

New Horizons Learning Centre (PRU)

Charborough Road, Filton, Bristol, BS34 7RB

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good, particularly at the Severnside Campus. Teachers do not always match work precisely to the needs of different learners and expectations for behaviour are not high enough in a few lessons. As a result students' progress is not consistently strong.
- The pupil referral unit (PRU) has worked closely with parents and carers and agencies to improve attendance. However, the attendance of some students remains too low.
- While the leadership team, including governors, has been highly effective in quickly establishing policies and procedures to drive improvement, it has not fully ensured that its ambition for rapid change is shared by all staff.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong systems have been implemented to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the PRU's work. As a result, there is an accurate understanding of how well students are doing and what needs to be done to raise achievement.
- Rigorous and consistent safeguarding procedures are now in place in all centres and students say that they feel safe.
- Students at the Barbara Russell Children's Unit and The Junction make good progress and achieve well because they are given good individual support.
- Staff at the '6day+ Provision' and at the Courtney Road Primary PRU are skilled at teaching students how to manage their own behaviour. As a result, these students become successful learners.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited the four sites and all five provisions. They met with the teacher responsible for delivering home tuition.
- Nine lessons were observed, of which three were joint lesson observations with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the local authority’s senior advisor for special needs and vulnerable groups, the deputy principal advisor for quality and standards, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, and with staff.
- Inspectors talked to students at all the centres and heard two students read.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the work of the PRU and looked at a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding practices, improvement planning, students’ records and assessment information on students’ progress. They analysed the 46 questionnaires returned by staff and looked at questionnaires which the PRU had distributed to parents and carers and students.

Inspection team

Christine Emerson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector inspector

Rowena Green

Additional Inspector inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The New Horizons Learning Centre (PRU) is part of the New Horizons Learning Centre Federation with a primary and a secondary school, both of which provide education for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), and the local authority's behaviour support service.
- The local authority has delegated responsibility to the governing body of the federation.
- The PRU is based on four different sites across South Gloucestershire, each one delivering educational programmes for students who are not attending mainstream schools.
- The Severnside Campus, based at Filton, is for secondary-aged students who are excluded from mainstream schools, either for a short period or permanently. Some of these students are in a reintegration unit with a focus on returning to mainstream. A small minority of the students attend early college at Filton or at the College of Bristol.
- The Junction, at Mangotsfield, caters for medical referrals including students with mental health problems and school-aged parents. The centre also provides a home tuition service.
- The '6day+ Provision', which is housed in a separate building on the Mangotsfield site, provides a service for the local authority's secondary schools who can buy places for students on fixed-term exclusions.
- The Courtney Road Primary PRU is co-located with the new primary school for students with BESD at Kingswood. It provides education for primary-aged students who are excluded from school and require support for their behaviour.
- The Barbara Russell Children's Unit is based at Frenchay Hospital. It provides education for hospitalised children and young people, including educational rehabilitation for those with acquired brain injury.
- The PRU serves 15 secondary schools, 100 primary schools and three special schools.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and a large majority are boys. A minority of students are dual registered with mainstream schools. A few are known to be eligible for the pupil premium although this funding is allocated to the schools with which they are dual registered. A minority of students have statements of special educational needs for BESD. A few students are looked after by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching in all centres is consistently good by:
 - matching work set more precisely to the learning levels of individual students
 - giving students personalised learning objectives at the start of lessons so that each student knows exactly what they have to achieve
 - setting high expectations for behaviour in all lessons.
- Improve attendance by ensuring that every student has a well-planned individual learning programme, including activities which motivate them to attend.
- Ensure that all staff, including support staff, share the leadership's vision for change by:
 - involving staff more effectively in planning and reviewing new developments
 - establishing a working party, which includes representatives of the full staff team and governors, to take forward the recommendations of the 'staff well-being' survey.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although some pupils make good progress and achieve well, this is not consistent because work set in lessons is not always fine-tuned to meet the needs of students of different ages and learning levels.
- There is variation in the achievement of students who attend different centres, with students at the Severnside Campus making less progress than those at other long stay centres.
- Although students at The Junction make good progress in mathematics, progress in mathematics is weaker than in English at the Severnside Campus and at the Courtney Road Primary PRU. The PRU has identified this issue and taken action to raise achievement in mathematics by, for instance, improving links between centres to promote better teaching.
- Some Year 11 students achieve vocational qualifications in subjects such as construction and animal care as a result of good opportunities to attend early college.
- GCSE results have improved with more passes at grades D to G. However, there are very few GCSE passes at higher grades.
- Primary-aged students at the Courtney Road Primary PRU make good progress in learning to read and write because of a strong focus on literacy. A Year 4 student read confidently to an inspector and had a good understanding of the text. He was proud to show his reading record which clearly demonstrated the good progress he is making.
- Students at the Barbara Russell Children's Unit, including those with brain injuries, make good progress because they have good individual support and good quality individual learning plans which address their particular needs well. This was evident with a Year 10 student who made good progress in predicting from a story and, with support, developed a good understanding of the plot and characterisation.
- Good links with referring schools enable students on short-term placements, such as those at the '6day+ Provision', to make good progress in their school coursework while they attend the centre.
- A majority of Year 11 leavers move on to colleges of further education or employment. However, the PRU's records indicate that a few leavers each year do not engage in education or enter the workforce.
- A large majority of students in the reintegration unit at Severnside and at the '6day+ Provision' reintegrate successfully back into mainstream schools.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The PRU's detailed and accurate records of lesson observations indicate that teaching is improving with an increasing number of good lessons. However, teaching is still not consistently good, with some lessons which require improvement and little evidence of outstanding teaching.
- There is variation in the quality of teaching across centres, with more teaching that requires improvement at the Severnside Campus than at the other centres.
- Teachers in all the centres are now using the same format to ensure that lessons are well planned. However, the learning objectives which are shared with students at the start of lessons are sometimes too broad. When this is the case, individual students are not sufficiently clear about what they are expected to achieve.
- Some teachers adapt work effectively so that it matches the needs of individual learners well. However, this is not yet consistent in all lessons. In the minority of lessons where work set does not take enough account of variations in students' ages and learning levels, students are not sufficiently well engaged in learning.
- In most lessons there are high expectations for behaviour. This was evident in a good lesson at the '6day+ Provision', where the teacher was highly effective in creating a calm atmosphere of

