

# Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service

Coningsby Street, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 2DY

## Inspection dates

11–12 July 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the reorganisation of the pupil referral service in Herefordshire in 2015, skilled leaders and management committee members have worked tirelessly to embed their shared vision for the centres of preparing pupils for life.
- The commitment of all staff in supporting pupils to achieve the best outcomes is evident across the service.
- Strong, nurturing relationships that exist between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. Pupils behave well at all three centres. They understand and respect the clear rules and expectations which are shared with them when they join.
- Pupils receive an outstanding level of support for their personal development and welfare. This enables them to build their resilience and confidence in a safe environment.
- Teaching is generally good at each of the centres. Teachers plan activities that are challenging, interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs.
- Leaders have high expectations for pupils and set challenging targets, based on pupils' abilities. Leaders track the individual progress of pupils on a regular basis and make sure that additional support is provided for those who need it.
- The curriculum is well matched to the varying needs of the pupils. The use of alternative provision to complement the curriculum is a strength of the service and leaders monitor these providers with rigour.
- Pupils are able to take a range of examination subjects, including GCSEs, BTECs and functional skills qualifications. This helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Able middle leaders are ambitious about their areas of responsibility and are committed to further improvements. However, their work is not yet having sufficient impact across the service as a whole.
- Leaders set high expectations for pupils' attendance across the service. While attendance is still low, it is improving, and is higher at the sites of alternative provision.
- Leaders collect and analyse a wealth of information about individual pupils' academic and social and emotional development at each centre. However, they are not yet analysing this in a way to help them identify emerging trends or patterns across the service.
- Pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving or reasoning skills in mathematics.

## Full report

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

- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they monitor their area of responsibility across the whole service, ensuring a better understanding of strengths and areas for development.
- Further refine the way assessment information is collected and analysed so that leaders can:
  - identify emerging trends for different groups across the service
  - use the wealth of information they already hold about pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs to recognise the wider progress that pupils are making
  - identify wider trends in attendance, so that they target interventions for specific groups and reduce further absence across the service.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Highly skilled and committed leaders and management committee members have made sure that the reorganisation of the three previous, separate pupil referral provisions in Herefordshire has been effective. They have created a single, seamless service for pupils who have a wide range of needs.
- Leaders from each centre are now working extremely well together, and have a shared vision for the service as a whole, articulated clearly in their self-evaluation and plans for further improvement. They also recognise that each centre is unique, as pupils have a variety of different needs. This is a strength of the service.
- There is a strong team ethic in every centre. Staff value the additional professional development opportunities they receive and they say that arrangements for managing their performance are effective. They value the open and approachable management team.
- Provision at H3, the centre which manages home and hospital tutoring and a base for pupils with the most complex needs, is outstanding. The exceptional leader and her committed and able staff ensure that these vulnerable pupils are nurtured and supported to make progress in a safe and welcoming environment. This provision, which is highly regarded by health professionals, allows some pupils with the most complex mental health needs to access support which cannot otherwise be provided within Herefordshire.
- The H3 Centre is now beginning to offer provision for a small number of post-16 students. Leaders make sure that students are able to follow courses appropriate to their needs, including level 3 qualifications.
- Leaders' vision of a curriculum which provides a balance of academic and vocational studies has been realised. However, they are not complacent; they continue to regularly review and refine their curriculum offer so that pupils have the best opportunities to be successful and prepared for the next stage of their education, which may include returning to mainstream education.
- Nearly all pupils access some type of alternative provision during their time at the centres. The range and variety of provision has been selected carefully and staff monitor this with rigour. Different providers enable pupils to access accreditation or therapeutic learning, relevant to individual need. Pupils value and enjoy their learning at these providers and say that it helps them to 'develop themselves'. Almost all pupils sustain their placements at these providers.
- Leaders have high expectations for all pupils to achieve the best they can, and this is reflected in the challenging targets they are set on entry to the centre. They recognise that pupils may have gaps in their learning, or may have been out of education for some time, so support is personalised. This enables pupils to make good, and sometimes accelerated, progress. However, leaders have not yet refined the way they use assessment information to identify trends in attendance, academic and personal development across the service and target support where it is needed.

