

The Priory Centre

Pontefract Road, Crofton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 1LL

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' monitoring of the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not sufficiently robust. Leaders do not check well enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. This hampers leaders' ability to improve the school.
- The quality of teaching is variable across the different sites. Teaching assistants do not have a clear enough role in supporting pupils to achieve well during lessons.
- The teaching of reading and writing is not consistently good. Additional support for pupils is not successful enough in helping them to improve their skills in spelling or phonics.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly. As a result, they miss out on their learning and find it difficult to settle in class.
- Behaviour in the school is not securely good. Some pupils struggle to behave well at unstructured times during the school day.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to ensure that all pupils are given tasks that meet their needs. Work given to the most able pupils is sometimes too easy. There are too few opportunities for them to think deeply and enjoy challenging activities. As a result, some do not achieve as well as they can.
- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that their self-evaluation takes full account of the achievement of all pupils attending different sites within this provision.

The school has the following strengths

- The new acting interim headteacher has a sharp understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the needs of its pupils. He has taken effective action to strengthen staffing and the support available to pupils.
- Since the start of the academic year, pupils' progress has accelerated across different areas of the curriculum.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective in enabling pupils to make strong progress.
- The safeguarding lead has successfully established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Everyone is aware of their responsibilities.
- Leaders are passionate about reintegrating pupils back into mainstream school. An effective package of support ensures success for those pupils who are ready for this move.
- Pupils in key stage 2, attending The Thorns Centre, make strong progress because teaching is planned well to meet their needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - clarifying which leaders have strategic responsibility for monitoring the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - making sure that leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time
 - ensuring that leaders keep a close check on the progress of pupils on part-time timetables so that pupils can move to access full-time education as quickly as possible
 - incorporating the attendance and achievement of pupils from the Thorns and Broadway centres into whole-school self-evaluation.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils make consistently strong progress by ensuring that:
 - work is well matched to the needs of pupils, including the most able, so that pupils are challenged to deepen their learning
 - teaching assistants have a clearly defined role in supporting pupils to achieve well during lessons
 - opportunities for reading are strengthened across the curriculum
 - pupils develop accurate skills in phonics and spelling across all year groups.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that the behaviour policy is consistently applied throughout the whole school
 - improving behaviour during social, unstructured times such as breaktimes and lunchtimes
 - reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There has been a notable increase, particularly in the last two terms, in the number of pupils who display challenging behaviour who have been referred to The Priory following exclusion from their mainstream schools. This has tested the school's policies and procedures around behaviour. The school's work to improve behaviour has been successful for some pupils. However, inconsistencies in the application of the school's policy has led to variable behaviour from pupils in some areas of the school.
- School leaders focus predominantly on improvements to behaviour, rather than on the impact of teaching and learning. This limits leaders' effectiveness in supporting teachers to improve. Professional development opportunities are provided for staff, but these are centred on managing behaviour, rather than improving the quality of pupils' learning through better teaching.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning looks at the teacher, rather than at the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. This leads to a lack of clarity about the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress.
- Analysis of attendance is completed on a personal and site-specific level. While there have been some reductions in pupils' absence, leaders do not have a clear, strategic overview of whole-school attendance. Pupils' persistent absence is not decreasing as quickly as it should.
- Leaders' checks on the education of pupils on part-time timetables are not currently effective enough to ensure that pupils make the rapid progress needed to catch up. Pupils on part-time timetables do not move back into full-time education quickly enough and, as a result, learning hours are lost.
- Monitoring of pupils who receive pupil premium funding or those who have SEN and/or disabilities is not focused sharply enough to inform accurate planning and development in all subjects. Pupil premium funding is being deployed appropriately to provide additional support for pupils' academic and personal development. There is evidence of positive impact of this funding in mathematics teaching, where highly personalised learning is leading to strong progress.
- Parents feel that they receive appropriate information about their children's behaviour within school. However, they are less confident that they understand how their children are progressing with their learning.
- The acting interim headteacher, in post since September 2017, is passionate about the school and its pupils. He has already made successful changes to the middle management structure, the recording of pupils' performance information and teachers' use of assessment. This work is at an early stage, but workbooks show that some teachers are now making better use of assessment information to inform planning for pupils' needs.
- Leaders have ensured that additional off-site provision, at The Thorns Centre, is providing effective teaching and support for key stage 2 pupils. It aligns well with the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Reintegration of pupils to mainstream schools is a high priority for leaders. Over the last two academic years, 15 pupils have returned successfully to a mainstream school and sustained their strong progress.
- Pupils benefit from a varied curriculum. Subjects such as art and design and technology are well resourced and motivate pupils to try different art forms and techniques. The completed artwork is a celebrated feature, displayed throughout the school.
- Leaders value the support they receive from the local authority and have close links with relevant teams within the local key stage 4 pupil referral unit and special school. This has enabled a sharing of staff, skills and resources across the school.

