

# Brighton and Hove Pupil Referral Unit

Lynchet Close, Brighton, BN1 7FP

## Inspection dates

26–27 November 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils make good progress, and most return successfully to learning, greatly improving their life chances.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are carefully tailored to challenge and excite the pupils.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and are well prepared to take the next step in their lives.
- Pupils generally behave well when they are in lessons or move around in the building. Their relationships with staff are trusting and strong, so that they feel safe and happy at the centre.
- The leaders have developed very effective ways of keeping track of pupils' academic and personal progress so that work is set at just the right level.
- The leaders, with strong support from the management committee and the local authority, have rapidly built up an effective centre that is continuing to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement. There is some inconsistency in the deployment of teaching assistants and in the management of pupils when they become upset.
- Some pupils do not have a clear understanding of how they can improve their basic skills and the written feedback from teachers is not always completely effective.
- A few pupils do not attend well enough to make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine lessons which included nine teaching staff. All of the observations were undertaken jointly with the senior leaders.
- The inspectors had discussions with the pupils, senior leaders, teachers, members of the management committee and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection looked at the work of the centre, including pupils' behaviour, and analysed documentation in relation to attendance, safeguarding, pupils' work, self-evaluation and the centre's system for checking on pupils' progress.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to help plan the inspection. The inspectors had telephone conversations with two parents during the school day and reviewed the school's parental survey.

## Inspection team

Mick Megee, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Brighton and Hove Pupil Referral Unit was opened in August 2012 following a local authority reorganisation of its behaviour support and outreach services. It operates on three sites: one accommodating Key Stage 2 pupils, and one each for Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Pupils are referred either because they are permanently excluded from mainstream school or because they are at risk of this happening.
- All pupils have complex social and emotional needs or have behavioural difficulties, and most have a history of persistent absence and non-attendance.
- About one fifth of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Boys significantly outnumber girls.
- There are a few children looked after by the local authority and an above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. All these pupils are eligible for additional pupil premium funding.
- The centre has not yet received its primary school sports funding. There are no Year 7 pupils in the centre, so that it does not receive the catch-up funding for this group.
- A national leader of education has been seconded to support the centre as an executive headteacher.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 attend alternative provision at City College for vocational courses.
- Most students are White British. A below average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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

- Improve teaching so that most of it is outstanding by consistently:
  - deploying teaching assistants effectively
  - referring to and emphasising literacy and numeracy targets throughout the day so that pupils have a clear understanding of how they can improve their basic skills
  - applying behaviour management strategies
  - providing high quality written feedback to pupils on their work.
- Improve attendance, particularly for the small group of students who are persistently absent.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and quickly improve their attitudes to learning after joining the centre. All groups, including girls, boys, pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well from their individual starting points.
- The centre has a strong record in turning pupils around quickly and many return to mainstream education after a short period, especially in Key Stage 2 and 3.
- Parents and pupils agree that progress is good. One parent, typical of others, said, 'My son's reading has really come on, and he's making the right decisions now. I'm so happy and relieved.'
- Many arrive at the centre having experienced failure in their previous schools, and lack self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Gaps in their past education mean that attainment levels on entry to the centre, though varied, are generally lower than expected.
- However, by the time they leave, although attainment in English and mathematics is still below national expectations, the gap in attainment has closed significantly.
- Pupils who qualify for pupil premium funding achieve well and leave with similar levels of attainment and progress in English and mathematics as other pupils in the centre.
- Pupils' numeracy and literacy needs are effectively met through the individualised teaching, often involving one-to-one support, and most improve these skills well. A good example of this was seen during a personal and social education lesson where pupils were confident enough to read out loud to a visitor, making marked improvements in reading fluently as they did so.
- Pupils participate well in physical education (PE) and make good progress through a good balance of individual, team, cooperative and competitive sports and activities. The centre has detailed plans for using the primary sports funding when it is released to improve resources such as playground equipment.
- Pupils' progress is sometimes hampered by weaknesses in teaching such as the ineffective deployment of teaching assistants and inconsistent written feedback to pupils on how to improve quickly.
- Most pupils in Key Stage 4 achieve success in external examinations, such as GCSE and Functional Skills. These pupils enjoy attending vocational courses at a local training provider and achieve useful qualifications in courses such as construction, landscape gardening, motor vehicle repair and hair and beauty studies. These programmes make a significant contribution in preparing pupils for when they leave the centre.
- All Year 11 pupils receive independent specialist support from the Youth Employability Service advisor so that they move successfully into education, employment or training. However, poor attendance hampers the progress of a few.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the centre is good and some is outstanding. Most staff skilfully engage and motivate pupils helping them to overcome their personal barriers to learning.
- The routines for managing and improving pupils' behaviour for learning are well thought out and where they are consistently applied, the atmosphere in the classrooms is respectful and positive.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide learning activities that are accurately tailored to meet individual pupils' aspirations and capabilities. They inject enthusiasm, they know their subjects well and make good use of the assessment information to set activities that are challenging but realistic.
- The most skilful teachers modify and adjust their planned activities as the lesson progresses to meet the pupils' changing needs and interests. This was seen in a physical education lesson

about throwing a rugby ball, where the teacher quickly and adroitly changed the activities in the light of the pupils' responses and rekindled flagging interest.

