

Linhope PRU

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131999
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	360348
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Hurst
Headteacher	Mr Jeff Lough
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the management committee, the school nurse, teaching staff, and the pupil referral unit's senior leadership team. The inspectors observed the work of the pupil referral unit and looked at teachers' planning for lessons, school leaders' development plans, samples of pupils' work, and the work of external providers. The inspectors also took into account the views of 35 parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of pupils across the four key stages.
- Whether pupils' attendance is good enough.
- The quality of the health, safety and welfare documentation and the associated systems.
- Whether the management committee is effective in supporting the headteacher.

Information about the school

The unit provides education and support for pupils in Years 1 to 11 who have been excluded from mainstream schools in and around the city of Newcastle. At the time of the inspection, there were 144 pupils on roll with no pupils in Year 1. The great majority of pupils are boys and few come from ethnic minority backgrounds. A large majority are known to be eligible for free school meals and many live in areas of high social deprivation. All pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and a significant number have additional literacy and numeracy needs. Sixteen of the pupils are currently in the care of the local authority. A large majority are also known to the criminal justice system. Six pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The unit has gained the Healthy School status and Basic Skills Quality Mark. The local authority is planning to make it easier for pupils to access the unit by opening a second part of the provision on the east side of the city in September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Linhope PRU is a good pupil referral unit that provides a good quality of care and guidance for pupils. As a result, pupils make good social, emotional and academic progress. The views of parents and carers are reflected well in the comment: 'My child has flourished since joining Linhope. For the first time he wants to come to school.'

The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and deliver the quality of provision necessary for them to do so. Because school staff are good at supporting the complex behavioural needs of pupils, barriers to learning are minimised and pupils achieve well. Based on secure monitoring, accurate self-evaluation has identified the right priorities for improvement. Consequently, since the last inspection the pupil referral unit has sustained its good levels of provision and has improved in several areas. For example, a highly effective system for tracking pupils' work which has improved the use of assessment by teachers in lessons has been introduced. As a result, pupils are now more successfully challenged by their work and make good progress and achieve well. This, coupled with the successful implementation of exceptionally high quality systems and policies to safeguard pupils at all times, has shown that the unit has a good capacity to improve further under its current leadership.

Pupils arriving at the unit often have low self-esteem and significant gaps in their learning. As a result, attainment is initially low for some pupils. As they re-engage with learning they make good progress both personally and academically and grow in confidence. This is as a result of the good quality of care, guidance and support offered by all staff. Pupils say they enjoy school, sometimes for the first time, and are clear about how to stay healthy and exceptionally safe. Behaviour is good overall because pupils learn how to control their emotions and make the right choices. Effective transition arrangements ensure pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education or return to mainstream school. As a result, the number of pupils not in education or employment after leaving the unit is low. Attendance is average for the majority of pupils and improves significantly for many during their time at the unit. However, attendance for a small number of pupils remains low.

Good teaching is based on a thorough assessment of pupils' learning needs and as a result, all groups of pupils make equally good progress. Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide a good level of support both in and outside lessons. Whilst the curriculum is well organised and highly personalised, it does not currently offer a sufficient choice of subjects for higher-attaining Key Stage 4 pupils.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve overall levels of attendance by working with parents and carers and outside agencies to ensure all pupils attend more regularly, particularly those whose attendance is low.
- Further improve the quality of the curriculum by broadening the range of subjects available at Key Stage 4 for higher-attaining pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When pupils join the pupil referral unit, the levels at which they are working are generally lower than those expected for their age. This is often because of previous low patterns of attendance due to their learning and behavioural needs. Pupils also often need to develop the skills required for good learning, such as sitting down and listening. Currently, attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 11, which represents good progress and achievement for many pupils.

Behaviour is good both inside and outside lessons, largely because pupils respond positively to their individual learning programmes. These enable pupils to work consistently and achieve well across the curriculum. This was demonstrated well in a Key Stage 3 lesson focused on developing enterprise skills. Pupils enthusiastically worked together on designing a tasty fruit smoothie to sell at a forthcoming coffee morning. At the time of the observation, much thought and debate was being put into the colour, texture and nutritional qualities of each smoothie, demonstrating pupils' good understanding of healthy eating. Costings and profit margins were accurately calculated, also demonstrating pupils' good understanding of functional numeracy. A high level of cooperation was essential in order to complete the task and this pupil-inspired product was of an impressive quality. Overall, pupils in all key stages make equally good progress across the curriculum.

At the end of Year 11, the majority of pupils leave with a number of qualifications and accreditations despite often only having attended the pupil referral unit for a short time. Last year's school leavers successfully passed examinations in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), first aid and motorcycle maintenance. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are looked after by the local authority, make equally good progress.

