

Newbridge House PRU

Newbridge House, Ewan Close, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA13 9HU

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils' achievement is good overall. The vast majority of pupils arrive with knowledge and skills which are lower than those expected for their age. This is often due to gaps in their learning linked to their previous behaviour or a medical condition. With help and support from skilled staff and a consistently applied behaviour-management system, the majority re-engage quickly with learning and make good progress.
- Teaching is good. Expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning are high and activities are interesting and varied. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.
- The good quality of work seen in pupils' books and school data show that over time they make good and better progress across years and in different subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is generally good and is sometimes outstanding in classrooms and around the three school sites. Staff are quick to intervene and offer support to newcomers who have difficulty controlling their behaviour. This ensures that the learning for others continues unabated.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They learn how to keep safe both inside and outside school including through the provision of excellent internet safety training that helps pupils to recognise any possible dangers.
- The highly effective headteacher and senior leaders work closely with the management committee. This very strong partnership has built upon the good quality teaching and pupils' achievement identified in the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Staff do not consistently adhere to the marking and feedback policy. As a result, pupils are not always given sufficient guidance on how to improve the quality and presentation of their work.
- Middle leaders in both the home and hospital teaching units have yet to develop the skills required to ensure consistency of the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils who attend these units.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons and parts of lessons taught by teachers and support staff in the three units which make up the school. A short observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspector held meetings and had discussions with pupils, the school leadership team, the teachers in charge of both home and hospital teaching units, members of the school staff, the chair of the management committee and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also held telephone discussions with senior leaders from three local schools whose pupils are also registered with the pupil referral unit.
- The inspector took into account the views of four parents who were contacted by telephone. No parent made their views known through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector studied health and safety documentation, teachers' planning, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, pupils' attendance data and the school's system for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a pupil referral unit comprising three different units in two separate locations. The vast majority of pupils who attend remain dual-registered both at the unit and their mainstream school, often spending only a short period of time each week attending the pupil referral unit.
- A small number of pupils have been permanently excluded from their school but often, with the help of the unit, make a successful transfer to another school. A further very small number, currently six pupils, remain solely on the roll of the unit
- Since the previous inspection the school has grown in size by taking responsibility for two additional home and hospital teaching units.
- The main base, Newbridge House, provides for pupils in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 within Barrow-in-Furness and surrounding areas who have either been permanently excluded from mainstream school or are in danger of becoming so, because of social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- The other two units are home and hospital teaching units which provide for pupils with medical needs which prevent them from attending their mainstream school. One unit is situated in Kendal approximately 33 miles from the main site and the second has recently moved into a building adjoining the main site.
- Currently, there are 55 pupils on roll who are spread across the three sites.
- Support is also offered by pupil referral unit staff to mainstream primary and secondary schools in order to help them to manage and improve the behaviour of individual pupils to reduce the likelihood of exclusion.
- A small proportion of pupils have other learning difficulties such as autistic spectrum disorder.
- The majority of pupils who attend are of White British origin. A much smaller proportion is from other ethnic groups. The vast majority of pupils who attend are boys.
- A high proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority. This funding remains at the pupils' mainstream school where the majority spend most of their time.
- The great majority of pupils who attend are supported at school action plus, which is much greater than average. A smaller proportion has a statement of special educational needs, often given during the time they attend the school.
- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievement by improving the consistency of marking and feedback in books across the school so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve both the presentation and content of their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that the leaders in charge in the hospital and home tuition units have the required skills to check more closely on the quality of teaching and achievement in order to improve the progress of pupils further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall pupils' achievement is good. Current data and the work in pupils' books show that progress over time, often from low starting points, is good. Comments made by leaders and managers of some of the schools at which pupils are dual-registered confirm this good progress.
- The very clear focus on ensuring pupils make good academic progress as well as securing improvement in their behaviour contributes to nearly 70% making a successful return to mainstream schools. Gaps in learning, often caused by episodes of difficult behaviour or illness are quickly identified and effective action taken. This ensures that pupils make good progress and start to catch up on missed learning.
- Pupils make equally good gains in reading writing and mathematics. However, progress is sometimes slower in the home and hospital units where pupils' attendance is often lower due to their medical conditions. Occasionally, staff in these units have lower expectations of what pupils can achieve in the time available and when this happens progress slows.
- Pupils said they enjoy reading a variety of different materials including magazines, books and newspapers. Younger pupils make good and better gains in reading because of the vigilant approach taken by staff to improve their skills in daily reading sessions. As a result, they make up lost ground and reach levels closer to those expected nationally.
- For the majority of pupils their stay in the school is short and contact with mainstream schools is nearly always maintained. They are entered for national assessments and external examinations at these schools and the good progress made enables them to be more successful in these. The attainment of the few who stay for longer periods, although lower than others nationally, has risen over the last two years for all groups of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Those pupils that need to stay longer make at least good progress because of the wide range of both academic and vocational opportunities on offer including, for example, GCSE catering and photography. Success in these ensures pupils leave with a range of qualifications and accreditations which prepare them well for further education or the workplace.
- All staff keep the focus on overcoming pupils' many and often complex needs. For example, staff ensure that even when crisis point is reached by a pupil and their behaviour dips, the learning of others continues without disruption.
- Gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils are closing. School data shows that although the funding for pupils eligible for support from pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is maintained by their mainstream school they made equally good progress last year to that of their peers. There are insufficient pupils in the unit permanently to make a judgement on their attainment.
- The most able pupils make good and better progress. This is because most staff have high expectations of what they can achieve and set work which challenges them to achieve their potential across different subjects.
- The vast majority of pupils have identified disabilities or special educational needs. Those with additional needs, for example autistic spectrum disorder, and those from other ethnic backgrounds have their needs successfully identified and well-targeted extra support is put in place. As a result, progress for all groups is equally good. This shows the school's continued commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- School records and evidence in pupils' books and folders support school leaders' view that the quality of teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding over time.
- 'I enjoy coming here because I feel staff have got to know me and understand how I think,' commented a pupil whose views reflected those of others. Staff understand pupils' complex

