

Linhope PRU

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

Inspection dates

9–10 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- School leaders have failed to ensure all safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Attendance records are inaccurate. Sometimes pupils are marked as present for the whole week when they are only attending part-time. This means leaders cannot be sure that all pupils' whereabouts are known and that pupils are safe.
- Not all serious behaviour incidents are recorded in the serious incident log. Consequently, leaders and governors do not have an accurate oversight of the number of incidents, or whether these are reducing over time.
- Resources and the curriculum for the small number of very young pupils are insufficient to enable them to thrive in their learning and development.
- Only a few pupils return to a mainstream school. Some spend over two years at the school, or wait too long for a space in local specialist resourced provision or special educational needs provision.
- Governors (the management committee) have not challenged the information provided by the headteacher robustly enough. For example, attendance rates are much lower than those reported.
- Too many pupils attend learning for short periods in the school day, turn up late or leave early. The curriculum is too narrow for pupils who attend the school for lengthy periods of time.
- Risk assessments for the public libraries where some pupils have one-to-one or small-group tuition sessions are too generic and not specific to the individual buildings.
- The local authority's slow decision making and rapid expansion of this specialist provision are contributing to low morale of staff and reducing the capacity of leadership to tackle weaknesses and drive improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Some effective teaching is enabling pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics from their often low starting points.
- An increasing number of pupils leave Year 11 with formal qualifications and most 16 year olds move on successfully to further education or training.
- Good relationships between pupils and staff ensure that pupils feel safe and well supported in times of need. Many pupils report how much happier they are here than at their previous schools. Parents spoken to were equally positive.
- Pupils' reading skills develop well during their time in Linhope.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - urgently making sure attendance registers are completed in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements, using the correct codes that accurately identify when pupils are in learning activities and when they are absent
 - taking robust action to improve attendance rates, ensuring pupils attend alternative provision regularly, arrive on time and complete their sessions
 - ensuring the regular reports to the management committee have accurate attendance information against which they can challenge where rates are not as they should be
 - ensuring risk assessments for Blakelaw Community Centre and for the libraries that pupils use for learning sessions are specific to the risks associated with the buildings attended
 - making sure that all serious behaviour incidents are recorded accurately in the serious incident log, monitored over time and reported to the management committee so they can understand accurately the impact of the school's work in managing the complex behaviours of the pupils attending
 - ensure arrangements to check the quality of provision, teaching and learning, pupils' attendance rates and achievements in all alternative provisions are robust and regular.
- The local authority, as a matter of urgency, should complete the review of alternative provision so the school can operate as the intended 'short-term alternative provision', with an appropriate age range, where pupils can reintegrate quickly into mainstream schools or other provision.
- Broaden the curriculum and resources for pupils, particularly for those attending alternative provision in the community and those pupils who stay in Linhope for long periods.
- Ensure resources and provision for the very young pupils enable them to develop their skills across all the areas of learning and development they may have missed in their previous schools.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Procedures for recording pupils' attendance do not comply with DfE requirements. For example, some pupils are marked as present for a whole day when they only attend for half a day. Some staff in a few of the alternative provisions do not keep proper registers and some allow pupils to go home early. This means that leaders cannot know that all their pupils are safe when they are recorded as attending school.
