the curriculum are provision for students' personal development, particularly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the fact that it gives students access to a wide range of accreditations. However, opportunities for individual students to follow a vocational curriculum off site are more limited. Students make a significant contribution to an attractive environment through high quality art. All staff are very welcoming and this ethos permeates the school. The school takes positive action to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination in all of its work. The management committee meets the needs of the PRU through the appropriate balance of challenge and support, and the headteacher has ensured its members are supplied with detailed information upon which they make decisions. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust and meet statutory requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 April 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Highfields Inclusion Partnership, Stockport SK5 8DR

Thank you for being respectful and approachable when my colleague and I inspected your PRU. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting lessons. Thank you for taking the time to give me your views. It was clear from talking with you and the questionnaire replies we received from you and your parents and carers that you feel very safe at school. You are also very pleased with the way the new headteacher is changing things. Many of you are making good progress in your personal development and are learning to manage your behaviour better.

We judged the PRU as satisfactory. This is because teaching is satisfactory and so you are making satisfactory progress in learning and good progress in personal development. Some of you are doing better than this because you make sure you attend, and in some lessons teachers have high expectations of you and make sure that activities are fun and help you learn well.

I have asked the teachers to do three things to help you make good progress more often. They are to make more lessons engaging by making what you do as interesting as possible; asking you to complete activities at just the right level of challenge; to ensure that you always know what you are learning; know what you need to do to be successful and to let you work for more of the time without a member of staff very close to you. The second is to make better use of rewards to encourage you to attend better and behave as well as you can. The third is to use the information collected by the PRU to make it as good as it can be.

I hope you will try to do all you can to help the staff and encourage each other to do the right thing.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Hilling-Smith
Lead inspector

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