

Inspection of a good school: Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service

Coningsby Street, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 2DY

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2022

Outcome

Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that attending Herefordshire Pupil Referral service has transformed their life. They value the small group setting, the respectful environment and how well they are prepared for their next steps in education. Leaders are determined that their pupils will leave the school able to flourish. Pupils try their best to meet these expectations.

Pupils join this school because they have experienced difficulties in the past. They settle in quickly and soon start to do well. Pupils say that the school is welcoming of them and that staff understand them well. As a result, pupils say that they are accepting of each other's differences. They say that bullying does not happen because staff deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils behave well in lessons. They want to do their best. Staff act quickly when pupils experience difficulties and pupils are confident to ask for help.

Pupils contribute to their local community. Pupils at key stage 3 hold weekly coffee mornings and events with older neighbours. Pupils at key stage 4 support people with learning disabilities at the local Aspire Centre and some pupils work in the community café. Pupils value these experiences.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

When pupils start at the school, they follow a two-week induction programme. Leaders find out about pupils' strengths, ambitions and learning gaps during this time. Pupils then start on pathways that are most suited to their needs and enable them to move on to their next stage of learning. Pupils in key stage 3 study a broad and balanced curriculum. At key stage 4, pupils follow a curriculum that is adapted to their needs and aspirations. In the Hub, pupils follow a carefully designed curriculum that supports their learning and their emotional or medical needs. Pupils at the St David's Centre can attend training providers to learn vocational subjects, such as expressive arts, animal care and construction. These courses make sure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

In most subjects, the curriculum is well sequenced. Leaders are clear about what pupils need to know. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not as clearly planned and this stops pupils making as much progress as they could. There is not a systematic approach in place to improving pupils' reading skills. This means that some pupils do not get the help they need to read confidently.

Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly when they join the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) makes sure that all staff have the training and information they need to support pupils with SEND well. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well in lessons.

Leaders place great importance on making sure that pupils know how to get along with others. Most pupils have had difficulty in managing their behaviour in the past. Leaders establish clear expectations and pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their behaviour and to manage the impact of what they do on others.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is central to what the school does. Pupils learn life skills, such as money management, and they learn how to keep themselves safe in the thorough relationships and sex education curriculum. This is supported by visiting speakers, trips, and visits. In careers, pupils learn about the range of opportunities available to them. They learn about different job roles and attend taster sessions at local colleges. Pupils participate in work experience placements. This helps pupils move on to positive destinations when they leave school. Pupils take part in an extensive range of activities that develop their talents and interests. These include water sports, boxing, citizenship activities, outdoor education, bushcraft, gardening, and cooking. These activities allow pupils to develop new skills and to develop resilience.

The interim headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Staff value the support of school leaders. They say that leaders support their well-being and manage their workload well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is given the highest priority by leaders. Leaders across all three sites work well together. They share information, ask each other advice, and ensure that their safeguarding practice is as good as it can be. Staff are well trained and so they know the risks that pupils at the school may face. Staff record even the smallest concerns and leaders act on these appropriately. Safeguarding leaders are tenacious. They have very well-developed systems and processes to support safeguarding. Leaders are not afraid to challenge local agencies when they feel that these agencies are not acting in the best interests of the child. Pupils are taught how to manage the risks they face through a thoughtful PSHE programme. Safer recruitment checks are well managed and secure.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subject areas, the curriculum is not as well sequenced as it needs to be. This means that, in some subjects, the gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always addressed quickly enough. Leaders should make sure that the curriculum is well planned and sequenced in all subject areas.
- There is not a systematic reading programme in place to support pupils to become more proficient readers. This means that some pupils do not develop their reading fluency or reading comprehensions skills and so they do not do as well as they could in subjects across the curriculum. Leaders should develop and implement a suitable programme for improving reading for pupils who need this help.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in 11 and 12 July 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	130991
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10240835
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	53
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Jan Baker
Headteacher	James Bowdler
Website	www.hprs.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been a number of changes in leadership since the previous inspection. There is currently an interim headteacher in post.
- The hospital school provision became part of the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service in April 2021.
- Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service operates on three sites. Key stage 4 pupils attend the St David's Centre, pupils in key stage 3 attend the Aconbury Centre and pupils who attend the hospital school provision attend the H3 centre.
- Pupils who attend the St David's Centre and the Aconbury Centre have been permanently excluded or have experienced behaviour difficulties in their previous school. A small minority are on short stay places.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training available to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about the pathways open to them.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers and representatives of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, art and PSHE. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Field

Ofsted Inspector

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