Torbay Pupil Referral Unit
Torbay PRU, Higher Polsham Road, Paignton, Devon, TQ3 2SZ

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall effectiveness</th>
<th>Previous inspection:</th>
<th>This inspection:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achievement of pupils</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviour and safety of pupils</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership and management</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
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Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Teaching is not yet good. Teachers do not always make sure that students are ready to learn at the start of each lesson. Students can often become too dependent on their teachers or teaching assistants and do not develop the skills to become independent learners. Feedback to students through marking does not give precise enough guidance to enable students to know exactly what to do to improve their work.
- Students at Key Stage 4 do not make enough progress. GCSE results are not good and the progress that students make in relation to their starting points is below expectations.
- The role of middle leaders is insufficiently developed and this gives rise to inconsistent expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning across the different sites.
- Members of the management committee do not know the school well enough and do not provide enough robust challenge to senior leaders.
- Students’ attendance is low and it is not improving rapidly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has a clear vision and provides good strategic leadership. He works closely with the local authority and headteachers of local secondary schools in order to ensure that the pupil referral unit contributes to the educational provision of the area by meeting the needs of specific groups of students in Torbay.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff know the students well. They provide very effective guidance and support to students and help them to manage their behaviour.
- Key Stage 3 students on the Polsham site are well prepared for their return to their mainstream schools. Teachers help them to improve their behaviour and make rapid progress in English and mathematics. Members of staff work very closely with mainstream schools to support the reintegration of students after the 12-week programme.
- The development of a curriculum which enables Key Stage 4 students to secure GCSEs in English, mathematics and science, alongside a vocational qualification, has helped to prepare them for the next stage of their lives.
Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine part lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the Director of Learning. The inspector made a short visit to six other lessons, including three at South Devon College, where Key Stage 4 students from the Torbay Pupil Referral Unit were following a vocational course.

- The inspector held meetings with several groups of students, the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, members of staff in charge of various aspects of the school’s work, two members of the governing body and two local headteachers.

- The inspector discussed lessons seen with the Director of Learning and examined a range of documents, including the school’s own evaluation, improvement plans and data about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.

- The inspector looked at a range of students’ work in lessons and all Key Stage 4 work in English and mathematics completed this term by students at Waterside.

- The inspector took into account one individually-submitted written response to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire, a number of parental feedback forms completed by parents of students who had recently completed the 12-week programme at Polsham, an interview with one parent and seven completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

| Steve Williams, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
Full report

Information about this school

- Torbay Pupil Referral Unit is a pupil referral unit with 52 pupils on roll. It operates on three sites:
  - the Polsham site for Key Stage 3 students (aged 11 to 14) from local mainstream secondary schools on a one-term placement
  - the Waterside site for Key Stage 4 students (aged 14 to 16) originating from local mainstream secondary schools who have been referred to the pupil referral unit through the Torbay pupil placement panel for the remainder of the key stage
  - Parkfield House for students aged 11 to 16 who are experiencing school phobia or anxiety issues.
- The majority of students enter the school after the beginning of Year 7 at varying points in the school year and remain at the pupil referral unit for varying periods of time.
- There are more boys than girls and all students come from White British backgrounds.
- All students have special educational needs and three have statements.
- All Key Stage 4 students receive part of their education off site at South Devon College, most for one day per week. Five students are on a full-time programme at the college. Two students spend one day per week following a course at Combe Pafford School.
- The school receives financial support for its Key Stage 4 students eligible for pupil premium. The majority of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups including looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. The school has six looked after children and no children of service families.
- The school does not meet the government’s current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that students make better progress, by helping teachers to:
  - make sure that students are always ready to learn at the start of each lesson
  - provide detailed feedback on students’ work so that students know exactly what to do to improve
  - develop students’ independent learning skills
  - use the support provided by teaching assistants more effectively in order to help students to learn.
- Strengthen further the impact of leadership at all levels by:
  - ensuring that there is consistency of practice and consistently high expectations across all sites
  - developing the role of middle managers
  - enabling the management committee to become more involved in helping the school to improve. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Improve attendance through better tracking and more rigorous follow-up of students’ absence, particularly where students are being educated off-site.
Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In Years 10 and 11, students do not make enough progress, because teaching is not yet good enough and too many students do not yet attend regularly. There is no significant difference in the progress made between boys and girls.
- Although the standards reached by students at the end of Year 11 are not good enough, they have improved over time. In 2013, 24% of students achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to G, and most achieved GCSE grades in English, mathematics and science and a level 1 accreditation in a vocational subject.
- As a result of their achievement in GCSE subjects and in vocational subjects, all of last year’s Year 11 students secured places to enable them to continue their education and training. This represents a considerable improvement on the previous year.
- In 2013, students’ attainment at GCSE in mathematics was better than in English. The policy of entering students early for GCSE in mathematics did not have a damaging effect on their attainment, but was important in sustaining their motivation. In the samples of work of Key Stage 4 students, progress in English is now good and students are taking pride in their work. In English, students learn to appreciate literature and the work they do contributes to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. In one lesson seen, by studying characters from a culture different from their own, students’ cultural understanding was considerably enhanced.
- At Key Stage 3, most students reach or exceed the expected level of progress each term. The strong focus on ensuring that students make academic progress in English and mathematics while they are at the pupil referral unit helps them to move on, particularly where they are likely to return to the original mainstream school after a 12-week placement. One headteacher applauded the emphasis on progress in English and mathematics and noted that it had resulted in more successful reintegration than was previously the case.
- The individual attention that the students receive helps to meet their specific needs. As a result, most identified groups of students, including most of those attending off-site alternative provision, make progress that is comparable with that of their peers. This includes disabled students and those special educational needs, and students for whom the school receives additional financial support through the pupil premium. In 2013, there was no significant difference between the attainment at the end of Year 11 of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding and other students in both English and mathematics. There are no students for whom the school receives Year 7 catch-up funding. More-able students make similar progress to other students.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