- Pupils are able to take a range of examination subjects which are suited to their needs, interests and abilities, including GCSE English, mathematics and science, BTEC awards, functional skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2 and entry-level qualifications. Fewer pupils have chosen to take GCSE science but leaders have recognised the reasons for this and have addressed them. They expect more pupils to choose science as an option next year.
- Each centre provides a well-maintained, welcoming environment with some specialist facilities for subjects including design technology, art and food technology. Pupils' work and achievements are displayed proudly. The 'Aconbury Stars' board celebrates pupils' achievements. There is a strong emphasis on preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and fundamental British values are celebrated and explored through a variety of activities. During the inspection, some pupils were learning about the 2010 Equality Act and its meaning and commented that as 'we're all humans, we should all be treated the same, no matter what (protected) group we're in'.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and funds are spent wisely. Leaders make sure that individual needs are catered for. They monitor the progress of this group of pupils and interventions are used where necessary to support pupils in their learning. The special educational needs coordinator has good plans in place to widen professional development opportunities and checks on the quality of interventions being delivered across the service.
- Middle leaders have a clear vision for the development of their areas of responsibility. While their work has had a positive impact on standards and progress at individual centres, they do not yet formally monitor the teaching of their subjects across the service.
- Leaders and members of the management committee make sure that pupil premium funding is used well to support pupils' learning and development. There are no significant gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of their non-disadvantaged peers. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils have performed better than their non-disadvantaged peers.

## **Governance of the school**

- The management committee, driven by its inspirational chair, has paid close attention to planning for the future. Recent leadership appointments have ensured that there is continued capacity to drive forward the improvements that have already been made across the service.
- The chair of the committee has worked hard to recruit skilled committee members who understand the nature of the service and can offer high levels of challenge. Members bring a wide variety of expertise to the committee as well as experience and expertise in education and health. They know the strengths of the service, and where improvements need to be made. Regular visits to the centres mean that they can check on the accuracy of information provided to them by leaders.
- Committee members appreciate the wide range of information about each centre with which they are provided. This enables them to ask questions about progress, behaviour and attendance and offer additional challenge and support. For example, members were concerned about some pupils' attendance and as a result set up a separate

committee to monitor this more closely.

- The service has a very small number of pupils who are on part-time timetables. Most of these pupils' timetables are reviewed on a fortnightly basis, and time in the centres is increased accordingly. Occasionally, pupils cannot sustain their place within the service and alternative placements have not always been secured as quickly as the management committee would have liked. Committee members have been instrumental in making sure that a formal agreement is now in place with the local authority in relation to these pupils, ensuring closer monitoring of these timetables and more-rapid action to secure alternative placements.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and the management committee make sure that all staff and committee members receive comprehensive safeguarding training which is regularly updated. Staff value the training they receive, including training on the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. They have a good understanding of potential risks in the local area, such as child sexual exploitation.
- Each centre has a fully trained designated safeguarding lead and a deputy. Safeguarding procedures are understood by all staff and they know to whom they report their concerns.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding is given high priority at alternative providers. Staff carry out rigorous checks on every provider before pupils begin their placements there and make sure that staff have been suitably recruited and checked for their suitability to work with children. Detailed records show that staff carry out risk assessments, health and safety checks, and make sure that providers have appropriate insurance.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The strong relationships between pupils and staff are evident across each centre and create a positive climate for learning. Staff make sure that pupils are ready to learn before they enter the classroom.
- Pupils' work is generally presented well and free from unwanted doodling and embellishments. At St David's Centre, work in mathematics was better presented than in English. In the other centres there was little difference in presentation of work.
- The newly appointed English leader has a clear vision for the way forward to make a difference to the progress pupils are making. An entry-level qualification has been introduced for Year 9 pupils, which provides a stepping stone to higher accreditation in Years 10 and 11.
- Past experiences mean that some pupils are reluctant to read aloud when they join the centres. They are supported and encouraged to read and use additional resources such as coloured overlays to help them with their reading. Inspectors saw a number of pupils who were confident to read aloud, in front of their peers.

