

Stratton Education Centre

St Phillips Road, Swindon, SN2 7QP

Inspection dates 18–19 April 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The majority of students across all four sites achieve well during their time at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Achievement in English, mathematics and personal development is good.
- Teaching is almost always good which means that students make the progress expected of them. In the best teaching, students are challenged so that they work quickly and extend their skills.
- Older students have opportunities to attain good-quality accreditation by the time they leave the school in Years 11 or 13.
- Behaviour is good. There are many good examples of students' behaviour improving quickly once they start at the PRU. Students on each site say they feel safe.
- Students receive good-quality care and support, benefiting from effective integrated therapies and exciting off-site activities which promote good personal development and enjoyment.
- Efficient planning by the management committee means money is spent well for the benefit of all groups of students, including those who are known to be eligible for additional funding.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the assistant headteachers have a clear vision and an accurate view of the school. Leaders place a strong focus on improving the performance of staff through rigorous monitoring and training.
- Leaders, managers and members of the management committee have brought about improvements in teaching and achievement since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although attendance improves during students' stay at the PRU, it is still below the levels expected because a few students are persistently absent.
- Work does not always meet the needs of different groups of students.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, some of them jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a few short visits to observe students' learning and listened to a few students read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and other senior leaders and managers, staff and students at the different sites and a local authority representative. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of the Management Committee.
- The inspectors observed the work of the four different sites and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and students' work.
- There were no responses to the online survey (Parent View). The inspectors took account of 40 responses to the inspection questionnaire from staff from across all sites.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Buist

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) has four separate sites spread across Swindon, each catering for a different group of students. All sites are managed by the same leadership team and the same management committee.
- The Riverside Centre provides full-time education for students with anxieties about school attendance. The majority of these students are successfully re-integrated back into mainstream schools or colleges.
- The Adolescent Unit School is based at Marlborough House. It is part of an in-patient Tier 4 CAMHS service. This supports up to 18 students with severe and complex mental health issues.
- At Stratton, which is the administrative centre, there is education for students who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream school because of their challenging behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- The Hospital and Home Tuition Service is based at the Great Western Hospital and provides continuity of education for students unable to attend mainstream schools for medical reasons. It coordinates a home-tuition service for students with medical needs.
- Occasionally pupils of primary age are catered for but none was at any of the centres during the inspection.
- Almost all students are White British and no students speak English as an additional language.
- A few students are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is above average.
- A few students have additional special educational needs such as autism spectrum disorders or learning difficulties. About one fifth of students have a statement of special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that activities meet the needs and abilities of each student by matching tasks more fully to each student's interests.
- Improve the attendance of persistent absentees by:
 - working closely with parents and students as well as the local authority's support services
 - making sure that students' individual curriculum plans fully meet their needs so that they all want to come to school every day.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The vast majority of students, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve well. As a result, they make at least good progress in English and mathematics, and in their personal development.
- Progress in reading is good. Staff place a high focus on improving and developing reading skills across the PRU, making sure that students read regularly and develop effective skimming and scanning skills.
- Older students attain good-quality accreditation. By the time they leave students acquire qualifications that prepare them well for their futures, regularly acquiring GCSE's and advanced level qualifications such as A levels.
- Good achievement was evident in a Year 11 English class at the Riverside site, for example, where students were very absorbed in their learning because inspirational teaching provided high quality resources, motivating them to search for the very best features of a leaflet they were developing.
- A good range of work-related experiences are offered where relevant and these play a valuable role in promoting self-esteem and confidence and giving students the skills they need when they leave school.
- Just occasionally, a few students do not achieve as well as they could because their tasks are not linked fully to their own needs and interests. At these times the level of challenge is not sufficient to promote the progress expected. The lack of specialist facilities for science and technology reduces what students can achieve in those areas.
- Students' personal development is promoted well by staff on all sites. Students now have many opportunities to have their say and take part actively in discussions. Students told the inspector that they are regularly involved in making decisions and choosing activities.
- Those known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve as well as other students in English and mathematics because the extra funding is used well to employ additional staffing and also to fund additional activities for these students.

