

# Linhope PRU

Linhope, Linhope Road, West Denton, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE5 2LW

**Inspection dates** 26–27 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. There is a constant and effective drive to keep improving teaching and learning.
- Achievement is good; students make good progress as they catch up on what they have often missed in mainstream schools.
- Teaching is solidly good; it is occasionally outstanding. There is no inadequate teaching.
- Students behave well in and out of the classroom. Attendance is exceptionally good. Students try hard to succeed in their work. Students feel safe in school and at all of the other sites at which they spend time.
- The school is well placed to keep improving. A strong capacity for improvement has been clearly demonstrated in the way that areas for development have been addressed since the last inspection.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not sufficiently make it clear to students what they need to do to improve their work to reach a higher standard.
- There are times when teachers could expect students to take on more responsibility for their learning and behaviour and encourage them to work with more independence.

## Information about this inspection

- Eleven lessons and 9 different teachers were observed.
- Many discussions were held with senior and middle managers.
- Meetings were held with the chair and several other members of the management committee and also with a representative of the local authority and the school achievement partner.
- One parent responded to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View); inspectors took into account the views of 16 parents as expressed in the school's own questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to students throughout the inspection and looked at examples of work in their books.
- Inspectors visited a sample of the alternative providers that students attend for parts of each week.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Most students attend the school because if they did not, they would probably be excluded by their mainstream schools. A few are students who have been permanently excluded from other schools.
- A much higher than average proportion of students is known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is extra funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, children that are looked after and children from service families.
- There are very few primary-age pupils so the school receives very little extra funding for primary sport and physical education.
- There are many more boys than girls. Nearly all students are White British.
- When students feel unable to attend the school they often do their work in libraries around the city, supported by outreach workers from the school.
- As well as on-site education, many students, especially the older ones, attend other settings that make alternative provision for the education and training of young people. These alternative providers are:

<b>Company</b>	<b>Courses offered</b>
FIT Ltd	Construction: plastering, bricklaying, joinery, painting
Newcastle College	Foundation learning and GCSE access
Talbot House	Foundation learning: hairdressing, construction, motor vehicles
Stepney Bank Stables	Horse care and stable management, social, emotional and behavioural skills
Black Row Farm	Horse care and stable management, social, emotional and behavioural skills
Northumbria Youth Action	Motor vehicles, bike maintenance
Trinity Solutions	Hair and beauty, motor vehicles, sport and leisure, construction
Palmersville Training	Foundation learning, hairdressing, construction, catering, painting and decorating, customer services, retail and warehouse, business administration
MPC	Military preparation course
YMCA You Project	Social, emotional and behaviour support, sport, teendrive, ASDAN, fishing, arts awards
CoMusics	Music production, singing and rapping, graffiti art
The Lighthouse Group (TLG), Longbenton	Social emotional and behavioural skills, English and mathematics qualifications, nurturing 1:1 environment
Fairbridge, West 15	Motivation, confidence and self esteem, outdoor pursuits, sport, personal development

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

- Improve teaching and learning to make more of it outstanding by making sure that all teachers take great care to let students know what they need to do in order to improve their work and make faster progress, for instance by:
  - including more precise individual suggestions when they mark students' work
  - making wall displays more informative about the next steps students need to make to cross significant attainment boundaries.
  
- Encourage students to become more independent in their learning and behaviour in more lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment on entry is usually on a par with that in the lower-ability sets in mainstream schools but students make good progress to start catching up with national averages. Many leave with much better qualifications than they or their parents could have hoped for at the time of their admission. Nearly all parents are thrilled with the progress their children make and the students themselves often express pride in their achievements.
- A greater range of courses that lead to the gaining of qualifications, including GCSE, has been introduced since the last inspection. Passes are usually in the lower range of grades.
- Many students, especially those in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in Years 7 and 8 make sufficient progress to return successfully to mainstream schools. Students leaving at the end of Year 11 nearly always do so to positive destinations, such as college or training. Many are greatly helped to do so by what they learn with the extensive range of alternative providers.
- Overall, boys achieve slightly better than girls, especially in Years 10 and 11. This was particularly evident last year. As a result, leaders and managers quickly reviewed the curriculum to encourage more female engagement and support.
- Equal opportunities are strongly promoted. There is no significant difference in the progress of any group of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. Looked-after children often do better than others but their numbers are small and hence subject to a lot of variation from year to year, making year-on-year comparisons difficult.
- Almost all students have special educational needs. The individuality of approach to all students ensures that whatever these needs are and however severe, they are well met, allowing each individual to achieve equally.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are in a small minority. They achieve well, their reading often improves rapidly and usually they are well prepared for moving on to other schools.
- The most-able students at Linhope are suitably challenged to do their best. This does not always lead to higher qualifications but it nearly always leads to better prospects on leaving school.
- Pupil premium funding is being particularly effectively used to encourage better attendance. These same students can be seen to have made faster progress as a result.
- Some students are emotionally vulnerable or unable to attend the school for other reasons. There is a strong programme of outreach support for these students. They are often taught in library rooms or other settings, often on a one-to-one basis. Most achieve well in this nurturing environment.
- A few Year 9 students are entered early for Entry Level assessments. This is very carefully managed to make sure that success is used as a stepping stone to further success in Key Stage 4.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Nearly all teaching is good. A little is outstanding and there is none that is consistently less than good. Improvements in teaching are gradual but they never stop. The cumulative effect of this is that teachers are constantly becoming more skilled and better able to successfully promote learning.
- There are few consistent weaknesses. Many lessons have significant strengths but sometimes a simple weakness that stops them from being outstanding.
- Underpinning all of the best teaching are the strong relationships between adults and students and the expertise with which teachers lead and manage their teams of skilled teaching assistants. These relationships between adults and students are often significant in the sympathetic, effective and consistent management of behaviour and the promotion of sensible