Through the work of effective partnerships with health-care professionals and the youth offending team pupils learn to feel exceptionally safe. They know that staff are there to support and guide them to make safe choices. They say they enjoy their time at the unit. As one student commented: 'Staff care here'. Through participating in the wide range of sporting opportunities and healthy eating options offered, pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a contribution to the community within and outside school by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. For example, pupils are often involved in fundraising activities organised by the school council for local charities. Pupils' good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in the way in which they react to each other and take care of the environment. Through outside visits and links with schools in Belarus, pupils develop a good awareness of communities beyond those represented in the immediate locality.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are effective at using assessment information to set achievable targets for pupils. Planning of lessons is conscientious and in the majority of lessons, good attention is given to ensuring work is modified to meet the different needs of all pupils within the class. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give good guidance on how improvements can be made. As a result, the majority of pupils are clear about how to improve their work. This ensures pupils make good progress overall. Support staff are well deployed and work closely and effectively with teachers to support the needs of all pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and this coupled with strong relationships, ensure that pupils re-engage with learning quickly.

The curriculum is well-organised and imaginatively enhanced by many visits and activities away from the classroom. Visits to a variety of locations help develop pupils' independence. Partnerships with a range of organisations help to promote learners' understanding of the world of work and have inspired pupils to volunteer in a range of settings. While the range of accreditations offered through external partnerships is good, more academically able pupils educated within the unit have a more limited range of options, which narrows their future choices. A good range of work experience opportunities, college placements and a strong focus throughout the unit on career opportunities ensures pupils are well prepared to make informed future choices.

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As a result of good care, guidance and support, pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and help. A careful and thorough assessment is undertaken when pupils arrive at the unit, which is then used to target support effectively. Vulnerable students are very well supported and this is helped by strong links with many outside agencies. Attendance has been low in the past. It is currently rising rapidly as a result of strong links with the Education Welfare Service and through the attendance officer's work with parents and carers and pupils. The headteacher recognises that there is further work to be done to sustain and build on this to ensure continued improvement. Transition arrangements are securely in place and are well supported by partnerships with Connexions advisors. This can clearly be seen in the destinations of last year's school leavers, the majority of whom are currently still in education or employment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The visionary leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders has moved the unit forward well, resulting in good outcomes for students on a well-controlled budget. This, coupled with strong partnerships forged with outside agencies, is driving improvement further. The current management committee members represent a good range of partner organisations and offer a good level of support and challenge to senior leaders.

Policies and procedures ensure all government safeguarding requirements are met and that practice is of an excellent standard. The strength and quality of these procedures mean that safeguarding issues are dealt with very effectively by unit leaders. The senior leadership team and staff have ensured that the unit is an inclusive community. Systems to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination within the unit are good. The unit leaders work successfully to eliminate any gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils. Leaders have built successful links which benefit pupils and the local community, including participation in local events. For example, pupils have recently been involved with a volunteering scheme which saw nine volunteers helping in a variety of different locations including farms, stables and other schools. Strong links with other schools and communities have developed pupils' understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society well. Staff go to great lengths to engage all parents and carers and to ensure they are kept well informed about their child's successes. The active parent and carers' group is testament to this success and has resulted in strong links with many parents and carers including those who are harder to reach. As a result, links with home are well-developed and parents and carers appreciate the ongoing work of the pupil referral unit.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Thirty five responses were received by the inspection team from parents and carers. This represented approximately one quarter of the 144 pupils who are on the pupil referral unit's roll. In light of the diverse nature of the unit's population this represented a good response rate. A very large majority of questionnaires were positive and supported the work of the unit.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Linhope PRU to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 144 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	37	18	51	3	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	69	10	29	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	69	10	29	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	24	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	60	12	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	40	17	49	2	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	71	8	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	71	8	23	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	77	8	23	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	74	8	23	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	74	7	20	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linhope PRU, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE5 2LW

Thank you all for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. A special thanks to those of you in Key Stages 3 and 4 who came to meet with us and took the time to tell us your thoughts about your time at Linhope.

You enjoy school and are making good progress in each key stage. Well done! We were particularly impressed by your positive attitudes and with your contributions to school and local life, such as your charity fund-raising activities. We agree with those of you who told us your school is good. These are the things we think your school does especially well:

- ensures everyone is welcomed into school and is given help and support to make a new start
- makes sure you all have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and how to develop healthy lifestyles
- helps you all to understand how important it is to manage your feelings and behaviour so that you make the right choices.

In order to make your school even better we have asked your school to:

- make sure that it works closely with parents, carers and other agencies to encourage all pupils to attend as frequently as possible
- ensure that in Key Stage 4 you have as many curriculum options offered as possible so that all of you are able to make the best choice for the future.

We feel that you can help your teachers best by making sure you attend regularly and work as hard as many of you are now. We also wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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