Governance of the school

- The management committee has not, historically, challenged the leadership team well enough on the achievement of pupils across the whole school. The committee members are, now, beginning to ask more challenging questions and play a stronger role in decision making relating to staffing. They take opportunities to visit the main school site to find out information for themselves, rather than relying exclusively on what they are told by leaders.
- The management committee does not have a comprehensive, strategic overview of the effectiveness of provision which encompasses all of The Priory Centre sites. Although it receives outcomes information relating to pupils in key stage 2, it sees this as a separate project, rather than an integral part of the school.
- Since the previous inspection, governance has been strengthened. Meetings are better focused on the most pressing issues. Governors are receiving more detailed information from the headteacher. This has helped the management committee to function more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Rigorous safeguarding practices are in place throughout the school. The safeguarding leader is highly knowledgeable and has good relationships with pupils, parents and the local authority. Referrals, where the school has concerns about pupils, are dealt with in an efficient and timely fashion.
- There is culture of safeguarding which runs throughout the school from the acting interim headteacher and designated safeguarding lead, through to the pupils. Safeguarding is woven throughout the curriculum and is a prominent feature in displays around the school.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors all said that their children feel safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently securing strong progress from pupils. Some teachers do not ensure that the work is planned well enough to

close the gaps in pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils, especially the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Although some pupils are making rapid strides with their attendance, other pupils are frequently absent. As a result, they find it difficult to maintain their learning and progress. These pupils do not settle to lessons well and can disrupt the learning of others.
- Many key stage 3 pupils struggle to spell accurately. Pupils do not read widely and some pupils actively avoid reading. Although teachers recognise that many pupils lack confidence in reading, they seek to avoid conflict with them by reading for pupils or providing short extracts of texts to encourage them to find information. This limits the progress pupils make with their reading.
- At The Priory Centre, teachers and other adults do not encourage and support pupils' reading and writing development well enough in a range of subjects. This is due to a lack of staff training and limited reading schemes to support pupils' literacy development. Senior leaders recognise these shortcomings and are taking steps to address them.
- Teachers do not always make effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Too often, teaching assistants are focused solely on managing the behaviour of one or two pupils.
- Teachers provide good advice and guidance to pupils to help them improve their work. Where pupils act on this, they make progress in their learning. However, teachers do not structure subsequent work consistently well to enable pupils to consolidate and apply their learning quickly. Consequently, their progress slows.
- Teachers' specialist subject knowledge and good questioning skills are used to positive effect in mathematics to encourage pupils to respond and participate effectively in lessons. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants check on pupils' knowledge of number facts and their understanding of mathematical concepts thoroughly. They use this information carefully to plan learning which is well pitched to challenge and engage pupils.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective for pupils attending the off-site provision at The Thorns Centre. Pupils who have education, health and care plans make good progress. Teachers carefully guide and support pupils to draw increasingly upon their reading and their knowledge of spelling rules and punctuation to assist their writing. For example, they teach them how to review their own work and how to use dictionaries to look up spellings and identify the meaning of words. In mathematics, teaching identifies what pupils already know through timely questions and quizzes. Well-planned activities and tasks matched to needs enable pupils to make secure progress.
- Art and design and technology are well planned to enable pupils to experience a range of materials and processes. Pupils of all abilities successfully extend their knowledge and skills in response to the activities.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils show varying levels of respect to their peers and teachers. Staff challenge negative language, although not consistently throughout the school. A small number of pupils ignore requests from their teachers. The school's programme to promote tolerance, respect and the rule of law includes a range of visits and visitors. However, the impact of this is not embedded within pupils' attitudes and behaviour towards each other and some teachers.
- Pupils lack social language and conventions when interacting with other pupils and visitors. Pupils talk to adults that are known to them, but they are reticent to give their own views and opinions.
- Teachers use restorative justice processes once pupils leave the classroom. However, the success of these practices is not clearly evidenced in terms of pupils learning from their mistakes or reintegrating back into learning within the classroom.
- Staff are alert to the needs of pupils. For example, they are quick to react to pupils leaving the site and bring them back into school. Parents say that they are informed immediately if this happens and say that 'school goes out of their way to persuade pupils to stay on site'.
- The school has an effective personal, social and health education programme. Leaders utilise a range of resources and external organisations to train teachers to address risks associated with cyber bullying and grooming.
- Clear expectations of behaviour are apparent at The Thorns Centre and pupils are clear about the consequences of their actions. Key stage 2 pupils are enthusiastic learners, keen to demonstrate what they know.
- Despite a rapid increase in pupil numbers, the staff have supported pupils who demonstrate the most challenging behaviour well. The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and that teachers show them a great deal of respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement
- The Priory Centre has seen a large increase in pupils since the last inspection report. This has tested the policies and procedures around behaviour, with varying levels of success. Pupils displaying the most challenging behaviour are being managed well, but low-level disruption is evident in a small group of pupils.
- Some pupils struggle to control their behaviour, especially during unstructured social periods, such as breaktimes and lunchtime. A few activities are on offer, and in the school's own survey of pupils undertaken in summer 2017, the vast majority of pupils told leaders that there is little of interest outside lessons. Leaders have yet to identify

