

The Pupil Referral Service, Peterborough

St George's Centre, Lawn Avenue, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, PE1 3RB

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils of all ages achieve well. Progress in mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4 is particularly good.
- Students leave at the end of Key Stage 4 with a good number of useful qualifications equivalent to GCSEs. Almost all move on to education, employment or training.
- Teachers take each individual's particular needs carefully into account when planning work and lessons. The teamwork between class staff is excellent.
- Pupils' behaviour is very well managed and excellent procedures ensure pupils are safe.
- Pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development improve considerably. This helps them to enjoy school and learn well.
- The outstanding work carried out to prevent pupils from being permanently excluded from their mainstream schools is highly valued by the schools and local authority.
- Primary-aged pupils move back to their mainstream schools quickly and successfully.
- Many interesting subjects and activities are provided for pupils of all ages. The range is continually extended to provide more challenge and variety, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- The headteacher is very highly regarded. Under her leadership, and with the full support of staff and the management committee, the school has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Local headteachers and the school's own staff say that it has been transformed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The information collected on pupils' progress is not routinely checked to ensure that all groups are achieving equally, so that extra support can be quickly provided if necessary.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers are not regularly sought in all centres.
- A small amount of teaching is too easy limiting pupils' learning and concentration.
- Progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing is not as fast as it is in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons across all three centres, taught by 17 different teachers. One further session was observed at the alternative provider R&N Motors. Six lessons were observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher (also currently leading the primary centre), the heads of the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 centres, the Chair (also a representative of the local authority) and two other members of the Management Committee, local mainstream headteachers, and several other members of staff including the home tuition coordinator and the family liaison worker. Informal discussions were held with pupils and parents.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents and carers, to be shown. However, their views as expressed to the inspection team and the results of a survey conducted at the Key Stage 3 centre were taken into consideration.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of documentation, including: records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, and the school's strategies to improve them; records of the quality of teaching and how the school works to improve it; self-evaluation documents and improvement plans; and documents related to the work of the management committee and to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Judith Charlesworth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
Sue Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Pupil Referral Service, Peterborough (PRS) works with pupils who mostly have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some have additional difficulties such as moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions. All have very complex needs, often resulting from their lives out of school. Some have health problems, including mental health issues. Typically, about three quarters are boys.
- The PRS comprises three centres. These cater for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 (St George's centre) in Key Stage 3 (Fletton centre) and in Key Stage 4 (Honeyhill centre). This is a change since the previous inspection when there were two Key Stage 4 centres and an outreach service supporting pupils in primary schools, although this service is still provided by the PRS on a different basis.
- The PRS has five main functions. These are to:
 - Provide full-time education for pupils of all ages from the City of Peterborough who have been, or are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school, or who cannot access mainstream education for other reasons. The aim is that they should return to mainstream education wherever possible.
 - Provide behaviour support for pupils to prevent their exclusion from mainstream schools by attending the PRS on full- or part-time basis. All primary pupils are currently attending part-time and are on the roll of both their home school and the PRS. Most students now in Key Stage 3 attend the PRS full time, as do almost all the students in Key Stage 4.
 - Work with pupils of all ages who are unable to attend school on medical grounds, either in their homes, in hospital or at the PRS.
 - Act on behalf of the local authority in relation to exclusions, managed moves from one school to another, and ensuring fair access to a suitable school for all individuals.
- The number of pupils on roll fluctuates throughout the year. During the inspection there were 166 pupils on roll, including those attending full-time, and those dual-registered (attending both the PRS and their mainstream school). Additionally, the PRS is currently working with 19 'guest' primary-aged pupils who are still on the full-time roll of their mainstream schools but attend the PRS for short blocks of time, typically one or two terms.
- A few full-time pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The number of part-time pupils with statements varies. Last year, about two thirds of the pupils were being supported at school action or school action plus at the time of their referral to the PRS.
- A much larger proportion of pupils than usual is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra government funding to support the achievement of particular groups. A small proportion of pupils are looked after by the local authority, although a quarter has the regular involvement of social services. Most pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The PRS uses two alternative provisions to supplement its own curriculum at Key Stage 4. These are R&M Motors and the City College (Peterborough).
- The headteacher performs a number of high-level functions within the local authority. She sits on several city-wide committees, groups and working parties, and provides support and guidance for schools and individuals.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in speaking, listening, reading and writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers tell pupils what they should do to reach higher levels, both in lessons and in their marking
 - all lessons keep pupils interested
 - pupils have enough opportunities to use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in lessons other than English.

