

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Whitehouse Pupil Referral Unit

262a Pickering Road, Kingston-upon-Hull HU4 7AD

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Whitehouse Pupil Referral Unit has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jake Thompson. This school is part of the Venn Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dr Simon Witham, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Terry Johnson. There is also an executive principal, Nicola Witham, who is responsible for the school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's 'respect' values of resilience, empathy, self-awareness, positivity, excellence, communication and teamwork are high priorities at this nurturing school. There is a happy and calm atmosphere. Pupils are valued and warmly welcomed by caring staff. It is a close-knit school community, where staff encourage pupils to do their best.

There are high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It supports pupils to build their knowledge and skills according to their needs. Pupils are well prepared to move back to mainstream education or to special school provision.

Pupils enjoy learning in a safe and inclusive environment. They appreciate that staff listen to them and understand their needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school assesses, identifies and meets pupils' individual needs in a timely and precise way.

Pupils learn to behave well. Skilled staff help pupils to develop ways to manage their emotions and behaviour. Pupils appreciate using the safe spaces and resources the school provides, to help them to calm and regulate their behaviour. They know they can talk to adults they trust about their worries. The school provides personalised and effective pastoral support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs.

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

Most pupils join Whitehouse having experienced significant difficulties in their mainstream schools. Some have had periods of absence and have developed gaps in their learning. The majority have SEND. Staff check pupils' needs thoroughly when they join the school. They use this information to create personalised learning and specific targets for pupils. When relevant, targets link to pupils' education, health and care plans. Staff utilise every opportunity to build pupils' self-esteem and help them to achieve well.

The school has set out the important knowledge that pupils should learn in a logical order across different curriculum subjects. Staff design learning to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' English and mathematics skills. However, the quality of some pupils' writing is affected by weaknesses in their knowledge of grammar and punctuation. These aspects of pupils' writing sometimes go uncorrected by teachers. Pupils in the early stages of learning to write are not consistently taught the skills they need to form neat, legible handwriting.

Pupils learn how to interact with others appropriately. Daily etiquette sessions help pupils to discuss, listen, take turns and to be respectful of others. Pupils, including those with SEND, engage increasingly well with learning and develop their personal skills. All pupils enjoy small group and, sometimes, one-to-one teaching and support. Staff check how well pupils are achieving and engaging in learning. They use this information effectively to plan pupils' next steps.

Reading is a high priority for the school. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and information. They benefit from daily opportunities to read, including to adults. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read receive personalised phonics teaching. Staff check pupils' progress in phonics carefully. Pupils who need extra help with reading, including those with SEND, receive tailored support and extra teaching.

Leaders have strong procedures to promote pupils' attendance and to follow up absences. They work effectively with pupils' mainstream schools, parents and carers and external professionals. During their time at the school, pupils' attendance improves and they learn more and remember more of the curriculum.

The curriculum supports pupils' wider development well. Pupils learn self-care and grow in confidence. They learn about risks such as from online abuse and about railway and water safety. They discuss issues relating to gender stereotyping and celebrate diversity. Pupils are encouraged to be active. They enjoy taking part in team building and problem-solving activities. Pupils learn life skills, such as first aid, and enjoy a variety of enrichment activities, including skateboarding and outdoor education. They are proud to be advocates for school improvement through their roles as school councillors.

The trust and governors have secure and effective oversight of the school. They work proactively with leaders to provide the best for pupils. Staff appreciate leaders' support for their professional development, workload and welfare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that pupils consistently receive the guidance they need to improve their handwriting or that teachers routinely identify gaps in pupils' knowledge of grammar and punctuation. This means that some pupils may not develop the ability to write fluently and with legible handwriting. The school should ensure that all staff understand how to develop pupils' handwriting skills and to use and apply accurate punctuation and grammar in their writing.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142259
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10346563
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Terry Johnson
CEO of the trust	Simon Witham
Headteacher	Jake Thompson
Website	https://whitehouse-pru.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a pupil referral unit for pupils from the age of 5 to 11 years.
- The school provides an outreach service to schools across the city of Hull.
- A significant proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Most have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school is part of the Venn Academy Trust.
- The school shares the same site as Bridgeview Special School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, executive headteacher, assistant headteachers, some curriculum leaders, a director for teaching and learning for the trust, the special educational needs coordinator, the school business manager, the designated leader for safeguarding, the deputy designated leader for safeguarding and the director of safeguarding, attendance, risk and welfare for the trust.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust board and the CEO and deputy CEO of the Venn Academy Trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning, listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult and looked at samples of pupils' work and considered a range of documentation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Inspectors met with some pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector met remotely with leaders of some of the schools who commission places at Whitehouse Pupil Referral Unit and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jenni Machin

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025