

# Newton's Walk

Cedar Street, Derby, DE22 1HL

## Inspection dates

11–12 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Leaders work extremely well with social care and health professionals and others to ensure that pupils are kept safe and well.
- Pupils achieve well because the unit is successful in convincing pupils that they can do well. A strong focus on English and mathematics is improving pupils' skills particularly in reading and numeracy.
- Teaching is good because all staff form very strong relationships with pupils and are expert at managing their behaviour. Teachers are skilled at gaining pupils' interest and attention and at getting them to take pride in their work.
- Leaders, including the management committee, have ensured that teaching remains strong despite changes in staff and that staff and other resources are well used to bring the best out of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because they understand the rewards system and want to please their teachers. Most try really hard to manage and improve their behaviour and are successful in achieving this
- Families feel hugely supported by the unit and the many ways in which it keeps them informed about how their children are doing. They praise the advice they get as to how to manage their child's behaviour and help them with their learning.
- Excellent partnership working with other schools ensures that the majority of pupils are able to return to mainstream provision and those who attend the unit part-time improve their behaviour at their mainstream school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pupils still find it difficult to manage their behaviour. There are few areas in which they can 'cool off' or be taught individually or in smaller groups when they are upset or behave badly.
- Marking does not help pupils to understand what they now need to do to improve further.
- Occasionally tasks are too easy, particularly for the most able pupils and in writing.
- In subjects other than English tasks do not always take account of pupils' literacy targets and levels. This slows their progress, for example in writing and if they cannot read the problem they have to solve in mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the teaching in all classes and also visited one of the alternative provisions used by the unit to observe teaching and provision there. She visited ten lessons. The teacher in charge (known as the primary coordinator) joined her for almost all of these visits.
- The inspector held discussions with the teacher in charge and the senior leadership team, other teachers, a representative of the local authority and members of the management committee.
- The inspector examined pupils' work and talked with them about it. She heard pupils read as well as observing this in lessons. The inspector looked at a range of evidence, including the ways in which the school analyses and checks on pupils' progress and promotes good behaviour. She also analysed safeguarding documentation, records of behaviour and evidence as to how the school checks on, and improves, the quality of teaching.
- Too few parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire on the Parent View website for responses to be analysed. However the inspector spoke with a small number of parents on the telephone and examined evidence from the unit as to how they worked with families and others. She spoke with the headteacher of a placing school. Fourteen questionnaires filled in by staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Newton's Walk is a pupil referral unit for primary aged pupils who have identified special educational needs relating to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Almost all pupils have either been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or are placed at the unit because they are at risk of exclusion. Six are dual registered, being on the roll of Newton's Walk and a mainstream school. These pupils attend the unit for one day a week over a six week period for a range of courses such as anger management.
- Most pupils have a history of disrupted schooling and poor attendance, sometimes having been attending schools for only a short time each day. Pupils arrive at the unit at any point in their primary education. Almost half are in Year 6. When pupils first enter the unit they attend part-time but almost all are full-time after 2 weeks. The few pupils in Key Stage 1 had just joined the unit at the time of the inspection.
- All pupils are at school action plus and a few have a statement of special educational needs. Many have additional learning needs, such as speech, language and communication difficulties, and attention deficit and hyperactive disorders. Most are White British. Very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- Almost all pupils are boys and similarly almost all are eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority or those from service families). The unit also receives the additional sports funding available for primary aged pupils.
- A small number of pupils attend two alternative provisions, Baby J and The Island or have home tuition, mostly in addition to attending Newton's Walk.
- Unit staff provide an outreach service to families and to other schools, including intensive support to families through its complex support team and family support workers.
- The Chair of the management committee took up her post in September 2013.