- The number of pupils attending Linhope has doubled since the last inspection. The range of 'alternative provision' offered to pupils has expanded across the city to meet demand and pupils' needs and interests. The rapid increase in numbers is hampering leaders' capacity to plan suitable provision for all pupils who arrive who struggle with learning or complex behaviours.
- Delays in finalising the review of alternative education across the city by the local authority are leading to uncertainty for staff and for pupils. As a result, some pupils have attended this intended 'temporary' provision for far too long. Around a fifth have been here for more than two years and some for three. This is particularly unsatisfactory for the very young pupils.
- Staff keep meticulous records of pupils' behaviour in individual pupils' files and work closely with pupils to manage their complex behaviours. Some serious incidents recorded in individual files are not then added to the whole-school serious incident log. Consequently, the log provides too positive a view of the number of serious incidents that are taking place.
- Many pupils have been out of school for significant periods before arriving at Linhope. The curriculum is particularly focused on helping pupils catch up in English and mathematics. Pupils' workbooks in a number of classes in Linhope show the good progress pupils are making from their often very low starting points. Good use of the pupil premium funding is ensuring disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers in these subjects.
- Older pupils report how much they value the help in improving their basic literacy and numeracy skills and the qualifications they can now take. However, the curriculum is not broad enough for pupils who stay here for years; particularly for pupils attending alternative provision in libraries and in the Blakelaw Centre. Resources and the curriculum for the small number of very young pupils are also limited.
- Too many pupils attend learning for short periods, which limits the curriculum they can access and the progress they can make in their learning. For example, out of the 130 or so pupils that attend alternative provision outside the Linhope site, over 35 access learning activities for less than 10 hours a week.
- Nevertheless, a good range of information, advice and guidance, vocational provision and support from the Connexions service is ensuring pupils are well informed about future careers options. Most move on to education or training opportunities when they leave at the age of 16.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, teachers' use of assessment and the impact of their work on pupils' progress regularly in Linhope. Staff feel well trained and supported. However, judgements made on the effectiveness of this work are made mainly on the Linhope site and larger alternative provisions and not as often in the short sessions that pupils attend in libraries. This means weaknesses are not always identified and tackled in some of these smaller provisions.
- The school's focus on personal, social, citizenship and health education, through cross-curricular work and discrete work in lessons, is improving pupils' understanding and responsibilities as citizens of modern Britain and how to keep themselves safe well. Displays across Linhope showcase the effective work they undertake; for example their work on sexual health, gang crime and the rule of law.
- Work to ensure equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination of any kind is strong. However, because some pupils only attend sessions in libraries and do not experience the range of opportunities available at Linhope and Pottery Bank, equality of opportunity is not consistent for all.
- Leaders have developed a succinct improvement plan with a range of appropriate actions and targets for improvement. However, targets set are not based on accurate information. Attendance data are inaccurate and assessments of teaching quality based mainly on what is happening in Linhope. This over-positive view is also reflected in the school's self-evaluation.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The management committee has not ensured that pupils are safe. The committee receives regular reports on pupils' attendance, achievements in English and mathematics, destinations and the quality of teaching. Minutes of meetings show members ask challenging questions of leaders. However, members have not challenged the quality of information they receive robustly enough. For example, information on attendance and judgements on the quality of teaching are inaccurate. One member visits a small range of alternative provision and reports to the whole committee about his findings.