and implement a range of the activities that pupils would like.

- Whole-school interventions, such as a reward points system, are used inconsistently from class to class. Some pupils do not recognise, readily, the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- Attendance is improving because leaders check on absence regularly and follow up when pupils are not in school. However, persistent absence remains above the national average. Where pupils are regularly absent, they find it more challenging to catch up quickly with learning that they have missed.
- The headteacher has restructured the middle management team to include a teacher with responsibility for behaviour. This teacher has started to work, alongside the deputy headteacher, to monitor and evaluate pupils' behaviour more effectively. This recent change has not had sufficient time to impact significantly on pupils' behaviour.
- Additional support is provided by the school for a small number of pupils who struggle to control their very challenging behaviour. This support is leading to improvements for these pupils.
- Pupils who are moving back to mainstream education are well supported. At The Broadway Centre, pupils reflect well on their behaviour and express a desire to improve. They are aware of what they need to do in order to be ready to return successfully to mainstream school.
- Behaviour at the Broadway and Thorns centres is strong. The pupils are motivated to work because of staff's clear expectations. As a result, effective learning takes place.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Many pupils join the school in key stage 3 with low academic starting points due to gaps in their education. Assessment information shows that most pupils' achievement is improving. However, outcomes are not yet good because not enough pupils make the more rapid progress needed to help them make up for their prior underachievement.
- All pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. Some pupils in key stage 3 do not make the swift progress necessary to achieve the aspirational targets they are set. This is because teachers do not use assessment information well enough to support pupils' learning. Activities in a range of subjects do not regularly challenge pupils or help them to learn as well as they should.
- Over time, the most able pupils, who enter the school with achievement above that expected for their age, make slow progress due to a lack of challenge in their learning.
- Too few pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, develop secure reading and comprehension skills. Opportunities to read widely and for enjoyment are curtailed by a lack of books and an appropriate reading scheme.
- Pupils are now making more rapid progress in mathematics due to an incisive analysis of the gaps in individual pupils' learning. In workbooks, pupils' individual targets focus sharply on the basic knowledge and understanding that they need to master in order to move on.

- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that key stage 2 pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	130981
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10043498

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	8 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Ms N Brown
Acting Interim Headteacher	Mr A Phillips
Telephone number	01924 862232
Website	www.wakefieldprus.co.uk
Email address	headpriory@wakefieldprus.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2013

Information about this school

- The Priory Centre is a pupil referral unit educating pupils in key stages 2 and 3.
- The key stage 2 provision has eight pupils and education is delivered at The Thorns Centre. All pupils have education, health and care plans and are directly referred by the local authority.
- The key stage 3 provision has 33 pupils educated at The Priory Centre, five pupils at The Broadway Centre, one pupil attending Action for Change for three days a week and educated at home two days a week, and one student in specialist education at The Cherry Tree Centre.
- The leadership of the school comprises an executive headteacher, who oversees the key stage 3 and key stage 4 provision for the local authority, and an acting interim headteacher. The acting interim headteacher took up post in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a wide range of lessons and learning activities at The Priory Centre, The Broadway Centre and The Thorns Centre. A proportion of these were carried out jointly with the acting interim headteacher.
- Pupils' written work was examined during lessons and in discussion with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during their arrival at, and departure from, school, between lessons, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally.
- Inspectors held telephone discussions with three parents. The results of the school's own questionnaires from parents, staff and pupils during spring and summer 2017 were also taken into account.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with the executive headteacher, the acting interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders.
- Inspectors met with three members of the management committee.
- A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's evaluation report, school development and action plans, performance management documents, management committee meeting minutes, records of the monitoring of teaching, and information relating to pupils' attendance and achievement. Safeguarding documents and records relating to behaviour were also examined.

Inspection team

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