

Hartlepool Pupil Referral Unit

Seaton Lane, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS25 1HN

Inspection dates

15–16 October 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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

- Not enough students make good or better progress from their individual starting points.
- The amount of progress students make is inconsistent across subjects and key stages.
- The quality of teaching is too variable and this has a negative impact on students' learning and achievement.
- Behaviour and safety require improvement as some students are slow to develop more positive attitudes during their time at the pupil referral unit (PRU).
- Leadership and management require improvement because not enough teaching is good or better. Monitoring and evaluation are currently not rigorous enough to develop teaching or the progress for all student groups.

The school has the following strengths

- Individual student attendance often improves dramatically while at the PRU.
- The curriculum is broad and varied. It gives students a wealth of experiences and develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- The management committee brings a great range of knowledge and experience to support and challenge senior leaders in equal measure.
- Many students make the progress expected of them. Students at Key Stage 4 achieve well. Last year's leavers gained qualifications at grade B at GCSE and went on to further education, employment and training.
- Relationships are positive between staff and students. Students are pleased that their attendance, learning and behaviour are all improving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all teachers jointly with the service manager of the school. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to lessons. A visit also took place to an alternative provider.
- Meetings were held with students, the chair of the management committee and another member, members of staff, including senior leaders and a representative of the local authority. A telephone discussion took place with a senior leader who accesses the school's provision.
- There were insufficient responses to the online inspection questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector took into account the school's own surveys. Questionnaire responses from five members of staff were also considered.
- The inspector scrutinised examples of students' work and looked at various senior leadership documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and planning, information on students' academic progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michele Crichton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hartlepool PRU has 24 places predominantly for short-stay provision.
- It has two strands to its provision. One strand of its work covers statutory provision for permanently excluded students from mainstream schools across Hartlepool at Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4. Outreach support is given to pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Students at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are supported within the PRU.
- The second strand is a preventative provision to work with all mainstream secondary schools across Hartlepool to support students at risk of exclusion at Key Stage 3. This is known as InReach/OutReach. The Key Stage 3 focus is on close, collaborative, school-based working with the school in all three key stages to help prevent exclusion. There are three phases to this provision:
 - Phase 1 students are referrals supported in their mainstream schools to help to prevent exclusion. Phase 2 referrals attend the unit for one half-term for intense academic and personal development support, because they have been or are on the brink of permanent exclusion. Phase 3 consists of continuous, negotiated, off-site support for students who have returned to mainstream schools.
- All students are White British. Boys significantly outnumber girls.
- Many students have involvement with other agencies including youth offending, family and social care.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of looked-after students is currently very small.
- Most students have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties but occasionally moderate learning difficulties. Infrequently, guest students may have special educational needs and/or disabilities and spend a very short time at the PRU.
- West View and Right Trax offer alternative provision for students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, particularly in Key Stage 3 mathematics, by:
 - providing all students with learning activities that are interesting and have the right amount of challenge
 - ensuring work and activities are closely matched to the needs of all student groups so that they maximise their progress in lessons
 - ensuring teachers accurately know their own teaching strengths and areas for development.
- Improve leadership and management, to raise standards and accelerate students' progress by:
 - applying greater precision in assessing the quality of teaching and its effect on all students' learning and progress across key stages and subjects
 - applying greater rigour in checking how well all student groups within the school are doing, including through work scrutiny, and taking swift action to address any resulting concerns.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - providing opportunities for students to work on tasks independently and take more responsibility for their own learning and progress
 - ensuring effective liaison with secondary schools before students transfer back into

mainstream, so that the process is successful.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because there are differences in the attainment and progress rates of different groups of students, subjects and key stages. This is because of the inconsistency in the quality of teaching. This variability in progress does not prepare all students well for their return to mainstream schools.
- Almost all Key Stage 3 students arrive with low skills in reading, writing and mathematics. These students can spend different amounts of time in the PRU and the range can be extreme: from one or two days to many months. They usually make expected progress but not enough to make good or better progress. Their literacy development is stronger than their numeracy development.
- Students arriving at Key Stage 4 are significantly fewer in number; they stay at the PRU for longer and can enter with more varied levels of ability. During their stay in the PRU they develop more settled attitudes to learning, their attendance improves and good progress is made in their learning. This is evidenced by last year's leavers gaining qualifications at B grade in GCSE and others going on to attend college courses.
- Staff track individual progress rates of students and develop personalised learning programmes. However, tracking shows the progress of all student groups including the most able, those with a disability or special educational need and those who receive additional government funding (the pupil premium) within the school is broad. Tracking is also insufficiently rigorous to see exactly by how much the PRU is narrowing the gap between its students and all students nationally, especially at Key Stage 3.
- Staff ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted appropriately. For example, all students are individually assessed on entry and regularly monitored throughout their time at the PRU.
- Students arrive with variable abilities to read, with often marked difference between the two key stages. The PRU has a range of strategies to develop reading at any level from one-to-one focused support to the analysis of vocabulary needed at GCSE level. The Key Stage 4 students eligible for pupil-premium funding have benefitted from this intensive support as demonstrated through the good progress they make.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies considerable across the PRU. Some of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, there was some which requires improvement and a very small amount was inadequate. Senior leaders' own logs of lesson observations relate that teaching over time is usually stronger.
- Where teaching is less effective, activities do not promote literacy or numeracy development well, they are not precisely matched to students' abilities and teachers revisit work that students already know. This limits the progress that they make, especially for the most able and particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of marking in students' files, the presentation of their work and the activities they do vary between English and mathematics. In both subjects work is regularly marked by teachers and it indicates what has been done well and gives some pointers in how to improve further. However, in both subjects there is little self- and peer-assessment used to mark work.
- In mathematics, marking is less comprehensive and informative than in English and has fewer next steps to learning. In some mathematics lessons and students' files there is a reliance on too many worksheets or working from a text book.
- In English there is a range of activities to interest students and opportunities for them to write at length on a variety of topics. Additionally, staff use outdoor activities to develop both literacy and numeracy in a meaningful way. For example, diaries are kept by students to recall a sequence of events during a visit. Mathematics is used during a woodland lesson to give a ratio of dry