dialogue, which supports students' learning.

- Reading is well taught throughout the school and students often become confident readers, happy to read aloud from their own work or to share texts for group reading.
- Teachers are good at identifying opportunities to promote numeracy and literacy in all lessons, rather than just in English and mathematics. Leaders and managers carefully monitor the quality of teaching in all subjects to ensure quality across the whole timetable. The results of this show that teaching is nearly always at least good, whatever the subject.
- Most work is marked thoroughly. Comments at the end of each piece of work focus far more on what has been learned than what more could be done to improve this work to lead to faster progress. There is also very little information on display in classrooms about what different levels of work look like and what students have to do to get to each level.
- Students behave well in class but in some lessons they have few opportunities to demonstrate more maturity and responsibility because teachers occasionally miss opportunities to leave them alone when things are going well and let them get on with working with less support.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students behave particularly well in class. At nearly all times of day the school is very calm, with students moving around sensibly. They show a good awareness of others around them and this helps to stop accidents happening. Supervision is good and students know they are safe.
- Bullying is rare. Students know the various forms it can take and what they need to do if they encounter it. Tolerance and understanding are strongly promoted. This makes a significant contribution to students' excellent personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspection coincided with the school's themed week on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. Older students were seen discussing the topic very sensibly and without prejudice.
- Since the last inspection attendance has shifted from being a weakness to a strength. Excellent leadership and management initiatives, many supported through pupil premium funding, have helped improve attendance by about 20% since the last inspection to a point where it compares favourably to national averages for each group.
- Increasing involvement and perseverance in alternative provider placements point to much improved attitudes. Nevertheless, there are still students who tend to go quiet when they have finished a task rather than asking for more, or harder work. There are also some who slack a little when they are not being directly supported, rather than doing their best to get on independently.
- Exclusion is rare and nearly always for very short periods, usually to allow students to 'cool down' a bit when they are becoming particularly troubled.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- There are considerable strengths at all levels of leadership, management and governance. Not everything depends on the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and excellent management of the deputy headteacher.
- Everyone plays a part and systems are so well understood and manageable that when key members of staff are away from school, others can step in highly effectively. The high quality leadership and management of alternative provision and outreach, for instance, have been maintained without a hiccup in the absence of the substantive post-holder.
- Middle managers and those responsible for key stages or subjects are making an increasingly effectively contribution to the monitoring and development of their areas of responsibility. Teachers are skilfully managing classroom teams, administration is highly efficient and, in every

way, the school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

- There is a very strong focus on improving teaching and learning. There is excellent induction of new staff to make sure they understand what the school's values and aspirations are. Teachers and teaching assistants are set targets each year to challenge them to improve their practice. The best of these include precise targets against which success can be measured; for instance, 'I will ensure that 25% of Year 11 students will achieve grade C or above in their GCSE'. Occasionally, targets have slipped through the net without measurable outcomes. Leaders and managers are quickly addressing this.
- There is an outstanding programme of continuing professional development for all staff. It is very well balanced to include training in all areas of the curriculum and all aspects of the school's work.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is very precisely tailored to the needs and ability of each individual. One of its strengths is the way that if students are having difficulty in accessing the curriculum in school an alternative curriculum is taken out to them with excellent support from the outreach team.
- Safeguarding is of the highest quality. The school is often held up throughout the authority as an example of best practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is highly effective. Since April this year, the management has had a delegated budget to manage for the first time. It is doing very well, with much valued support from the local authority. Governors are also ensuring that substantial extra funding through the pupil premium and the much smaller amount from the primary school physical education and sport initiative is carefully accounted for and used to best effect. The composition of the management committee has changed radically over the past year. It used to be dominated by local authority employees, each bringing highly valued expertise, yet also, occasionally with a small conflict of interest. The committee now has much greater representation of secondary and primary headteachers who are significant stakeholders in the school. There is also good and increasing involvement of parents on the management committee. Governors are frequent visitors, are kept exceptionally well informed about standards, behaviour and the quality of teaching and play a large and important part in monitoring and evaluating the school and challenging and supporting its leaders and managers equally. They check that the headteacher is meeting personal targets for improvement and that the performance of other staff is matched to their pay.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131999
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	430893

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeff Hurst
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeff Lough
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 267 4447
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 267 2873
<b>Email address</b>	jeffrey.lough@newcastle.gov.uk

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