

Cedars - Newcastle, Moorlands and Darwin Bases

High Street, Knutton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 6BX

Inspection dates

12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' wide range of needs are well met, through flexible learning programmes. Where appropriate, short-stay students return to school rapidly.
- Students make good progress because expectations are high. They are given every opportunity to study nationally recognised academic and vocational courses in a range of settings, which best suits their needs.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is promoted well. The opportunities to participate in a range of outdoor and residential trips do much to develop their social, emotional and personal skills.
- The management committee provides good challenge and support so that improvements have been secured since the previous inspection.
- Students enjoy the informal nature of the centre. They are given excellent support from all staff, including mentors who help them to overcome obstacles in their lives so that they are better placed to learn. Students feel safe and well cared for. Their behaviour improves well.
- Senior leaders have focused on improving teaching since the previous inspection, so that it is now consistently good. Students enjoy practical lessons such as art, physical education and science. Teaching is sensitive to students' often fragile state, but also provides good challenge enabling them to achieve well.
- Even though the pupil referral unit is a complex organisation to lead and manage, partnership working with colleges, schools and other agencies is a strength and students benefit from this.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. The marking of students' work is inconsistent and it does not tell them how to improve their work further.
- The website does not contain all the required statutory information.
- The attendance for some students is still too low.
- The analysis and use of student progress information to show the overall effectiveness of the diverse service is not developed well enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed nine lessons or part lessons.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, students, the Chair of the Management Committee and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents' comments in annual reviews were taken into account.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on students' progress, its self-evaluation, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of students and scrutiny of their work.
- Inspectors visited two alternative providers and phone calls were made to another two.
- The separate Child and Adult Mental Health (CAMHS) unit was inspected.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Stanbridge

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cedars pupil referral unit (PRU) provides education for secondary-aged students who have been excluded from mainstream schools. Some are longer-term placements at the Cedars base for students who need additional support to improve their behaviour, attendance and achievement. Some students stay at Cedars for shorter periods of time.
- Education is also provided for young people who are in-patients at the Darwin Centre Child, CAMHS residential unit. These students also remain on the roll of their mainstream school.
- A few students have dual placements, remaining on the roll of their mainstream school.
- Approximately three quarters of students are boys. A few have statements of special educational needs.
- One third of students receive additional government funding, known as the pupil premium. This is above average.
- Students are predominantly White British.
- The pupil referral unit makes extensive use of nine alternative providers. These are Stoke on Trent College, Stoke on Trent 6th Form College, Newcastle College, Rodbaston College, E Quality Learning, Kinetic Learning, Unity, Sporting Stars, NACRO and MARTEC. These provide additional academic and vocational courses for students.
- A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up the post in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning to outstanding through:
 - ensuring that marking is more consistent and provides students with pointers about how to improve their work.
- Develop better analysis and use of student progress information to measure the overall effectiveness of the different aspects of the service.
- Improve students' attendance by identifying further ways with other agencies, to support students with persistent absence back into education and school.
- Ensure the website meets statutory requirements by containing all required information.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and management committee have created a positive and encouraging place to learn, where students achieve well, given their often low starting points. Staff provide good role models of courtesy, respect and tolerance, promoting students' achievements and personal development well.
- The PRU is careful to use only OFSTED accredited providers who have been judged at least good or better. In addition to this, staff undertake checks of providers to ensure students are safe and achieving as expected. Weekly meetings which focus on every student are excellent at enabling staff to address any difficulties students may be experiencing, such as in their behaviour, attendance or progress.
- Partnership working is a strength. The PRU works with a range of agencies such as health, social services and the police effectively. For example, medical and education staff work closely together in the Darwin Base for those students experiencing mental health issues.
- All students are respected regardless of background and previous history. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. For example, girls who are in a minority confidently told inspectors they felt safe and comfortable. They reported being given 'loads of help' to achieve their aspirations. Relationships in school are harmonious and discrimination of any type is nipped in the bud.
- The subjects and experiences offered to students are a strength of the provision. Students have every chance of experiencing success through their individual needs being tailored for well. One student spoke with pride about the construction course he was following and the qualifications he had achieved.
- The values of respect for the law, tolerance and democracy are strongly promoted through the ethos of the PRU and taught subjects. This prepares students well for life in modern Britain.
- The PRU's website does not set out how British values are promoted, students' achievement information, or the impact of pupil premium funding, even though these are requirements.
- Students are provided with helpful and impartial careers advice and guidance and the choice of alternative providers plays an important role in helping to prepare students for life after school.
- Safeguarding has a high priority in school and with off-site providers. The designated safeguarding leader conscientiously ensures all requirements are met so that students are protected and staff are alert to potential dangers vulnerable students may face.
- Other leaders in the school have a clear view of the strengths of their areas of responsibility and areas for development. They are enthusiastic and diligent, and work closely to improve the behaviour and achievement of students.
- The PRU has decided to keep the existing system for assessing and measuring students' progress, as it deals with many different schools and is waiting to see how these schools develop their own systems of assessment in the future.
- The local authority has full confidence in the PRU and provides support as needed. For example, it facilitates the meeting with other PRUs in the authority to share best practice and bring about further improvements.
- The PRU does not always receive pupil premium funding or Year 7 catch-up funding, as often they remain on the roll of placing schools. Where additional funding is available, this has been used effectively to increase disadvantaged students' achievement through access to examination and vocational courses.
- The work of teaching staff is checked closely and measured against the national 'Teachers' Standards' and this has ensured that teaching is now good across the school. Teachers have had opportunities to observe

other practitioners and visit other schools. Advice on how to improve teaching has also been sought from a local Teaching School. However, this has not yet given rise to sustained outstanding teaching or achievement. The link between salary progression and the quality of teaching is appropriate.