needs and are adept at using information about pupils' progress to plan future learning. They ensure activities sustain pupils' interest and experiences and this captures their enthusiasm to try hard and do their best.

- Most work is set at the right level of challenge being not too easy or too hard. This gives pupils the required confidence to tackle their work and achieve success. However, work set for pupils in the home and hospital teaching units is not always matched as closely to their level of need. When this happens, particularly when work is too easy, progress slows.
- Pupils' learning in English and mathematics is good. Despite their high levels of need and often low self-esteem the praise pupils receive leads them to become very proud of the work. This pride is clearly reflected by pupils who are very keen to share their work.
- Reading skills are effectively taught and opportunities to read are offered in all subjects. As a result, pupils often make good gains and some develop a love of reading which continues in their leisure time.
- Their success in writing in different areas of the curriculum, and the encouragement they receive from staff ensures younger pupils are keen to write, often for the first time.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils have every opportunity to apply their skills to solve problems, for example, in using their knowledge and understanding of measuring angles to find even more complicated answers and solutions.
- Pupils frequently continue to attend their mainstream schools for part of each week. When this is the case staff work alongside mainstream colleagues sharing responsibility for pupils' education. Regular meetings are held to discuss pupils' academic and social, emotional and behavioural progress. Shared objectives are set which ensure pupils make the best progress possible in both schools.
- Parents spoken to were unanimous in their support of the school. One described school staff as offering 'brilliant levels of support to both children and their families'. Although there is possibly some initial reluctance for their children to attend the provision, parents value the good academic progress as well as the improvement in behaviour.
- One of the key features of teaching over time is high expectations of pupils' behaviour and social skills. These could clearly be demonstrated in personal, social, health and cultural education where pupils debated the types of behaviour which led to an Antisocial Behaviour Order being issued. Pupils thoughtfully debated the subject showing good levels of empathy and a balanced view. Their mature attitudes and understanding clearly demonstrated their good progress academically, socially and emotionally.
- Staff work closely together to ensure extra sessions planned for pupils who need extra help with their learning result in those pupils making the same good progress as others in the school. The majority of pupils' work is marked diligently and guidance is given on how to improve. However, sometimes, particularly in the home and hospital units, marking and feedback does not follow school policy sufficiently well. As a result, pupils are unclear about how to improve their work. When this happens pupils do not learn from their errors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of pupils attend the school because of behavioural difficulties. Many improve their behaviour in the classroom significantly as a result of the consistently applied behaviour-management system. The change in pupils' behaviour enables the vast majority to make good progress and transfer smoothly back to mainstream school or on to another provision.
- The behaviour of pupils who attend the hospital and home tuition service is good and often outstanding because pupils feel their needs are clearly understood by staff. The calm and nurturing atmosphere in the units enables them to settle quickly and successfully re-engage with learning.
- Behaviour around the school and at lunchtime is orderly. Staff and pupils frequently eat lunch