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

- Accelerate achievement in English, particularly in writing by ensuring that:
  - teachers plan work in other subjects that takes account of pupils' literacy targets and levels so that tasks have sufficient challenge for all groups including the most able
  - all staff have had appropriate training in supporting and teaching pupils about the relationships between letters and sounds
  - alternative providers and unit staff are working to similar literacy and numeracy targets and the amount of time spent on such skills is carefully checked
  - marking consistently makes clear to pupils how well they are moving towards their targets and what they now need to do to improve further.
- Work with the local authority to adapt the accommodation so that there are more opportunities for pupils to learn in smaller groups and stay in the unit even when they behave badly or when they know they are finding it difficult to learn in the larger group.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all pupils enter the unit with very low achievement levels, because of their disrupted education and, for many their specific learning needs. Often they also have very low self esteem and confidence which holds them back. Sometimes their learning has fallen back considerably from their levels at the end of Key Stage 1 because of all this.
- Staff are particularly successful in turning around pupils' attitudes to learning so that over three quarters return to mainstream schools or special schools. Almost all pupils join in lessons with increasing concentration as they settle into the life of the unit, including those with attention deficit and hyperactive disorders, because staff are expert at helping these pupils to learn and know each individual's needs so well. This all means that pupils learn more effectively and start to make up lost ground, particularly in their reading and numeracy skills.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good. This is because of the good use of the pupil-premium funding to provide new resources and staff training so that pupils can have much individual attention when they are struggling with reading. Pupils read regularly and say how much more they enjoy their reading. They happily read out loud and talked with the inspector about their favourite authors and books, using a good range of strategies to work out the meanings of new words.
- There are no differences between the achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium and the very few pupils who are not in English and mathematics. This is because the school now has good data available about pupils' levels when they enter the unit and monitors their progress rigorously. If any pupil starts to fall behind leaders are swift to put in extra help. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in these subjects because of the good individual support they have to accelerate their English language skills.
- A very small number of pupils do not make good progress because their attendance is less good either because they still find it difficult to attend or because they are on part-time programmes because of their behaviour.
- The few pupils who attend the alternative provision and have home tuition support make good progress, particularly in their cooperation and attitudes to learning. They benefit from applying their literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts. However, the opportunities they have to do these are not checked on sufficiently and particularly how such activities help them to meet their targets. Consequently their progress varies, particularly in writing.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and in their confidence in carrying out more complex calculations because these skills are practised and taught regularly. Key Stage 2 pupils showed they had made considerable progress since entry in trying to solve mathematical problems. However not everyone could read the problems because their reading level had not been taken into account. This made one or two feel they 'could not do' the work, when the mathematics was easily within their reach.
- Pupils make good progress in practical aspects of subjects other than English because the curriculum has been adapted into themes so that the subject vocabulary and skills are taught in meaningful ways. For example, they talk with excitement about their break-dance group and their martial arts lessons in physical education, watching very carefully as moves are demonstrated and joining in very well indeed. However, there is not enough emphasis in developing their literacy skills in these subjects.

- The sports funding has been used very well to extend pupils' participation and skills in sport and to help them to understand how to have healthy lifestyles.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers now have good information available to them about how well pupils in their classes are doing. Most use this well, particularly in mathematics and English to set interesting and challenging work for pupils. This helps pupils both to make good progress and to become more resilient as learners when something is more difficult.
- Teachers use the unit's behaviour policy and rewards systems very well to help pupils re-engage with learning. The small classes and high number of trained adults available mean pupils quickly form positive relationships with their teachers and want to do their best for them. Praise is used very well to keep pupils informed about how they are doing and explanations and questioning probe carefully how well pupils understand.
- Although the class follows whole-class themes the learning caters to each individual because of the small numbers in each classroom. This helps pupils keep on task and to take a pride in their achievements. Year 6 and Year 5 pupils hoping to transfer back to mainstream schools showed a good grasp of poetry in the style of Spike Milligan, reading their work back with pride and writing freely, when several had been very reluctant writers in the past.
- Staff are ever alert to how pupils are feeling and how confidently they are dealing with tasks or involved with them. Teaching assistants and teachers move smoothly between pupils encouraging and explaining and keeping them on task. Sometimes pupils do not concentrate well, often because of things that have happened outside of school. If this happens there are few spaces where pupils can be supported to learn individually other than in corridors or the playground. Learning time is then wasted for these pupils.
- The teaching of reading is good because pupils' needs are carefully identified and individual programmes put into place. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also benefit from this support as teaching assistants extend the pupils' understanding of specific language and vocabulary alongside supporting their listening and phonic skills (the links between letters and sounds). However not all staff have been trained to support pupils' use of phonics. Occasionally this confuses pupils when staff do not pronounce the sounds accurately.
- Physical education skills are taught and used well both to build on pupils' interest, to promote their willingness to be part of a team and to keep persevering. Pupils enjoy these lessons and their musical activities hugely whether at the school or at the alternative providers. These make a good contribution to their speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching in lessons and the work in books show that pupils who are on the 'shared placement programme' and those in Key Stage 1, who are on part-time placements, also make good progress. Unit staff make highly effective use of their time for learning focusing clearly on their attitudes to learning and their English and mathematics skills. Unit staff work highly effectively with their mainstream schools and with families to keep them informed and ensure continuity of approach. This means pupils are remarkably settled in a very short time.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The large majority of pupils make good or better progress in learning to manage their own behaviour. Although incidents do occur they rarely involve other

pupils and are more swiftly resolved as pupils settle into the unit's routines and expectations. Staff are skilled at helping pupils to think about their behaviour and how it affects others. This means pupils become much more sensitive to others' needs.