The quality of teaching is good

- High-quality relationships and effective support across the sites mean that lessons are calm with a good work ethos. Routines are clear so that students know what is expected of them.
- In the best lessons, teachers extend students' skills and build on their previous learning by working closely with students' mainstream schools. This was particularly evident at the Hospital School, where teachers are in regular contact with students' previous teachers so that there is a very high quality of continuity in their learning.
- Some outstanding teaching was evident at all four sites where students made excellent progress in their learning and/or their behaviour. The excellent celebration assembly at Stratton, for example, showed that students really value their certificates and that they are able to congratulate and celebrate others' successes because of outstanding relationships and support from staff.
- Questioning is a key feature of the most successful lessons in helping students to think carefully and search for knowledge. At the Hospital School, for instance, a student made excellent progress in understanding how to use similes and metaphors because questions challenged her very well to use them in her writing.
- Assessment has improved and students' work is accurately marked with helpful comments. Homework is regularly set.
- Just occasionally, in a very small proportion of lessons, tasks are not linked closely enough to students' individual interests or abilities. This affects their levels of attention, their achievement and their attendance. One boy, for example, said he missed school yesterday because he 'didn't

like boxing’.

- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning, listen to reading and to monitor outcomes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour on all sites is at least good. Only very occasionally is learning disrupted by the challenging behaviour of a few students or the reluctance of others to become engaged because of their individual problems. Case studies show that behaviour improves quickly once students start at the PRU.
- Students say that any bullying is quickly dealt with and on all sites students say they feel safe. No evidence of any bullying was observed during the inspection and records show that any incidents are quickly dealt with.
- In discussion students say they enjoy their time at the PRU. One pupil at Marlborough House said, 'I cannot praise the staff enough. Teachers give their own time, have lots of skills and link with our own schools so that there is good understanding of what we need to do.'
- Many students are at the PRU because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, because of anxieties about attending school or due to medical issues. On entry their behaviour or worries are often challenging, affecting their learning. Records show that they quickly settle and begin to achieve well because of good quality support and guidance. As a result, attendance is improving, even though a few students remain persistently absent and as a result overall attendance is too low.
- Behaviour is managed well on all sites, and students and staff rightly say that behaviour is good. Effective training in the management of behaviour has been provided and school documentation shows that exclusions are dropping. Once students feel confident they begin to work together and a few are seen helping others with their learning or sharing activities.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the range of subjects and topics, which enable good levels of responsibility and strong moral awareness. Students have a say in all areas of the PRU.
- The work-related opportunities for those who can benefit are a key feature of helping students engage with the community and prepare them well for their futures.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the assistant headteachers, effectively supported by staff and the management committee, have successfully improved the quality of teaching and achievement, and improved the curriculum and attendance, in the past two years. They have brought the four different sites together successfully so that there is a combined commitment to continue improving.
- Effective use of the national 'Teachers' Standards' shows a strong commitment to improving teachers' skills so that they can progress and seek promotion. Training is often specific to each site, for example during a whole Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) behaviour training day, the Marlborough House staff received specific training from a hospital psychologist to help them better understand their students' needs.
- The sites are well supported by the local authority, which recognises the improvements made in the past two years to align roles, give training and improve teaching. The local authority regularly supports leaders in monitoring performance.
- Leadership responsibilities are effectively spread across the different sites, each of which is fully involved in planning and evaluating its own performance. This means that staff are active in improving their own departments and in managing their own performance.
- The range of subjects and topics has been reviewed and enriched and now meets most students' needs well. Additional experiences, such as boxing and learning about horses, as well as work-related opportunities such as carpentry and mechanics, generally engage students well. Leaders

are aware that there is more to do to make sure that curriculum tasks fully engage each pupil so that they all want to come to school every day.

- The school manages a successful outreach service to students who have health issues. Effective support is provided by leaders to the outreach teachers in supporting the wide range of needs of the students.
- Relationships with parents have improved as shown by the rising attendance of parents at students' meetings. The school promotes very positive relationships with local schools, support agencies and a range of work-related providers.
- Leaders make sure that all students have equal opportunities, as demonstrated by the high proportion of students who benefit from individual support and additional experiences.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee provides effective direction to the school, promoting an atmosphere in which students thrive. Members of the committee are fully involved in checking the strengths and areas for improvement on each site through regular updates from leaders and through visits to the school. They know about the quality of teaching and the achievement of students. They have a clear awareness of their role in managing the performance of staff and they make sure that there are sufficient funds to provide the training needed to improve teaching further. They manage the school's finances well and make sure that money allocated to support students eligible for pupil premium funding is used for the benefit of those students. Members make sure that good teachers and staff are rewarded through the school's performance management structure and that any underperformance is improved through additional training and support.

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	126171
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	400130

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Paddy Bradley
Headteacher	Richard Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2011
Telephone number	01793 828941
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