mutual respect and endeavour. As a result, the students, both of whom had recently been excluded from their mainstream schools for poor behaviour, tried hard and demonstrated positive attitudes to learning. However, in a few lessons at the Severnside Campus expectations are not high enough and students' behaviour prevents them from learning well.

- Marking of students' work has improved considerably since the previous inspection with some examples of very good marking which gives students detailed guidance on how to make their work better. However, in a few instances marking is still not as detailed as it could be.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and most teachers have developed good levels of expertise in the specialism catered for by their centre, such as working with brain injured children or those with anxiety and school phobia.
- Students are given good individual support by teachers and support staff. This enables all students to be fully included in lessons and to make progress.
- Homework is set for those students where it is appropriate. Very strong links with families promote students' learning well at the Barbara Russell Children's Unit.
- Teachers use question and answer sessions and reviews at the end of lessons effectively to check students' progress. They are skilled at giving positive verbal feedback to develop students' confidence as learners.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The PRU has placed a major focus on reviewing and strengthening behaviour management systems which teach students to take responsibility for their actions. As a result, the exclusion rate has fallen significantly.
- Most students respond well to the strategies to improve behaviour which are in place in the different centres. For example, students at the Courtney Road Primary PRU make good progress in achieving their behaviour targets, for example taking themselves to the 'chill out' room when they feel their behaviour is getting out of control. However, on occasions, a small minority of students at the Severnside Campus demonstrate negative attitudes to learning, and teaching time is lost while staff deal with problematic behaviour or students' failure to engage.
- Attendance has improved because the PRU has implemented a variety of focused interventions, including better ways of involving parents and carers in promoting good attendance. There are some examples of students making good progress in improving their attendance. However, the PRU and the local authority both rightly recognise that attendance still remains too low.
- Students at all centres say that there is very little bullying and that staff deal with any instances of bullying quickly and effectively. They say that they feel safe while attending the centres and this view is shared by most parents and carers.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The leadership team is highly ambitious to achieve rapid improvement across the PRU and has quickly introduced the systems and structures which underpin a successful school. However, they have not involved the full staff team well enough in planning and reviewing developments. As a result, the PRU's 'staff well-being' survey and the staff questionnaires indicate that while middle leaders and teachers are positive, and in some cases very positive about the changes, a majority of support staff do not share the vision for change. This affects the PRU's capacity to improve, which, although sound, is not yet good.
- Safeguarding procedures have improved well since the previous inspection and there are now rigorous and consistent procedures in place across the PRU to ensure students' safety.
- The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the PRU's work has improved very well since the previous inspection and is now strong. It is detailed, well focused on the key areas which will drive improvement and securely linked to development planning.
- Comprehensive systems have been introduced to monitor teaching and learning and all teachers

are observed regularly. Leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching throughout the PRU and are using observations effectively to improve teaching. Performance management procedures are thorough and robust and used well to inform teachers' progression.

- The PRU offers a suitable curriculum which is adapted to meet the differing needs of students at the various centres and includes planned activities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, students gain a good understanding of diversity through activities linked to Black History Month. The PRU is effective in ensuring there is no discrimination and that all students have equality of education.
- The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, for example, by developing opportunities for older students to take vocational courses. However, some students are still not sufficiently motivated to attend the PRU because they do not always have access to an individualised programme that embraces their particular interests.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has improved considerably since the previous inspection with the leaders of the governing body taking an active role in driving improvement. For example, governors were instrumental in engaging parents and carers to improve attendance by reviewing attendance policies and procedures and making them more accessible to families
 - a few governors are relatively new and have not yet undertaken sufficient training to enable them to fulfil the role of 'critical friend' well.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131626
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	399724

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Antill
Headteacher	Tania Craig
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