- Teaching is usually good across the centres, and leaders' monitoring information confirms this. Baseline information shows that pupils enter the service with levels that are higher in reading than writing and teachers are aware of this and adjust their planning accordingly. The development of basic literacy and numeracy skills is evident across all subjects. Leaders plan to extend support in basic skills at the Dinedor Outdoor Centre, one of sites used for alternative provision.
- Inspectors saw some excellent examples of pupils' writing during the inspection, including an acrostic football poem and a descriptive piece of writing based on War of the Worlds: 'A colossal greyish rounded thing, the size, perhaps of a bear, was rising nonchalantly and painfully out of the cylinder. As it rose into the sunlight, it glistened like leather.'
- Lessons are interesting because teachers make them relevant to the pupils' interests and abilities. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were learning about calculating percentages based on salaries. They had to work out weekly wages, national insurance contributions and income tax. They discussed the minimum wage and compared salaries of different jobs.
- Mathematics work is challenging and nearly all pupils in key stage 4 this year have been entered for GCSE mathematics. Coverage of mathematical topics is good, but inspectors saw few opportunities to use problem-solving and reasoning across the centres.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons that are challenging and engaging. They set targets which are appropriate to pupils' abilities and enable them to make progress in their learning. Leaders make sure that teachers have information about pupils' prior attainments as well as detailed baseline information so that they can address any gaps in their learning and help them accelerate their progress.
- For pupils who only attend Aconbury Centre for a short time, progress is measured through scrutinising work in books. By returning to mainstream schooling, these pupils have clearly made progress in the wider sense.
- Leaders are not yet able to track the holistic progress of pupils, or identify trends and patterns in their information. However, the leader of H3 Centre has begun developing an approach which could enable leaders to do this more effectively across the service.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The service's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils who attend the centres have often had difficult experiences in other schools or breaks in their education. When they join, staff support them extremely well. Pupils from every centre told inspectors that they are happier because, 'Teachers are more understanding. They see you for yourself.' Pupils like the calm environments and the smaller groups.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons at the centres. Inspectors saw pupils working cooperatively with each other. They are able to talk about how to improve their work and what their next steps in learning are. Pupils were very clear that while teachers challenge them in

their learning, they don't 'pressure us'.

- Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe at school and that they had been taught about how to stay safe in the community. The curriculum provides a number of opportunities to learn how to keep safe, including online safety and 'sexting'. This work is supported by external agencies, including the local police community support officer. Key stage 4 pupils attend the 'Dying to Drive' training, facilitated by the three emergency services. The course teaches pupils about the effect of not wearing a seatbelt, drinking and taking drugs while driving.
- Pupils are exceptionally well supported in their mental well-being. The H3 Centre works closely with the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS), gradually reintroducing pupils to education in a nurturing environment. Pupils who are not able to come to the centre receive home tutoring, which is monitored regularly by the H3 Centre leader.
- Records show that there is very little bullying across the centres and pupils confirmed this. They spoke candidly, saying that they recognise that everyone comes to the centre with their own issues, but 'everyone just gets along'. They know that they can resolve their own issues, but can also ask an adult for help if they need it.
- Pupils value the opportunities they are given to attend a range of alternative providers which 'help us to develop ourselves'. They are well prepared for these experiences and staff make sure that their choices are based on their abilities and interests. Some activities encourage regular exercise, such as visits to the local gym.
- Pupils at St David's Centre take turns, as part of their level 2 qualification, to prepare a healthy lunch every day for all the staff and pupils at the centre. Staff and pupils sit together to eat every day. There is a real family atmosphere as staff and pupils sit together, discussing daily news or whether a tomato is a fruit or a vegetable! Inspectors witnessed genuine warmth and respect in the relationships between staff and pupils.
- The service works with several external agencies so that pupils can be supported with their range of needs. Pupils are able to attend a weekly drop-in session, facilitated by the school nurse, and regular meetings with the education welfare officer. The service also engages with an occupational therapist, physiotherapist and CAMHS workers.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which are shared with pupils and parents at the start of pupils' induction into the centres. Rules and consequences are made clear, including expectations at break and lunchtime, punctuality and attendance, smoking, leaving the site and using phones. Inspectors saw pupils adhering well to these rules, and staff supporting pupils to make the right choices. Pupils to whom inspectors spoke said that the rules were 'OK'. They agreed that, 'You don't need your phone in lessons'.
- Pupils know that they will be removed from lessons if they disrupt the learning of others, and they recognised that this strategy helped them to stay focused on their learning. The very small amount of low-level disruption or inappropriate use of

language inspectors saw or heard was challenged quickly and effectively by staff.

