

Inspection of a good school: Scarborough Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Valley Bridge Parade, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO11 2PG

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and academic success. However, until recently, there has been significant turbulence in leadership and staffing. As a result, the academic curriculum is not currently being delivered consistently well. Leaders have plans in place to improve this situation, but there is currently too much variation in the quality of teaching.

Pupils feel happy and safe at Scarborough PRU. There is an ethos of respect in school. Members of staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. Teachers know the individual needs of pupils. They know what can cause pupils to lose focus. Teachers think carefully about how to ensure that school is calm and that pupils behave well. Any unkind behaviour or bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

Personal development has a high priority. Leaders want pupils to be successful as they return to a mainstream school or find employment. Pupils and staff eat together at lunchtime, where there is a focus on developing social skills. Visiting speakers, activities on Thursday and Friday afternoons, and a variety of projects enrich the curriculum. For example, a current project on protecting turtle doves is underway. Nonetheless, leaders know that improvements to the quality of education are needed.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ambitious plans for the curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects that lead to qualifications. Leaders make sure that pupils are assessed when they start school. This ensures that the courses that pupils follow match their ability and knowledge. In some subjects, such as English, curriculum thinking is comprehensive. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn. The curriculum is well structured and well delivered. In

these subjects, teachers include activities in lessons that help pupils to recall and retain key information.

In too many other subjects, however, the curriculum is not detailed enough. The precise knowledge that pupils should know has not been identified. Teachers, some of whom are not specialists in the subject area, cannot deliver the curriculum effectively as a result. They cannot always react flexibly to pupils' understanding in lessons and shape lessons accordingly.

Although teachers take care in assessing pupils when they arrive in school, the tests that they use to check that pupils are learning the curriculum are sometimes imprecise. Sometimes, the tests include questions that contain information that has not been covered, as they are based on examinations designed for the end of the course.

Leaders have been developing a reading strategy at school. There has been a variety of developments to encourage pupils to develop a love of reading. Improvements to the library are an example of this. Leaders know there is still work to do. Currently, teachers do not identify the exact reading needs of the pupils. They do not know whether gaps in pupils' knowledge pertain to phonics or reading fluency.

Nonetheless, leaders have created a harmonious environment that is based on respect. Teachers care deeply about the pupils and know how to get the best out of them. The behaviour points system is understood by everyone and motivates pupils to focus. Teachers think carefully about how to avoid any flashpoints or confrontation. As a result, pupils are generally well behaved. Low-level disruption is uncommon and dealt with effectively. The need for any physical intervention to keep pupils safe from harm has dropped significantly. Consequently, only very few incidents remain. Generally, the longer that pupils have been in school, the more their attendance improves.

Teachers are aware of the needs of the pupils in their class. They plan to meet these additional needs well. This includes what they enjoy doing and what will help them to concentrate. Many pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers take this into account when delivering lessons.

Leaders know that they need to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education, and for adulthood. Careers education is a strength. Nearly all pupils who leave school move into education, training or employment. Leaders focus on developing pupils' social skills and confidence. A range of events, speakers and programmes are in place to support this.

A new headteacher has been appointed after a period of uncertainty regarding leadership at the school. The management committee is experienced and understands the strengths and areas for development of the school well. Staff are committed to the pupils at school. Staff indicate that leaders support their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know that many pupils at school have additional vulnerabilities. Leaders work with a range of agencies, including the police and health and social care, to keep pupils safe. Leaders keep records about any potential safeguarding issues and analyse this information weekly. Staff keep an ear to the ground in relation to pupils' safety. Daily staff briefings are used to ensure that all staff are in the loop about specific pressures for individual pupils.

The designated safeguarding lead makes sure that all staff have detailed information to help support and protect pupils. The curriculum explicitly teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe and prepare for life in adulthood.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the precise knowledge that pupils need to know is not clearly identified. Teachers who are not subject specialists cannot plan lessons effectively as a result. They do not adapt the curriculum to the needs of the pupils in their class consistently well. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have enough curriculum support and subject knowledge to help them to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Assessment does not always match what is being covered in lessons. Some assessments are taken from the end of an examined course and are used before all of the content within the assessments has been covered. This does not help teachers to pinpoint whether specific knowledge is being retained by the pupils. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively to check what pupils know so that any gaps in knowledge can be identified and plugged.
- Reading assessments do not identify the precise knowledge that pupils do not know. Teachers are not aware whether pupils' deficits are linked to their phonic knowledge or reading fluency. As a result, some pupils do not improve their reading ability as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place to correctly identify the reading needs of pupils who need to catch up.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good on 23 and 24 January 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	132027
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10255908
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	Management committee
Chair	Rosemary Rayne
Headteacher	Joanne Fox
Website	www.scarboroughpru.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is a pupil referral unit. Pupils who attend the school have either been permanently excluded from a different school or are attending for a period of time before returning to their original school or moving to a new mainstream setting.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the headteacher. They also spoke with a member of the management committee. An inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including reading),

mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects. This included science.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. They checked logs of actions taken to keep pupils safe. An inspector checked the single central record and other documentation regarding safe recruitment practices.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff, both formally and informally, during the inspection. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times, including lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and careers.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of management committee meetings, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Patricia Head

Ofsted Inspector

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