

# New Horizons Learning Centre

Mulberry Drive, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 4EA

**Inspection dates** 20–21 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although achievement is improving, there has not been enough time for pupils to reach the standards expected nationally for their age from their very low starting points.
- The progress that pupils make is uneven. It is slower in English than in most other subjects throughout the school because pupils have particularly weak writing skills.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils make slower progress in mathematics than in English. Attainment in English and mathematics is low.
- Teaching is getting better but it still requires further improvement as it is not yet consistently good. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations and they do not always plan tasks that match each pupil's needs or abilities. Pupils do not routinely know what they have to do to improve their work.
- Behaviour is improving. However, in some lessons, pupils' behaviour is not good because a few staff do not consistently use the school's systems for managing it.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress in reading and in science throughout the school is good. Pupils also make faster progress in mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4 than in Key Stage 2.
- Staff have very positive relationships with pupils. Pupils feel safe in school.
- The strong leaders and managers, including governors, have a clear vision for the school. Since the school opened, achievement, behaviour, attendance and teaching have improved.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons across both the primary and secondary sites, taught by eight teachers. All the lessons were watched jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspector made short visits to other lessons, listened to pupils reading and talked to pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, other teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at various aspects of the school's work, including records about safeguarding, students' progress and behaviour and attendance. She also looked at pupils' books, planning and evaluation records, external reports and minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- There were three responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View). Account was taken of the school's own parent and carer survey, undertaken in 2012.
- Lunch break and movement between lessons were also observed.

## Inspection team

Helen Howard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- New Horizons Learning Centre is a small, mixed special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, aged between seven and 16. There are no girls on roll at this time and no Year 11 students.
- The school is based on two sites, one primary and one secondary. Primary-aged pupils are taught in mixed year groups, with other pupils who attend the pupil referral unit.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A small number of pupils have additional learning difficulties.
- This is the school's first inspection since it opened in September 2011.
- The school is part of a larger combined service providing education outside of mainstream schools for South Gloucestershire. This includes pupil referral units, a centre for pupils with medical conditions and for school-aged parents, a hospital school, the behaviour support service and the provision for pupils who are temporarily excluded from schools. They are all led by the executive headteacher and a single governing body.
- The school uses a range of alternative provision in Bristol including The Riverside Project, Engage Bristol (Rock Steady Training), Fairbridge (The Prince's Trust) and Breakthrough Mentoring. There are also short term programmes provided through the Kingswood Partnership Link.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is very high. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children of parents in the armed forces.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or outstanding by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve
  - making sure that teachers consistently plan tasks that are matched to individual pupils' needs
  - making clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- Raise achievement in English and in mathematics by:
  - setting higher targets for those pupils who are capable of making even better progress
  - ensuring that, in all subjects, pupils can use their developing writing skills in tasks that help them to write at length and in a variety of ways
  - giving practical equipment to help pupils make better progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring that all staff consistently use the school's behaviour policy.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The school opened in September 2011, with Key Stage 3 pupils only, and now has pupils from Year 3 to Year 10. Students are not entered for examinations early and there are, therefore, no examination results for Key Stage 4.
- Achievement is improving but is not yet good over time because it is variable across subjects and year groups. Leaders and managers monitor pupils' performance carefully and, as a result, progress is rapidly improving in some areas, including science and art. Some pupils make fast progress when they join the school but, because targets set for them are not always high enough, their progress slows.
- Pupils make less progress in English than in other subjects because their writing skills are weak and teachers do not give enough opportunities for them to practise developing skills in a range of activities. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in mathematics is slower than for English because activities are not varied or interesting enough.
- A very effective whole-school focus on reading has resulted in almost all pupils making accelerated progress. This includes the use of reading 'coaches', a scheme which provides pupils with individual support from a member of staff every day. One student in Year 9 said that this had helped him 'a lot' and he was observed reading with confidence to his 'coach'. Pupils also have lessons to help them match letters and combinations of letters with the sounds they make (phonics). Consequently, they are beginning to close the gap between their attainment in reading and that of all pupils nationally.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding reached similar attainment to other pupils in the school in English and in mathematics, as measured by their average point scores at the end of Key Stage 2. These pupils also make similar progress to other pupils in the school in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils who use alternative provision make good progress and some are on track to achieve entry level qualifications in a range of subjects. A few pupils who have additional special educational needs make good progress because they receive effective individual programmes of support. Consequently, the school promotes equal opportunities well.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving but is not yet consistently good because it is variable within the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and this results in slower progress. Tasks are not always planned to match individual needs, and pupils sometimes do the same work in lessons despite having different abilities. Teachers use too many worksheets and pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in their own words, at length or in a variety of ways. This means that they do not make enough progress in writing.
- Teachers mark work regularly and use information from lessons effectively to check how well pupils understand their work. They do not always give specific comments in marking to help pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils do not make fast enough progress in mathematics. As leaders have rightly identified, teachers do not always give opportunities for pupils to use practical equipment to help them learn.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use time well, plan challenging activities and make learning interesting and fun. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson on how animals adapt to their environment, pupils thoroughly enjoyed a song and animated cartoon about camels. As a result, they were able to identify the ways that camels adapt to living in the desert.
- Pupils enjoy lessons when there are practical activities, such as constructing. They especially enjoy art, sports and science activities. They make good progress when teachers give them a range of different tasks and make the learning relevant to the pupils' own experiences.
- Support staff work very well with teachers to help motivate pupils and keep them on task. They

