

Inspection of The Horizon School, Hartlepool

C.E.T.L, Brierton Lane, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 4BY

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The Horizon School is a pupil referral unit that caters for pupils aged 11 to 16 years who have been permanently excluded from school or who risk exclusion. Horizon includes the Haven class, which caters for pupils with a range of health needs that have led to extensive periods of non-attendance at mainstream secondary schools. From the moment a pupil starts at Horizon, they are provided with exceptionally high levels of care, structure and support. Pupils rapidly improve their attendance at school and their engagement in learning.

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. His commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve their best permeates all aspects of school life. Leaders have established clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. These allow staff to create a learning environment that is calm and where pupils behave extremely well. All staff foster warm and caring relationships with pupils. In turn, pupils are polite and demonstrate high levels of respect for staff and for each other. If a pupil has anxieties or concerns, they are able to share these with staff and receive the help they need. A truly inclusive school has been established. In the words of one pupil, 'We are a tight knit community and look out for each other.'

Leaders work highly effectively with local secondary schools, parents and pupils to support reintegration to mainstream provision wherever possible. Detailed transition plans support this process to ensure that the vast majority of pupils are successful on their return.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the scope and breadth of their curriculum offer. Curriculum leaders demonstrate a strong subject knowledge. They have carefully mapped the sequence of learning across each subject. Pupil knowledge is carefully assessed on entry to school. Teachers are then able to identify gaps in learning and match teaching to pupils' varied starting points. The school offers a broad range of subjects. Pupils in key stage 4 have the option to study 10 GCSE or equivalent qualifications. Leaders ensure that when alternative providers are used, they provide safe and supportive placements to pupils. These placements add value to each pupil's educational offer and support pupils to achieve exceptionally well.

Reading is prioritised across the curriculum. An accelerated reader programme is in place, and interventions are provided for pupils who may need additional help. Leaders have thought carefully about the texts pupils read in English to ensure these are of a high quality. Pupils enjoy reading and confidently read aloud in class. They show maturity when reflecting on challenging life themes. For example, when studying 'Macbeth', pupils reflected on the impact of the manipulative behaviours demonstrated by some key characters. In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils fully understand the initial mathematical concept being delivered before they move on to teaching more complex procedures.

Pupils work hard in lessons and make rapid progress from their starting points. Because of the extremely strong relationships in place, teachers are able to successfully challenge pupils to improve their work. Pupil's outcomes and their achievement in examinations have improved since the last inspection. Pupils want to succeed when they leave the school. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education. This is borne out by the fact that all pupils go on to further education or employment and sustain their placements.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum has been carefully thought through. Pupils are able to access a range of excellent careers guidance opportunities. In addition, teachers have prioritised specific areas of the PSHE curriculum, such as learning how to stay healthy and keep safe in adult life. Rich experiences, including charity fundraising and environmental projects, nurture pupils' talents, build character and prepare them well for adulthood.

Engagement with parents and the wider community is strong. Governors are highly effective. They know the school well. They offer challenge and support in equal measure. Governors work closely with school leaders, supporting them in securing the best outcomes possible for all pupils. All staff feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Procedures for ensuring all adults who work in school are safe to do so are robust. The designated safeguarding lead provides staff with high-quality training and support. Regular briefings help staff to understand the local and national risks that may impact upon pupils in school. These are supplemented with twice daily staff meetings to share further information and any concerns about pupils. Staff know all pupils in the school extremely well. This allows them to quickly identify any possible signs of harm or concern. Leaders work effectively with external partners to ensure that pupils and their families can access the support networks they need.

How can I feedback 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	131294
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10241007
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Debbie Hill
Headteacher	Martyn Gordon
Website	https://horizonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Horizon School is a secondary pupil referral unit that caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. The school also has a small class of pupils educated as part of a home and hospital service called the Haven.
- The school currently has 37 pupils on roll. There is a further 12 pupils who are dual registered with Horizon and their mainstream host school.
- The Horizon School runs a breakfast club.
- The Horizon School uses five alternative provision placements: Evolve, Right Trax, Middlesbrough College, The Keys, Stockton Riverside College and Skills Academy. There are seven pupils who attend alternative provision for part of their weekly timetable.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school.
- Inspectors took account of one response to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors visited an alternative provision at Evolve and held telephone conversations with staff at Right Trax.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at English, mathematics, personal and social development, and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers about the curriculum.

Inspection team

Berni Moorcroft, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Malcolm Kirtley

His Majesty's Inspector

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