Teaching requires improvement because too often teachers fail to ensure that all groups of students make consistently good progress in their lessons.
- Teachers sometimes struggle to ensure that students are ready to learn at the start of a lesson and often teachers provide students with work that does not sufficiently engage them and develop a thirst for knowledge. As a result, students do not become effective independent learners and can become too dependent on their teachers or teaching assistants in order to make progress. This can sometimes mean that more-able students make less progress than their peers.
- Teaching assistants are hard working and supportive to students. They are dedicated to help students to succeed, but they are not often encouraged by teachers to take a step back in order to help to develop students’ independent learning skills.
- Teachers know their students well and have developed an excellent rapport with them. This helps teachers to manage any instances of challenging behaviour that arise, and engage their students in their learning. Where teachers use their understanding of their students to provide them with learning opportunities that in themselves promote engagement, highly effective
The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- Behaviour and safety are not good. Students have not yet developed a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning and are over reliant on adults for guidance. Behaviour around the various sites is not consistently good and some students attend infrequently.

- There is a clear behaviour policy, involving both rewards and sanctions, of which members of staff are aware. Students have a general awareness of expectations of behaviour, but there are different standards of acceptable behaviour on the different sites. Sanctions are used judiciously; permanent exclusion is not used and fixed-term exclusions are rare.

- Behaviour is generally well managed. Adults model good behaviour very effectively and, as a result, students generally show respect to adults and to each other. One student noted, ‘Teachers respect you for who you are,’ and said that this had a positive impact on his behaviour. Another referred to how a restorative approach following an incident last year helped him to get on with other people. The approaches used help students’ social and moral development and help students to develop strategies to manage their own feelings.

- Bullying occurs infrequently and, where it occurs, it is dealt with promptly and effectively. Students are aware of different types of bullying and know what to do if it happens.

- The pupil referral unit is successful in the management of behaviour and the development of strategies to bring about long-term improvements. One headteacher noted that the majority of students on the Key Stage 3 intervention programme at Polsham return to school with considerably improved behaviour, and referred to one boy who settled in rapidly on his return to mainstream school and then went on to become captain of the football team.

- Students feel safe in school and appreciate the care and support they receive. One student, when comparing the pupil referral unit to his mainstream school, said, ‘I feel more comfortable here. It makes me feel at home.’ Another noted that, since his arrival, his behaviour had improved both inside and outside school. Students learn about e-safety and understand how to stay safe when they are online.

- The school manages risks effectively and holds risk assessments and the required documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection.

- Attendance is very low, but it is improving. Tracking and monitoring procedures, including first day calling, follow-up work involving the Pupil and Family Advocate and multi-agency approaches are encouraging students to attend school. The school monitors the attendance of students attending off-site provision but has, to date, done too little to follow up issues of persistent absence amongst these students.
The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Weaknesses in middle leadership lead to inconsistent expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning across the different sites. Members of the management committee do not know the school well enough and do not provide enough robust challenge to senior leaders.

- The partnership with local mainstream schools and the local authority is strong and the executive headteacher shows good strategic leadership and has a clear vision for the school. The pupil referral unit is an important contributor to the range of educational provision in Torbay by meeting the needs of specific groups of vulnerable students.

- Day-to-day management is effective and steps have been taken to develop a greater consistency of approach across the different sites, although there is considerably more work still to be done in this area.

- The educational programme offered to the different groups of students meets their needs very well. For example, a programme with a strong focus on English and mathematics, which can lead to measurable academic progress in these key areas, has proved valuable in enabling Key Stage 3 students to make a successful return to their mainstream schools. Similarly, the curriculum at Key Stage 4, where all students takes one accredited vocational course, is very helpful in preparing them for their future career once they leave the pupil referral unit, supporting progression into college courses or apprenticeships.

- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are very effective. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and use this as the basis for taking steps to improve the quality of the experience of students. The school’s judgements on the quality of teaching and the strengths and areas for development are accurate. Performance management procedures are fully in place and there are robust systems for identifying and meeting the professional development needs of staff.

- The school’s self evaluation is detailed, but it does not provide a good basis for moving the school forward.

The governance of the school:

- The management committee provides an important mechanism for representing the views of various groups who have an interest in the work of the pupil referral unit – parents, staff, local mainstream schools, the local authority and other agencies. It meets on a regular basis.

- The management committee regularly reviews the work of the pupil referral unit and statutory policies; it makes sure that arrangements for safeguarding students are fully compliant and meet statutory requirements. It is fully involved in staff recruitment at all levels and oversees the performance management process and knows what is being done to reward good teachers and tackle underperformance. The management committee understands its role in monitoring spending on pupil premium.

- However, members of the management committee do not know the school well enough, visit infrequently and do not provide enough robust challenge to senior leaders.
What inspection judgements mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Grade</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>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. 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.</td>
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## School details

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<th><strong>Unique reference number</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Local authority</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Inspection number</strong></td>
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<td><strong>School category</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Age range of pupils</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gender of pupils</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Appropriate authority</strong></td>
<td>The Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chair</strong></td>
<td>Neil Payne</td>
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<td><strong>Director of Learning</strong></td>
<td>Sarah Holt</td>
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<td><strong>Date of previous school inspection</strong></td>
<td>29 February – 1 March 2012</td>
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<td><strong>Telephone number</strong></td>
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