- Leaders monitor patterns in behaviour and these records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are reducing over time. Staff are suitably trained to physically intervene with pupils in order to keep everyone safe, but there is very little use of physical interventions across the service. These are reducing over time in the Aconbury Centre and there has only been one physical intervention at St David's Centre in the last year. Similarly, fixed-term exclusions have reduced over time and there have been no permanent exclusions this year.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents, and looked at the centre's parent surveys. Parents spoke positively about the impact that the service has had on their children, who are now happier coming to school. Parents felt strongly that staff understood the individual needs of their children very well.
- Regular attendance is promoted by all staff and expectations are made clear to all pupils. Attendance is low, but is improving, and leaders provided compelling case studies which showed improvements in attendance for most pupils. Leaders follow up absences with rigour as soon as a pupil does not arrive at the centre, including contacting the police if necessary.
- All staff recognise and reward good behaviour and attendance and pupils are able to accumulate points to exchange for vouchers, receive awards at regular centre celebrations or participate in trips, which they vote for.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Overall, pupils are making good progress in all centres, and across most subjects. In the last two years, there were differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers in English and mathematics in key stage 3 and 4. However, current assessment information shows that this gap has closed. There is now no significant difference in the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers.
- The wide range of accreditation which is available to pupils at St David's Centre and the H3 Centre means that pupils are able to gain a range of qualifications to help them move on to the next stage of education. Staff at the Aconbury Centre liaise regularly with host schools to make sure that pupils are not missing out on their learning and are academically ready for their return to mainstream school.
- In 2016, all year 11 pupils at St David's and the H3 Centres who were entered for a GCSE gained a pass. At the H3 Centre, 80% achieved A\* to B grades. Those pupils who were unable to access GCSE English and mathematics gained passes in functional skills qualifications and BTEC vocational awards.
- For the small number of pupils who are supported with their learning at home, teaching focuses on basic skills and personal, social and health education. Teachers work to build pupils' resilience so that they are ready to begin reintegration into their mainstream school, or start attending the H3 Centre.
- The service, in partnership with the local authority, is now offering additional support to a small group of post-16 pupils who would otherwise be at risk of not attending education, employment or training (NEET). Leaders recognised that in previous years



pupils did not have the resilience or support to maintain their place at a mainstream college and as a result a number of pupils did not complete their college course. The service's 'NEET' project provides additional support and advice for centre leavers during their first year of education in further education. This has resulted in pupils being able to sustain their placements at college.

- There is a strong emphasis on preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. Pupils work towards a BTEC in employability skills and participate in a range of activities to complement their studies. On the first day of the inspection, Year 10 pupils were attending taster sessions at three local colleges, to help them think about their future options. Year 11 pupils are able to take part in a 'Live and Learn' project, supported by Hereford Council. For one day a week they participate in a variety of accredited vocational activities.
- The service employs an independent careers adviser who supports pupils and parents in all aspects of careers advice. St David's Centre arranges work experience for a small number of pupils, lasting for a half term. For some pupils, this has led to the offer of an apprenticeship or employment. Leaders want to increase these work experience opportunities to a larger group of pupils.

## School details

Unique reference number	130991
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10032543

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Dame Oremi Evans
Headteacher	Paul Barns
Telephone number	01432 274485
Website	<a href="http://www.hprs.hereford.sch.uk">www.hprs.hereford.sch.uk</a>
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Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In September 2014 the three pupil referral units in Herefordshire (St David’s Centre, Aconbury Centre and The Priory Centre) were merged into a single service. The service now consists of St David’s (key stage 4), Aconbury (key stage 3) and the H3 Centre (home and hospital teaching service). The H3 Centre also caters for pupils with mental health needs.
- Nearly all pupils access off-site alternative provision. The service uses the following providers: Holme Lacy College, Red Castle Training, Horizon Training, Longlands Care Farm, Cre8, Music Pool, Dinedor Outdoor Education Centre, Oldfield Forge and The Houghton farm project.
- Prior to their admission to the service, many pupils had been permanently excluded, had poor attendance, or had been away from education. Some pupils at Aconbury Centre are dual registered with their host school.

- A small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan. The majority of the pupils are White British. A small number of pupils are looked after. Half of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- A small number of post-16 pupils attend the H3 Centre, but remain on roll with their host school.
- Pupils are no longer taught in a classroom at Hereford Hospital but attend the H3 Centre.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent time at St David's Centre, Aconbury Centre and the H3 Centre. They visited two of the alternative provisions used by the service: Horizon Training and Longlands Care Farm. At the centres, inspectors, accompanied by senior leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils informally and looked at pupils' work in books and folders.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime, and met with a small group of pupils at Aconbury and St David's.
- Inspectors talked to senior leaders, middle leaders and a group of staff.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and service improvement plan, safeguarding documents, behaviour and attendance information, progress and attainment information and a number of policies. Inspectors looked at the service's website.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the management committee, including the chair and a representative from the local authority. She also talked to the service's improvement consultant by telephone.
- The lead inspector met with a small group of parents and considered the responses to the service's own parental surveys. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, to consider.

## Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda McGill

Ofsted Inspector

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