

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr K Purbhoo
The Headteacher
Area A – PRU South – Chichester
PRU South (Chichester)
Fletcher Place
Chichester
West Sussex
PO20 1JR

Dear Mr Purbhoo

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF AREA A – PRU SOUTH
– CHICHESTER**

Following my visit to your school on 10 and 11 June 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in February 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of the Management Committee and the assistant director of School Improvement for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall
Additional Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF AREA A – PRU SOUTH – CHICHESTER

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection: 10 and 11 June 2008

Evidence

Whilst other provision in Area A, that is the 39 Club and home tuition, is effective there remain concerns about the Chichester PRU, North Mundham. As a result the monitoring visit focused on provision for this facility. The inspector observed the PRU's work and scrutinised documents. Meetings were held with the head of Area A, teachers, the consultant assistant head of Chichester PRU, chair of the management committee, teaching staff and representatives of the local authority (LA).

Context

The PRU has now appointed a permanent teacher for mathematics. It does not yet, though, have a permanent English coordinator. The post of head of centre for Chichester PRU remains temporary.

Whilst there are already pupils with statements of special educational needs because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) attending Area A centres, Chichester PRU has recently accepted four pupils who have additional special needs.

Achievement and standards

Data show that for those pupils who attend regularly, progress is satisfactory. Whilst English remains the weakest subject, there is evidence that pupils' achievements are improving. In mathematics, there are a greater number of pupils making satisfactory to good progress. However, the attendance of pupils is of considerable concern and too many pupils are not attending often enough to make sufficient progress in developing their skills and understanding.

Progress for pupils in the primary class is good. Staff have a good understanding of the range of ability within the group and use this knowledge well to ensure that work is matched to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils achieve well.

The PRU has recently accepted a small group of pupils with additional special needs. These pupils are not on full timetables and this, together with the lack of specialist staff to support their needs, means that they are not making the progress they should.

The PRU now has a range of data that provides detailed information about the progress of pupils. Senior staff are beginning to consider the implications of the data they now have and how to address the weaknesses that it identifies. There are now effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment on entry, and the appointment of a member of staff to input data and present it in a way that is accessible to staff is appropriate. Staff have a better understanding of pupils' starting points and there is a better focus on ensuring that work is linked to the range of pupils' abilities. Senior staff have reviewed the process of setting challenging targets and, although some

work is still needed on these, they are now realistic and appropriately challenging. However, processes for sharing these targets with pupils in Years 7 to 11 and supporting them to understand what they need to do next are not well established. In contrast, in the primary class all pupils know their targets for their personal development and for literacy and numeracy, and are clear about what they need to do to improve.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2007:

- Assess pupils' attainment on entry to the PRU and track their progress to ensure that staff are able to support and challenge appropriately – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

At the time of the last visit, behaviour was improving. However, in the last month there has been a sharp deterioration and the situation is at present quite fragile. Senior staff took quick action as the number of incidents linked to inappropriate behaviour increased. They have spoken to pupils and their parents to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the PRU's expectations regarding behaviour. Whilst staff feel that there has now been an improvement in behaviour it is too early for them to be secure that this is a lasting improvement and that behaviour strategies are indeed having an impact. Evidence during the visit would suggest that there is still some way to go before pupils fully respond to the PRU's systems. The PRU is rightly proud of the fact that the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced.

The attendance of pupils has deteriorated since the last visit and is down to 60%. Whilst there is evidence that many pupils do improve their attendance from their previous settings, it is clear that there are some who are not 'buying into' the PRU's provision and this is having a negative impact on their learning opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching at the Chichester PRU is now solidly satisfactory, and this reflects good progress since the PRU was placed in special measures. A strength lies in teachers' subject knowledge and this is very evident in subjects such as humanities and mathematics. Teachers use their knowledge well to make explanations to pupils very clear and extend pupils' knowledge, such as in history when outlining events relating to the Cuban missile crisis. Teachers are more secure in their knowledge of pupils and whilst the work set is often the same for all, they use questioning well to challenge the more able. In some cases, extra work is set or, as in mathematics, a challenge is given, to enable more able pupils to extend their skills. Teachers work hard to hold pupils' interest and make lessons as interesting as possible by planning a range of activities. Whilst not all pupils respond to this, some do, and it is gradually having an impact on their enjoyment of learning.