together promoting a family atmosphere. As a result of this nurturing approach, pupils learn to show caring and friendly attitudes to each other, staff and visitors.

- School records show that over time incidents of difficult behaviour have reduced because of the effective way in which procedures to secure good behaviour are consistently applied.
- 'I enjoy coming to school here because staff care.' commented one pupil. This view reflects the views of others. As a result of their increased enjoyment of school, attendance improves for the majority. School records show attendance has steadily increased overall for the last three years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Effective systems ensure pupils arrive and depart safely. Risk assessments ensure that premises are secure, reducing the likelihood of danger for pupils when their behaviour dips.
- Lessons in personal, social, cultural and health education offer pupils advice on the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug taking. This clear advice enables pupils to make safe decisions to protect their health and welfare.
- Pupils spoken to were clear about the different forms of bullying. They feel incidents happen infrequently and that staff ensure pupils are aware of who to turn to should an incident occur.

The leadership and management are good

- The newly appointed headteacher along with the deputy headteacher and very recently appointed assistant headteacher have a clear and focused vision for improvement, which they share with the members of the management committee.
- As a result of strong team work, pupils' good levels of achievement and the good quality of teaching identified in the previous inspection have been maintained and built upon.
- Senior leaders check on teaching and track pupils' progress closely. Consequently, they have identified accurately aspects which need improvement and have set suitable targets to reach their goals. A clear plan identifies precise actions to reach these priorities and focuses upon bringing about further gains in achievement and teaching.
- Whilst the role of middle leaders is beginning to develop across the school, the teachers in charge of the two hospital and home teaching units are not yet fully effective. They do not have the skills needed to check the quality of teaching and achievement in their units. As a result, they are not sufficiently informed about how to raise pupils' progress further.
- The headteacher ensures performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and targets within the school's improvement plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken regularly and this information is used to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- The school's curriculum offers pupils a range of subjects including humanities, catering and photography. Planned adjustments to the curriculum are in place ahead of the national changes next term. Subjects such as personal and social education, art and drama promote effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- As the few pupils of primary school age attend for only short time each week the primary school sport funding is used at their mainstream school. Nevertheless, pupils benefit greatly from the on-site gym, which allows pupils good access to a range of different sports. Orienteering and other outdoor pursuits training offer pupils good opportunities to try new things and develop new skills which promote their self-esteem, physical fitness and personal well-being.
- The local authority has confidence in the leadership skills of senior leaders and has offered a light-touch level of support over the last year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The recent addition of senior leaders from both primary and secondary schools to the management committee membership have added to what was already a skilled team with a wide breadth of experience which they regularly update through further training. They have developed a good level of understanding of pupils' achievement through their interpretation and understanding of national data. As a result, they offer senior leaders good levels of

support and challenge in their quest to bring about further improvement. In partnership with senior leaders, they have developed an effective system for checking the performance of all staff, which rewards good teaching and addresses any underperformance. They manage their delegated budget prudently and this careful management has enabled them to support pupils well. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet current requirements.

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	112098
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	439460

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	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorraine Thompson
Headteacher	Lisa Balderstone
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2011
Telephone number	01229 407470
Fax number	01229 407470
Email address	pru.south@cumbriacc.gov.uk

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