ingredients to water when students make their own flat bread and cook it over an open fire.

- Teaching assistants are generally guided by teachers, and in most lessons they work together well to support learning and to manage students' behaviour appropriately.
- Where teaching is more effective, teachers have high expectations of students and all abilities are challenged well. Pace is brisk, work is individually planned and gaps in students' knowledge and understanding is clearly amended. This ensures good progress is made.
- Reading is consistently promoted by staff in both key stages and they encourage students to read every day. The use of electronic readers to motivate students to read has a positive effect on many who begin to gain pleasure from reading for the first time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because some students are slow in developing positive attitudes towards learning and this can influence the learning of others adversely. This is also not helped because some learning activities do not interest or challenge students sufficiently. For a minority of students, poor attitudes to learning continue when they return to mainstream school and some students return to the PRU again at later points in their education.
- Students were open and frank in their discussion with the inspector. They confirm that they feel safe and recognise that their behaviour, learning and attendance have improved during their time at the PRU. Relationships between staff and students are good because of the high levels of support and encouragement that students say they appreciate.
- They understand different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. However, sometimes students' experiences using social networking sites out of school and mobile phones within school during the day can cause arguments. Staff then have to take the time to calm students to ensure learning takes place.
- Students' behaviour is usually managed effectively and consistently by staff in lessons and around the school.
- Most students (75%) have significantly better attendance than at their previous school. Some of these students are now attending for 90% of the time. For the fewer students who refuse to attend regularly a variety of measures are put in place with students and families to constantly improve attendance.
- A few students attend off-site alternative provision. The behaviour and safety of these students are monitored along with rates of progress, with regular communication between all staff involved.
- The school develops positive links with parents. For example, this can take the form of regular contact from learning mentors who link with parents and other professionals to focus upon individuals' needs. Parents value this support, as shown by their good levels of attendance at these particularly well-focused meetings.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time leaders do not ensure that all students make at least good progress from their individual starting points across different key stages and subjects.
- Leaders have implemented recent systems for monitoring teaching so that achievement will improve. They regularly hold teachers to account and set appropriate targets that are linked to further progression through the pay scales. However, although teaching is checked regularly, leaders' current practice for the monitoring of lessons and the subsequent judgement of teaching are too vague. They do not make it clear to staff exactly what they need to do to improve their teaching.
- Leaders and managers do not focus strongly enough on the effect of teaching on students' progress or take enough account of the learning and progress of different groups including the most able and those who are in receipt of the pupil premium. Although new systems are

developing to track students more effectively, this has not yet had sufficient time to show evidence of impact.

- Senior leaders are over generous in their view of the school's performance.
- Capacity to improve, however, is demonstrated in a number of ways. There have been recent links made with good and outstanding schools to improve the quality of teaching. The senior leaders acknowledge that focused training for all staff is needed with a request to the local authority to support their training needs. The strong management committee supports and challenges the senior leaders in equal measure.
- Senior leaders are ensuring that some aspects of teaching and learning are already demonstrating improvement. For example, progress in reading is developing across the PRU and a drive to increase attendance also has a positive impact on students' progress.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities to extend pupils' academic skills and also develop them personally. Experiences such as working as part of a team when canoeing, persevering when tested through hill walking or fund-raising for charities mean that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- In the past the local authority has provided much support to the PRU but this has reduced over time. It is currently kept to the appropriate monitoring level required.
- All aspects of safeguarding meet requirements. This is true also when students go to alternative providers where they are always accompanied by a member of staff.
- **The governance of the school: requires improvement**
 - In line with recent changes to PRUs nationally, a re-structured management committee has been established at the PRU. However, the majority of the members were already on the governing board. A number of the members, including the Chair, are senior leaders from local secondary schools and have long working relationships with staff at the PRU. The management committee provides a real strength to the PRU as its members bring a wide breadth of knowledge and experience. They are providing challenge and are aware that teaching and progress are not good enough. This is evident through discussion and in minutes of meetings where critical questions of student progress reports are matched against overviews of the quality of teaching. Consequently, they are holding senior leaders to account and this is evidenced through systems to check the performance of teachers. However, changes have not yet had time to have enough impact and show improved outcomes for students. Currently, pupil-premium funding is only attached to students in Key Stage 4 and is used for targeted one-to-one support which ensures good progress.

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

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| Unique reference number | 131294 |
| Local authority | Hartlepool |
| Inspection number | 425900 |

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

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| 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 | 1 |
| Appropriate authority | The management committee |
| Chair | Peter McMahon |
| Service Manager | Anthony Hanson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 January 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01429 264950 |
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