- Extend the analysis of pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance information to check that all groups are performing equally, and to quickly identify where further support might be needed.

- Gather the views of pupils, parents and carers on the work of the PRS to inform practice and developments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all students in Key Stages 3 and 4 enter the PRS with attainment that is well below expectations for their age. This is due to the impact their previously poor attendance, disrupted education and personal difficulties have had on their ability to learn. Records of national test results before starting at the PRS show that very few made expected progress during Key Stage 3, sometimes because they refused to go to school at all. Primary-aged pupils usually have lower attainment than expected for their age, as difficulties in their behaviour and personal development have prevented them from learning properly.
- Over the past three years, students in Key Stage 4 have performed increasingly well. Almost all students now gain useful accreditation that prepares them well for the next stage in their lives. In the summer of 2013, about one fifth of the students achieved the equivalent of five good GCSEs at A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Most students achieved accreditation equivalent to GCSE grades A to G in five subjects, including English and mathematics, which is comparable to other Peterborough City schools.
- At Key Stage 3, progress is also good. For example, in Year 8 last year, the small number of full-time pupils made more progress than usual in mathematics, which helped them close the gap between their attainment and that expected for their age. Nearly half the students made outstanding progress in mathematics, at two, three or, occasionally, four times the usual rate. Progress in English was a little below average overall but was at its best in writing, in contrast with the national trend. Students' progress in speaking and listening was least marked. Nevertheless, students' progress in English is a great improvement on their previous achievement.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well as they respond to the nurturing teaching and curriculum. Their academic skills improve as they learn to manage their own behaviour more appropriately and concentrate. They use their new skills in mainstream school very successfully. Pupils with health problems and with special educational needs achieve well, in keeping with their particular difficulties, circumstances and abilities. This is due to the personalised approach taken to each individual's programmes of study and support.
- The PRS tracks each pupil's attainment and progress every half term. Results are clearly displayed so that they can be compared with other factors, such as individuals' attendance. They show that the attainment and progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to that of their peers, although a much greater number gain the equivalent of five GCSEs. However, assessment information is not routinely analysed to check that other groups of pupils are making equal progress, so additional support can be promptly provided if necessary.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' good achievement is underpinned by good teaching. Staff have excellent relationships with the pupils and provide very effective support for behaviour and personal development. The teamwork between teachers and support staff in all centres is outstanding. Both take full responsibility for teaching and supporting the pupils, often leading the class together. These factors help pupils to remain calm, concentrate and learn well. Teaching for pupils who have medical needs results in good achievement.
- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is strongly focused on helping pupils to manage their own behaviour and learning more effectively. The atmosphere in class is warm and nurturing, but it is

nevertheless clearly focused on helping pupils to move forward. Distracted behaviour is dealt with consistently well. Each pupil's academic and behavioural targets are displayed on the wall, and rewards for achieving them are instant and frequent, particularly at Key Stage 1. On one occasion, for example, pupils were delighted to receive a gold 'scale' to place on the spine of their 'monster' as a result of their efforts.

- Teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is characterised by an adult atmosphere in which staff show high expectations of students' work and behaviour. They are encouraged to work on their own and to take responsibility for their own learning. Lessons are well organised. Staff quickly get to know the level of each student's skills, and because of the high adult to student ratio, work is usually very well matched to individual needs. Learning aims are mostly made clear so that pupils know what they should achieve by the end of the lesson. Good questioning and careful checking of students' work throughout lessons ensure that staff know if students have understood, or if something needs to be tackled differently. An excellent example of this was seen in a GCSE art lesson, where students were encouraged to reflect on their work and improved it as a result.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics due to effective, well-planned teaching that ensures any gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are identified and closed. A good example of this was seen in Key Stage 3, where students worked on their own to solve problems about perimeter, area and volume. This was then followed by a rapid question and answer session, leading to a very short but enjoyable reward. Progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing is less rapid, sometimes due to the lack of suitable strategies to enliven some lessons.
- Displays of pupils' work and photographs of various activities reinforce the importance of making an effort and the enjoyment to be gained from school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively supported, for example through discussions on what is and is not fair in sport. In almost all lessons, pupils' behaviour and willingness to cooperate are good. They generally support one another, and show newcomers 'the ropes'. On one occasion, for example, a student was observed re-explaining the task to a classmate who spoke limited English.
- Weaknesses observed in a few lessons, which have also been identified by the PRS leaders, are where activities are either too easy or hard for individual pupils, and when pupils are expected to work on the same activity for too long which leads to distracted behaviour. Classroom displays often show what skills pupils need at different levels in a subject. However, these are not as effective as they could be because they are not referred to enough by teachers in class or in marking, which is often too focused only on behaviour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils attend the PRS because of difficulties they experience in regulating their own behaviour and their social and emotional development. The PRS recognises that to learn effectively, pupils' personal development must be strongly supported. It does this very successfully. For the great majority of pupils, personal development and learning improve together.
- Throughout the PRS, staff have very strong relationships with pupils which encourage them to feel secure. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem improve as a result. This is particularly evident in the Key Stage 4 'girls group' where students often regard the classroom suite as a home-from-home, as they talk through aspects of their lives with the adults. Two girls described how uncomfortable they had felt in mainstream and so they had both (separately) stopped attending school for several months before coming to the PRS, which they now attend regularly.

- The PRS systems and practices for keeping pupils safe, for example through fire prevention, computer safety and child protection, are very effective. Keeping safe from internet and substance abuse, being kind and anti-bullying are frequent topics in the strong provision for personal development.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, lessons and adults, including visitors, are usually good. They are positive in class and enjoy the motivating activities and rewards. Pupils are mostly friendly and sociable with one another. They usually listen to one another in class, take turns in activities without difficulty, and support each other's efforts. The very effective system of grading and colour-coding pupils' achievement and effort shows them immediately how well they are doing in each lesson, which encourages them further.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are closely assessed and tracked throughout their time at the PRS. The thorough 'readiness for reintegration' schedule used for Key Stages 1 and 2 clearly shows rapid improvement in personal development. A similar but shorter schedule is used for students in Key Stage 3, although this does not yield the same breadth of information. While pupils' behaviour improves, anti-social incidents and fixed-term exclusions do occur. The PRS deals quickly and firmly with all incidents. If pupils are excluded for a fixed period following violence or persistent disruption, well-established and thorough procedures ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the ground rules before they return to school.
- Pupils' attendance is below average, although it has improved steadily in all centres over the past three years. It is now broadly average in Key Stages 1 and 2 but still low in Key Stage 4. This is being firmly tackled by the PRS. Nevertheless, most individuals' attendance shows considerable improvement from that at their previous school, sometimes increasing from non-attendance to over 90%.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The staff, local headteachers, management committee and local authority are all quick to say how much the PRS has improved and developed under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. The heads of centre and other school leaders work very effectively to lead and develop the PRS alongside her. All staff are committed to providing a brighter future for pupils.
- One of the roles of the PRS is to prevent permanent exclusions from mainstream by helping pupils to improve their behaviour and personal development, and by supporting schools to work more effectively with these pupils. This work is extremely effective. Primary pupils now return to mainstream quickly and there have been no permanent exclusions since September 2012. There has been an overall decline in exclusions from 95 in 2010/11 to only six so far this year.
- The systems and practices implemented in the past two years to support the everyday work of the PRS are excellent, although a few, such as the routine analysis of different groups' progress, are not yet fully developed. The city-wide pupil records system has been implemented and adapted for the particular needs of the PRS.
- Leaders' evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the PRS is very detailed and helpfully documented, including in information-packed reports to the management committee. Identified weaknesses and developments are clearly reflected in improvement plans. Various cross-centre working parties have been established to improve aspects such as the curriculum.
- Senior leaders have done much to improve teaching. Developments are outlined in a very detailed annual teaching and learning strategy document, which is closely followed. Teaching is