have excellent relationships with pupils, who respond well to their enthusiasm.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** require improvement

- In setting up the new school, leaders and managers have focused on developing staff expertise in supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties. Consequently, adults are skilful in managing individual pupils' behaviour. However, in lessons, not all teachers follow the behaviour policy consistently. As a result, some pupils do not follow instructions and learning slows.
- School records show that behaviour has improved considerably since the school opened. The number of days lost to fixed-term exclusions has decreased and incidents requiring senior leaders to help are much less frequent.
- There are effective systems to manage and track behaviour. These include 'restorative approaches', used to help pupils understand the impact of their behaviour on others. This is having a very positive effect in supporting pupils to take more responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The school closely monitors the behaviour of students who are off site in alternative placements through contracts and daily communication. In this way, attendance and behaviour are tracked and acted on quickly if necessary. Whole-school attendance was well below average when the school opened, and whilst it remains below average, it has risen rapidly as a result of robust monitoring and effective strategies. Previous persistent absence by some pupils has greatly reduced.
- School surveys show that pupils feel safe in school. Teachers regularly address safety issues in lessons and pupils are aware of risks. Most understand how to keep themselves safe and the school undertakes detailed risk assessments for each pupil as part of a placement plan.
- Previous surveys show that some pupils reported a few incidents of bullying. Pupils say that the school takes this very seriously and they are confident that staff will deal well with any issues. Parents' questionnaires in a survey undertaken by the school show that parents also feel that their children are safe in school. Pupils understand the different types of bullying and the school effectively resolves the small number of incidents of racism or discriminatory language that are reported.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and managers and governors, has a very clear vision about how the school should develop and this is shared by all staff. The policies that have been introduced to improve teaching, behaviour and attendance in the last year have had a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. This demonstrates the capacity for the school to improve further.
- Senior leaders and managers monitor teaching rigorously as part of teachers' performance management. Consequently, they have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development. An effective programme of support and professional development for teachers, including coaching and training opportunities, ensures that the quality of teaching continues to improve as new staff join the school.
- The local authority has provided good support for setting up the new school. This has included the provision of advanced skills teachers to work in mathematics and science. It has also supported the school with self-assessment, which is accurate and demonstrates that the school knows itself well.
- The curriculum is providing many opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural awareness. There is an increasing range of vocational and academic courses offered at Key Stage 4, as the school grows in number. The school is ensuring that qualifications are available for all pupils. Additionally, it makes good use of alternative provision for a small number of boys. This includes sports programmes, construction and college provision. The good progress they make is rigorously monitored by the school.

■ Very strong partnerships with agencies, schools and other providers ensure that the school provides a flexible response to meet the needs of its pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors use resources effectively and challenge the school well. As members of a new governing body of a new school, they have correctly identified priorities and monitored the school's progress carefully. Governors have ensured that they have a good understanding of pupils' performance, including data, and this has been further developed with local authority training. Governors ensure that statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding pupils. They know the quality of teaching well and make sure that arrangements for managing teachers' performance are thorough. Under performance is tackled rigorously. Teachers move through the pay scales appropriately. Governors are aware of how the additional pupil premium funding is spent but have not yet analysed the impact of the activities on pupils' outcomes thoroughly enough. There are well considered plans to provide future training opportunities for new governors so that they can support the school and hold it to account robustly.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135827
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	400312

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Reed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tania Craig
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 865340
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@newhorizonslc.org.uk



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