- The school's capacity to improve further is strengthened through an effective management committee, which has planned well for the appointment of a new headteacher, who has had time to liaise with the outgoing headteacher.

■ The governance of the school:

- The management committee is knowledgeable and committed, and includes a number of education professionals. Members have a good working knowledge of the service through comprehensive reporting by the headteacher and they know teaching is good. Good quality information enables the committee to ask questions and hold the PRU to account. The committee measures the effectiveness of the PRU through rates of re-integration and students not in employment or training. However, measures to gauge overall student progress in the different remits of the service are not yet in place. The committee has a good overview of the finances. Members know how additional funding has been spent and the benefits to students' progress. Performance management of staff is in place and the link between pay and performance is appropriate. In conjunction with the headteacher they have ensured the curriculum promotes British values and that students are safe and protected.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They benefit from a strong mentoring system and this helps them to improve their behaviour and their readiness to learn by dealing with any obstacles they may have to learning.
- Students take pride in their work and this is demonstrated in the care they take in their written work, which is neatly presented.
- Behaviour around the PRU and in lessons is generally good and over time most students develop positive attitudes to learning. Some students are reluctant learners and need regular encouragement to focus in lessons.
- Students respect staff and their surroundings. The building is kept clean and tidy and colourful displays of students' work, such as art, enhance the learning environment to make it uplifting and warm.
- The majority of students make vast improvements in their attendance but overall attendance is well below average. Some students have chaotic backgrounds and find regular attendance at college or the PRU a challenge. Mentors provide home visits where needed to improve attendance. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is relatively low and stable.
- Visits to museums such as the Imperial War Museum, cathedrals and other cities help to promote students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development well. Assemblies provide opportunities for students to reflect on the needs of others and encourage fairness, tolerance and respect.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Staff are vigilant to ensure students feel safe. Students are confident to confide in staff should the need arise. They trust and like the staff.
- Visitors to the school are monitored and checked.
- Students did not express any concerns about bullying or cyber-bullying but knew and could tell inspectors how to keep safe online.

- Students' understanding of how to stay safe is increased through developing awareness of the dangers of substance misuse and risky behaviour, through lessons and through effective mentoring.
- Staff are vigilant in safeguarding matters. Risk assessments for off-site visits and other activities are in place and recording of serious incidents are maintained to a high standard.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers set high expectations for students for behaviour and work and most students respond positively and rise to meet them.
- Positive and trusting relationships between staff and students are a key factor in students starting to turn their lives around. The mentoring system is very effective in promoting improved behaviour and learning.
- Challenging behaviour, when it occurs, is managed sensitively and with minimal disruption to learning.
- Lessons in the main, capture students' attention and they are keen to discuss and confident to air their ideas. On occasions when work does not engage them, students lose interest.
- Students feel that the work given to them is pitched at the right level. One student complained 'It makes your brain hurt', but conceded he was making progress. Evidence from students' workbooks supports the view that they make good progress over time and are equipped effectively to undertake examinations in Year 11.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on literacy, reading and mathematics in lessons and in other subjects and areas of learning. Students' literacy skills are promoted effectively. The PRU has developed expertise in identifying and helping students with dyslexia. In English, students study a good range of texts and can identify emotive language in poems and novels.
- In lessons, students for the most part are keen to engage in sensible discussions and practical activities. For example, in a science lesson they learned different types of reflex responses caused by smelling salts.
- In mathematics, students are assessed on entry so that the right level of challenge can be provided, ensuring they have not lost ground when returning to mainstream school.
- Teaching in the CAMHS base is good and work is pitched at appropriate levels enabling students to achieve success in examinations. For example, in an information technology lesson, students made good progress in manipulating images and animations and go on to achieve GCSE results. The liaison between teaching staff and medical staff is excellent so that students' needs are fully considered and met.
- The marking of students' work is not consistent enough and comments are encouraging, rather than helping them to understand what they need to learn next.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The high number of Key Stage 3 students returning to mainstream school is an effective measure of the success and achievement of students. For Key Stage 4 students, the proportion who are in employment, education or training is high given their previous fragmented education.
- Expectations for students to achieve are high. They are placed in settings where their aspirations are raised. For example, students who attend the local sixth form college to study, mix with more able students increasing their confidence and achievement.
- All the alternative placements provide additional academic and vocational courses. The number of students taking GCSE courses has risen over the last few years. Students also receive mathematics and

English support at the PRU to supplement and accelerate their progress. Intermittent attendance by some students has a negative impact on their progress and achievement.

- Vocational courses prepare students well for life after school and their independence and self-esteem improves significantly.
- Students who attend the Darwin unit achieve well. They are able to study a good range of subjects and they gradually become more confident in their personal and emotional development.
- Disadvantaged students who receive the pupil premium achieve equally well and close the gap in attainment on their peers in mathematics and English. Funding has enabled more students to take examination courses.
- More able students achieve higher grades in GCSE courses. Some higher attaining students, who attend the Darwin base, are enabled to keep pace with their peers so that on returning to school, they are able to pursue A-level courses and then progress onto university.
- The PRU uses individual measures to track students' academic and vocational progress. This does not allow senior leaders or the management committee to check and compare trends from one year to the next, or identify overall progress easily for students in the different remits of the service.

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	131652
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	447972

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Martin Kerridge
Headteacher	Mike Fenton
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2012
Telephone number	01782 615678
Fax number	01782 615678
Email address	headteacher@cedarsnewcastle.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