regularly and stringently monitored, with detailed feedback and targets for improvement set where necessary. The new national arrangements for teacher appraisal have been implemented and are supplemented by other opportunities for staff to discuss their work with line managers.

- Plenty of opportunity is given to help staff improve their skills and take more responsibility within the PRS. Some teaching assistants teach alone, while others work in partnership with teachers in class teaching. Training for individuals and staff groups is ongoing, and often provided by the headteacher, who has recently led sessions on, for example, target setting with the use of data, Child Sexual Exploitation and various issues for support staff.
- The school provides an excellent range of subjects and activities that meet the different age groups' needs very well, although the current lack of internet facilities at Key Stage 4 hampers accreditation in this subject. Older pupils receive good advice and support about future options from independent advisers. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy throughout the PRS, as weaknesses in these areas often underpin low self-esteem and challenging behaviour. Suitable developments to the range of subjects offered to the 'girls group' are now being outlined. Pupils receiving home or hospital tuition have a personalised programme of study developed by the home tuition coordinator, depending on their age and circumstances.
- At Key Stages 1 and 2, subjects are designed to re-engage pupils and fill gaps in their learning so they can return to mainstream successfully. At Key Stage 3, morning academic subjects are supplemented by afternoon off-site activities, such as sport and visits. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is rich and diverse and leads to accreditation. The PRS is continually adding to the challenge and range of subjects provided. For example, Functional Skills in Mathematics and Skills for Lifelong Learning have both just been introduced at Level 3 (equivalent to AS Levels).
- Residential journeys have been recently introduced. The new primary sports funding is used well to improve sporting activities, and the new Key Stage 4 football team has not yet been beaten. Little alternative provision is used, but students are accompanied by PRS staff to assure they are safe and the provision meets their needs well.
- Most pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is used to fund school developments that aim to improve pupils' well-being, so leading to better achievement. Initiatives include funding the breakfast club, which dramatically raised attendance at Key Stage 4, and a specialist teaching assistant who provides careers advice and guidance. The grant also funds the new family liaison and welfare manager, who supports families and pupils to improve attendance, particularly at Key Stage 4. While the PRS works in very close partnership with parents and carers, their views – and pupils' views – on the PRS' work are not routinely sought to contribute to developments.
- The PRS is central to the local authority's behaviour strategy. The support for improving and developing the PRS through its school improvement partner and senior managers has been excellent. The headteacher is a member of several other important strategy groups, such as the Child Sexual Exploitation and the Prevent Strategies, and her support to the local authority is, too, outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The work of the management committee has improved greatly. Members are now experienced and knowledgeable and include school and local authority leaders. They are very well informed about all aspects of the work of the PRS by first-hand knowledge and detailed reports. This information includes the quality of teaching, how the PRS is tackling underperformance and rewarding good teaching, and pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. The management committee holds senior leaders to account for the performance of the PRS, but

fully accepts its own responsibilities too. It checks carefully on the progress of planned developments. Finances are well controlled and the significant deficit of two years ago has been eliminated. The committee makes sure all statutory duties are met, including through robust and effective safeguarding procedures.

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

Unique reference number	110601
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	425176

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	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Lewis
Headteacher	Claire George
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2011
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