Teachers' management of behaviour varies. Good relationships between staff and pupils help influence pupils to stay in class. The hard work and supportive approach of classroom assistants do much to support pupils. Staff, though, miss opportunities to ensure pupils are aware of the consequences of their behaviour and do not always make these clear or give pupils sufficient time to decide on the right course of action.

Senior staff are rightly reviewing the curriculum. There is a recognition that pupils are not attending because the provision does not give them what they need. Plans for the autumn term, whereby activities are more practical and linked to developing pupils' basic skills, are appropriate. There is, however, some way to go in developing this form of curriculum and ensuring that planning is detailed and there is clear progression for pupils to develop their skills. A strength of the present curriculum is the development of college links. Considerable work has gone into ensuring that there are clear expectations in terms of college provision and that there is a good range of courses available to pupils. Systems for supporting pupils in college and monitoring their progress are effective.

Whilst the majority of pupils now receive the required 25 hours curriculum time, the PRU has not been able to do this for the small number of pupils with additional special needs. A percentage of their time is timetabled as home tuition and this is inappropriate. Staffing has been put in place to support these pupils but staff do not have the expertise to meet the needs of this group. The head of Area A has acknowledged this and is in the process of negotiating support from the special educational needs (SEN) team.

Appropriate use is being made of outside agencies to support pupils, particularly with regards to mental health issues. The involvement of a primary health worker is improving links with parents and having a positive impact on supporting pupils' needs. There is a good focus on health and safety, and risk assessments continue to be rigorous as in previous monitoring visits. The behaviour management systems have been reviewed and adapted. However, it is unclear how effective these are in meeting the needs of the pupils and supporting staff in managing a range of challenging behaviours.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2007:

- Review Key Stage 3 provision to ensure that it complies with statutory requirements – satisfactory
- Ensure that all teaching challenges, stimulates and matches individual pupils' needs – good
- As a matter of urgency, ensure that risk assessments are completed for all pupils entering Area A PRU – good

Leadership and management

Leadership of Area A continues to be successful in raising the profile of the service and developing links with mainstream schools. This is particularly evident in the success in finding a site for the primary PRU pupils at a nearby school. The enthusiasm of the headteacher and his staff for having the PRU on site is impressive and bodes well for successful inclusion opportunities for the PRU pupils. Quick action by the head of Area A has resulted in the issue from the last monitoring visit regarding the hospital school being successfully addressed. Agreement has been reached with the hospital and procedures established that will enable the PRU to provide support when it is required.

Senior staff have worked hard to develop the processes for self-evaluation. They now have a draft document that can be edited and refined to incorporate the

strengths and weaknesses identified through analysing the data gained on pupils' achievements. They intend then to produce a more relevant improvement plan that reflects the outcomes of the self-evaluation.

Senior staff recognise the need to put in place a permanent head of centre and the local authority is working hard to resolve the present situation. Considerable support has been given to the temporary post-holder and this is enabling the PRU to run reasonably smoothly on a day-to-day basis. However, there is too much reliance on the consultant headteacher and head of Area A to provide strategic development and a clear overview of the provision.

The management committee continues to hold the PRU to account. Regular meetings and high expectations are enabling the committee to have a clear understanding of the areas for development. The PRU is clearly benefiting from the knowledge and expertise of members of the committee and the challenge they provide.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2007:

- Devise systems and procedures to measure the success of the PRU and use the information generated to hold leaders to account and plan for improvement – satisfactory

External support

The high level of support from the local authority has brought about improvements in teaching and is much valued by staff. The continued presence of the consultant headteacher contributes greatly to the positive morale of staff and her professionalism and expertise in terms of management have proved invaluable in supporting the acting head of centre. Senior staff recognise the need to be clear about the role of the school improvement partner in order that this additional support can add value, over and above all the support the PRU is already receiving.

The placement of the small number of pupils with additional special needs in the PRU is inappropriate and is placing additional pressure on staff in what is a fragile situation.

Priorities for further improvement

- Review the appropriateness of placing pupils with additional special needs in the Chichester PRU.
- Improve the overall attendance of pupils.
- Ensure that behaviour strategies are effective in improving pupils' behaviour.