- Leaders and managers have a good grip on where teaching is strong and where it needs to improve and work hard to improve identified weaknesses. However, for a small number of staff, teaching sometimes requires further improvement.
- Most teachers skilfully support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy through customised learning programmes, so that pupils overcome their initial anxieties and make good progress in these areas. However, a few teachers sometimes miss opportunities to support and develop these basic skills in lessons in other subjects.
- There are generally good partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants so that learners experience good role models and receive appropriate support, and activities and learning move on at a good pace. Occasionally, teaching assistants do not take the initiative and wait for the teacher's instructions, slowing down the lesson.
- Most teachers are good at assessing pupils' development and the best teachers provide regular oral and written feedback that makes sure that pupils know what they need to do to improve. However, there is some inconsistency in the use of written feedback, which may sometimes be just ticks and positive comments without guiding the pupils as to how they could make even faster progress.
- All pupils have individual literacy and numeracy targets. Teachers do not always refer to these enough in lessons and so pupils do not have a clear idea of the next steps they need to take.
- Discussions with parents and analysis of the centre's questionnaires indicate that parents believe that teaching is good.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Staff expect and mostly achieve positive attitudes and good behaviour from the pupils, so that they are able to work peacefully and purposefully in classrooms that are calm and safe.
- Pupils talk proudly about the centre and speak of all the staff with affection and loyalty. They say how much their behaviour has improved from their previous schools. Parents and all staff believe that the pupils' behaviour is improving and generally managed well.
- Most staff apply consistently the clear procedures for improving behaviour. Improvements in teaching over time have resulted in fewer incidents of pupils being upset or off-task and the number of fixed-term exclusions is low.
- Staff are generally expert at nipping poor behaviour in the bud if pupils become upset or begin to lose control, so that all pupils participate fully in lessons, showing their interest by asking good questions and working companionably alongside each other.
- One or two staff are not as effective in this and their responses may be clumsy or too late and pupils lose precious learning time as a result. The leaders of the centre know that this is the case and are providing these staff with further training.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying or use of racist language and that they feel safe in the centre. The pupils told an inspector that any bullying is dealt with very well and does not re-occur.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when using the internet, although a few pupils still smoke despite the staff's encouragement for them to stop or at least reduce.
- Pupils feel that they are dealt with tolerantly and that staff care for them. They enjoy their lessons and see that learning has a purpose in helping them to achieve their dreams. As a consequence, many pupils make excellent progress in improving their attendance, despite prolonged periods of absence or multiple fixed-term exclusions.
- The centre works hard to make sure that pupils attend well. Absences are followed up quickly and contact with parents is increased. The local authority has assisted by appointing a half-time welfare officer to increasingly good effect.
- However, a few pupils remain persistent non-attenders, especially where they have joined the

centre in Years 10 or 11, and for these few, there is a serious impact upon their current achievement and future chances.

- The centre has in place robust safeguarding practices for any off-site or practical learning activities. The centre regularly checks up on the alternative provision used by the pupils to ensure quality, safety and good outcomes for learners.

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

- The headteacher articulates her passionate commitment to make a positive difference to the pupils' lives through constant improvement. She has the whole staff behind her, as can be seen by the unanimous approval from all staff who responded to the Ofsted confidential questionnaire.
- The leaders and management committee have introduced high quality organisational practices in assessment, teaching, curriculum planning, progress tracking and staff training. Leaders constantly check the effectiveness of the centre's work and have accurately identified its strengths and priorities for development.
- The improvement planning has resulted in the increasingly high quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This good record of improvement in the short while since opening means that the centre is well placed to improve further.
- Performance management arrangements are fully in place with outcomes linked to the school improvement plan and relevant staff training. The teachers know that they must meet their performance targets based on pupils' achievement if they are to progress on the salary scale.
- Teachers with new leadership responsibilities receive good support from the leaders who hold these 'middle leaders' fully to account through the appraisal process.
- Staff comment very positively on the extensive range of training, particularly in how to improve teaching and learning, and managing difficult behaviour.
- The local authority assists the centre well through a very good array of school improvement and curriculum support and particularly through the secondment of an executive headteacher.
- The headteacher secures continuity and consistency across the centre's three sites by providing frequent, regular opportunities for staff to learn together, discuss pupils and share good practice and resources.
- The curriculum is exciting, relevant and individualised. There is good provision for pupils' emotional development alongside good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn quickly about other cultures and values through themed topic weeks, cultural visits and visitors together with small group work, mentoring, assemblies and celebratory events.
- The leaders successfully maintain strong partnerships with many external agencies and local schools, who feel they are valued and appreciated by the centre. The centre's ethos is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity very well and tackles discrimination promptly.
- The centre justifiably prides itself on its close relationship with the pupils' parents. This relationship is enhanced by the centre's full involvement with the local authority's scheme to provide family coaches who help the pupils and their families to make positive changes to their lives. Most of the centre's families are supported through this excellent initiative and the outcomes in improved attendance and reduction in anti-social behaviour speak for themselves.
- **The governance of the centre:**
  - The management committee very effectively supports the leadership team and provides robust challenge. There is a close working relationship between the headteacher and the chair of the management committee so that the centre has been able to implement a wide range of successful strategies. Members of the committee, many of whom are experienced headteachers, come in regularly to help check on the quality of teaching and to monitor the progress of groups of pupils. They make effective use of performance management to improve staff performance and outcomes for pupils. Members fully understand the principles for using pupil premium funding, which has only recently been identified in the budget by the local authority. Safeguarding and child protection are given a high priority and all statutory

requirements are fully met.

## 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>	138565
<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	428932

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	47
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Lyons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz McCullough
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 327389
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