- Pupils become increasingly keen to learn as they settle into the school. The careful induction programme and the work of the family-support workers and complex-case team mean that unit staff quickly know the challenges and interests that each child has.
- Pupils love to help around the school and this is often used as a way of engaging them when they are finding things difficult. For example pupils help to paint murals and to improve the playground and hall environment with some excellent examples of artwork on the unit's walls.
- Pupils' attendance almost always improves rapidly on entry to the unit. They say they like coming to this school because of the small classes and because the teachers help them to understand the work. They look after school resources very well and help to make sure their classrooms are tidy and look colourful. Occasionally, when they are troubled, they do break things, but this is rare. Mostly they will take themselves outside to the hall or the playground when they know they have to 'let off steam.'
- The unit's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Indeed there are some exceptional elements to this. The complex case team works very hard with families and pupils during their time at the unit and before and after they come to ensure that pupils have the best possible chance of moving forward successfully at home and at school.
- The well-being of the child is paramount in everything that the unit staff do. Careful risk assessments and weekly reviews of pupils' progress ensure that this is rigorously addressed. Sometimes incidents do happen that make individual pupils feel unsafe, though they acknowledge that these are resolved swiftly by staff. The lack of smaller learning rooms which can be used when pupils are not ready for whole-group learning means that some pupils who do behave badly have to be educated off-site for periods of time.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying well because of the good personal, social, emotional and health education programmes in place. The unit has very strong systems in place for dealing with any bullying that does occur and pupils are clear that it is managed very well. All pupils talked with say they get on better with other pupils at this school because everyone is clear about the rules.
- Pupils show a remarkable understanding of each other's needs and difficulties, often ignoring behaviour that might otherwise disrupt learning when they know someone is upset. When someone is 'calming down' in the playground they are patient if their break time has to be delayed. Staff are particularly good at keeping pupils informed about what is happening and listening to their views. This all helps them to feel valued and to respect other's points of view.
- A very strong programme supports pupils who are about to transfer back into schools so that they are clear about what this will involve and how they might manage the challenges. Schools and families praise the ways in which the unit supports this so that most pupils do manage to succeed in their new placement.

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

- The primary coordinator and her leadership team know the strengths of the unit very well and have accurately identified all that needs to be done next. Since the previous inspection they

have strengthened teaching and achievement by ensuring that assessment on entry is accurate and pupils' progress tracked towards their targets rigorously.

- Teaching is strong because there has been a good emphasis on staff training. New staff follow a good induction programme that shows them quickly how to manage difficult behaviour. Pupil premium and sports funding have been used well to train staff further. For example teaching assistants now have specialist skills in areas such as reading, speech and language and physical education which are helping to accelerate pupils' skills in these areas.
- A whole-school focus on mathematics and reading has ensured that these are more consistently taught so that pupils make good and sometimes better progress in these areas.
- Good systems are now in place for gathering information on, and checking, students' progress. Weekly phone calls to parents and fortnightly reviews ensure that families are involved in these very well and understand exactly how their child is doing. Programmes are quickly matched and adapted as necessary to pupils' needs.
- Staff performance is monitored carefully including the link to student progress. Middle managers such as subject leaders are now involved in observing teaching and learning in their subjects and are held to account well for standards in their subjects.
- Recent changes to a more themed approach to the curriculum are engaging pupils' interests and enthusing pupils and staff. There is an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and science but also a good range of themes that both support pupils' skills in subjects such as history or technology, whilst enriching their understandings of other cultures and beliefs. This, plus the range of community experiences, visits and visitors and contacts with other schools all mean that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school works extremely well with social care partners and the health authority to ensure that pupils are safe and that their emotional well being is protected. It works particularly well with parents and is highly responsive to their concerns. Families say that they no longer dread phone calls from their children's school because the unit rings them to tell them positive things.
- The local authority provides effective support for the management committee and for the unit self evaluation. It has an accurate view of the unit's strengths and next steps although it has not fully considered the ways in which the building's current arrangements restrict the range of teaching and learning options available to support a few more difficult pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee has a good understanding of the unit's strengths and areas for development. The new Chair is very clear as to the management committee's role and ensures it challenges the leadership of the unit and the local authority well, for example about placements and funding. Governors bring a good range of skills to the unit to help them fulfil their responsibilities and drive the unit's work forward.
  - Governors check regularly on the progress of pupils in the school, including how effective the pupil premium money and sports funding money has been in raising achievement. They understand the link between teachers' pay and performance management and question the leadership as to how teaching is being improved and what else can be done.
  - Governors are very clear that the safety of pupils' is paramount and have ensured that all responsibilities regarding safeguarding are met. They check on the working of the complex needs team and family support workers, ensuring staff too are safe but also recognising the need to ensure that pupils' safety in and outside school is provided for.



## 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>	136071
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	425068

This inspection of the school 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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	36
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sue Bradley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Stapley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 February 2011
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