However, these findings are oral so there is no record of the outcomes. In recent weeks, the committee have paid for an external consultant to formally review all provision the school uses. To date, only four provisions have been scrutinised and a report is yet to be produced. This means members do not have a current, accurate understanding of the experiences of all pupils and cannot therefore challenge where weaknesses are evident.

- The management committee is active in the school. They ensure arrangements are in place to check the performance of teachers and the headteacher. The management committee has been concerned about the rapid increase in the number of pupils attending the school and its impact on the stability of provision. Despite the rapid expansion since the last inspection, a complete review of alternative provision was only identified as a need by the local authority in November 2015. The review began in January 2016 and has yet to be concluded; thus delaying important decisions that need to be made about Linhope.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The school has robust procedures for recruiting staff and ensuring staff are well trained in all aspects of child protection and safeguarding procedures. Leaders take prompt action in contacting children’s social care services when there are concerns about pupils’ welfare. However, weaknesses in attendance procedures and monitoring pupils’ behaviour incidents are too serious to be put aside lightly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the quality is too variable across the different provisions that pupils attend to make sure they all make good progress in their learning.
- Where teaching is strong, teachers are adept in developing good relationships with pupils and managing their complex behaviours well. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject they teach. This energises pupils to take a full part in the lesson and achieve well. This was clearly seen in a health and fitness class and a personal, social, health and citizenship lesson where difficult issues were tackled well.
- Some effective teaching is enabling most pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics from their starting points into the school. Pupils in a Year 11 group explained eloquently how the teacher checks what pupils understand and what they struggle with in mathematics. The teacher then makes sure that they work together on their weaknesses to help gain good grades in their GCSE examinations.
- Workbooks of a Year 10 group of pupils showcased the good improvement in their knowledge and understanding in mathematics over time. Improvements were not least due to the good relationships developed between pupils and the teacher and high expectations the teacher had of pupils’ behaviour and productivity. Pupils in the Pottery Bank provision were seen to thrive in their learning.
- However, this is not always the case. In some lessons, teachers do not follow the school’s behaviour management policy correctly and pupils’ poor attitudes are not always challenged; this slows the pace of learning. Sometimes pupils are too casual about attending promptly so this delays the start of lessons.
- There is a difference in expectations of what pupils can do in some of the provisions. Sometimes in the alternative provision pupils leave too early or do not arrive at all, restricting the opportunities to learn well. Some pupils are not sufficiently challenged because work is not demanding enough, with too many simple worksheets to fill that are not well matched to pupils’ capabilities.
- Pupils’ workbooks are generally marked in line with the school’s policy and teachers provide appropriate feedback on what pupils are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils have targets in mathematics and English and know how well they are doing against their targets. The pace of learning and quality of work in other subjects is not always as strong. For example, in science in a class with pupils aged from five to 11, all were working at the same concept, even though it was too hard for some and too easy for others.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils are offered a wide range of personalised support and care. However, too many pupils are not in school full-time or do not attend regularly enough. This limits the impact of the school’s good work.
- Good work is undertaken to develop pupils personally, morally and socially, to improve attitudes to learning and to develop successful relationships with adults and their peers. Pupils report they are much

happier here than their previous schools. Younger pupils' spiritual development is promoted well, including through the range of world religions they study. Opportunities for older pupils are more limited.

- Lunchtime in the food hall is calm and pupils enjoy socialising with their peers and with staff who are always around to supervise arrangements.
- Individual 'pupil passports' identify pupils' achievements and behavioural needs clearly and these are well used as pupils make transitions into school to support their complex needs. Leaders work closely with a wide range of agencies to secure support when pupils and their families are facing great challenges.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and in alternative provisions they attend. Detailed risk assessments are in place for the larger alternative providers. However, the risk assessment for libraries and the community centre is too generic and does not identify any risks specific to the different sites.
- Pupils feel well taught about risks to their personal safety in school and their local community. They say staff are always available and support them in times of need. Pupils develop a good understanding of all types of bullying, including homophobic or racist bullying. They report that there is often bullying in their local community but not much in school and any incidents are quickly sorted out; mainly name-calling.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Younger pupils are clear about what is acceptable and generally respond well to strategies used by staff. Occasionally, in the upper school in Linhope, pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes are not always tackled in line with the school's behaviour policy; a small number of incidents of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection that were not tackled effectively.
- Pupils report that their behaviour has improved since coming to Linhope. The recently developed rewards system is making a positive difference to pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils are responding to the system and, as a result, are earning exciting out-of-school activities. For example, some pupils have recently enjoyed a skiing trip abroad. A number of pupils were going out for a treat paint-balling during the inspection because of their improved behaviour and attitudes.
- Every effort is taken to avoid pupils being excluded. The number of temporary exclusions has reduced year on year and is low. Staff keep careful records of all pupils in their individual files; including serious incidents of misbehaviour. However, not all staff are recording the individual incidents in the whole-school incident log so it is difficult for leaders and the management committee to check the impact of the behaviour management strategies they have put in place.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Many pupils have been out of education for some time before coming to Linhope and as a result have fallen behind in their learning. Most make good progress in English and mathematics lessons once they settle here because of the focus the school has on these subjects. Pupils' workbooks in Linhope show the good progress pupils make. There is also evidence of pupils' good progress in Pottery Bank. However, too many pupils are on part-time timetables, do not turn up to sessions or just take part in short sessions during the school day. This limits the progress pupils in some of the libraries can make over time.
- Pupils are not meant to stay for long periods in Linhope but a number do and the school has increased the number of formal accreditations and examinations pupils can take. In 2015, virtually all gained a qualification in an accredited course. Just over a quarter of boys and over half of the girls gained a GCSE in mathematics, which from their very low starting points represented good progress.
- School leaders track the progress of all groups of pupils including disadvantaged pupils, girls and boys, looked after pupils, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils and those working with the Youth Offending Service. Groups are too small to make meaningful comparisons to national averages but information shows that overall there is little difference between the progress different groups make.
- The teaching of reading is making a positive difference to pupils' skills and abilities. Pupils are encouraged to read for a purpose and for pleasure and have many opportunities to do so. This is helping to tackle previous barriers to literacy and enabling them to read well.
- The curriculum is too narrow for pupils who attend for longer periods, so pupils do not have the opportunity to make good progress in a wider range of subjects. However, vocational, work experience and training opportunities provided enable the majority to be effectively prepared for their next steps; most move on successfully to further education or training when they leave at the age of 16.

School details

Unique reference number	131999
Local authority	Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10010832

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	297
Appropriate authority	The management committee (governing body)
Chair	Jeff Hurst
Headteacher	Jeffrey Lough
Telephone number	0191 267 4447
Email address	jeffrey.lough@newcastle.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2013

Information about this school

- Linhope Pupil Referral Unit provides education for pupils with behavioural or social, emotional or mental health difficulties (SEMH), who have been permanently excluded from other schools in the city or who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The school provides education for pupils from the age of five to 16 years. There are currently no five year olds in school.
- The school has reorganised its provision into two phases: lower school and upper school. The school does not receive additional primary school sport premium because numbers are so small.
- Since the last inspection Linhope has doubled in size, from approximately 150 to 297 pupils. The school has extended the range of alternative provision it runs itself. These include the Pottery Bank Centre in the east of the city, use of facilities at Blakelaw Community Centre and the City Learning Centre.
- A range of libraries are used to deliver small-group work or one-to-one sessions with pupils. Pupils also attend a range of learning and vocational activities from local authority accredited providers. A full list of the current alternative provisions pupils access is shown below.
- Well over two thirds of pupils are disadvantaged and are entitled to additional government funding called the pupil premium. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and have identified special educational needs.
- When pupils come to the school they are taken off the roll of their previous school. Those who move on from Linhope move to either mainstream schools with additional resources for pupils with special educational needs or special schools across the city.
- Alternative provision used currently by Linhope:

Fitted Interior Training (FIT)	TLG (The Light House Group)	Outer West Library
Trinity Academy	ID Training	Fenham Library
Trinity Solutions (Mechanics)	YMCA	Kenton Library
Newcastle College	Newcastle Skills Centre	Walker Library
Northumbria Youth Action	Talbot House	West End Library
Stepney Banks Stables		East End Library

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at no notice due to concerns raised to Ofsted about the safety of pupils. It was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and converted to a section 5 inspection under the same act during the afternoon of day one of the inspection.
- The inspectors visited learning in the main Linhope site and a number of alternative provisions including vocational training providers. These included the school's own alternative provision the Pottery Bank Centre and provision in Blakelaw Community Centre. They visited learning in Fitted Interiors training, ID Training, Stepney Banks Stables, Newcastle Skills Centre and the YMCA. They also visited one-to-one or small-group sessions in East End library, Outer West library, West End library and Walker library.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, staff, pupils, three representatives of the management committee and a representative from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne's school improvement service. They also spoke to pupils informally throughout the two days.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a number of documents including safeguarding policies and procedures, attendance registers and pupils' individual timetables. They scrutinised four individual pupils' case files, the school's serious incident log and a range of information on pupils' progress across the school. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness was reviewed alongside the school's improvement plan. Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks while visiting lessons across the city.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Diane Reynard	Ofsted Inspector
Judith James	Ofsted Inspector

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