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Mr Martyn Patterson  
Headteacher  
Newhaven Pupil Referral Unit  
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Dear Mr Patterson

### **Short inspection of Newhaven Pupil Referral Unit**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2016 with Rosemarie McCarthy, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Following your appointment as headteacher soon after the last inspection, you have rebuilt the senior leadership team and developed a highly valued service for young people unable to be educated in mainstream schools. Leaders have worked hard to gain the trust and respect of staff, pupils and parents. As a result of your effective leadership, pupils benefit from a committed team of professionals who enjoy coming to work. This is because they feel valued and are supported to work together to improve pupils' outcomes. All staff recognise the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. These have led to pupils achieving ever better results over the last three years. You are committed to making the school outstanding as quickly as possible and are driving forward the necessary improvements to make this a reality.

You have worked to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report with considerable success. Many pupils now attend more regularly than they did because you continually reinforce the importance of good attendance with them and their families. Staff work very effectively with other professionals including the police, social care and health services, to ensure that all attendance concerns are followed up quickly and further support is arranged without delay. The attendance and punctuality of many pupils improves as they start to re-engage with

their learning and see school in a more positive light. The introduction of a free breakfast club and the adoption of Sonny, the school dog, have also led to some pupils attending more frequently. However, leaders are not always checking that pupils are making sufficient improvements on their previous attendance when they start at the school, and overall attendance is still below the average for all schools.

Pupils are supported to move on in their learning very effectively in all areas of the provision, including the new sixth form. They respond well to the consistently high expectations that staff have of them. On arrival, pupils undergo a period of assessment to determine what their needs are and what type of provision will suit them best. Teachers plan learning activities that engage them and encourage them to succeed, perhaps for the first time. As a result, many start to make rapid progress from their starting points on entry, particularly in English. Improved standards of literacy can be seen in the work that pupils produce across all subjects and in how they communicate effectively with each other and with adults when expressing their thoughts and opinions. Pupils in Year 11 who left the school last year achieved GCSE results in English that were comparable to all other schools nationally. This was despite many arriving at the school with significant gaps in their learning and low starting points. Highly effective teaching over time in English has led to increasing numbers of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able pupils, making accelerated progress and achieving standards that are in line with or above those achieved by their peers in all other schools.

Teachers monitor how well pupils are doing carefully, using the detailed assessment information gathered when pupils first arrive. They skilfully adapt learning activities to close any gaps in understanding that may exist. They ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are challenged to reach the aspirational targets set. They work closely with pastoral support staff, therapists and other professionals to ensure that all individual needs are fully understood and supported. They meet frequently to share information and decide on further interventions that will allow pupils to take their next steps. As a result, many pupils make rapid progress and start to catch up quickly. An increasing number achieve qualifications that will allow them to access courses at a higher level at college or successfully gain apprenticeships when they leave school.

Leaders use the improved systems for tracking assessment information to establish how well pupils are doing across all subjects. They check to make sure that all minority groups, including those who are looked after, achieve as well as their peers within the school and all other pupils nationally. They have correctly identified that standards in mathematics need to be improved, to compare more favourably with those achieved in English. Additional support and further training opportunities for improving teaching and learning in this subject are now in place, although the impact of these measures has still to be evaluated. Leaders have also taken appropriate action to support the quality of teaching and learning in science, while further staff recruitment takes place. Their successful interventions ensured that standards in science were maintained at the end of key stage 4 last year. In other subjects, most pupils are making at least good progress across all sites and types of provision, as a result of consistently good or better teaching.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school is a safe and supportive place. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. All the required staff employment checks have been carried out and safeguarding systems are consistently well managed throughout the school. Pupils move around buildings and outdoor areas safely. They are usually considerate in how they behave towards others and are respectful of their surroundings. Detailed risk assessments are carried out to ensure that pupils are kept safe during off-site visits and residential trips. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and reflect the practice seen. For example, the behaviour policy is applied in a consistent manner throughout the school. Child protection roles and responsibilities are known and understood by everyone and staff receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. This has included training on how to minimise the risks of extremism and how to refer any concerns they may have to the appropriate agency. Staff meet frequently to share information and agree a consistent way to support pupils who are a cause for concern. They work closely with other professionals to support more vulnerable families and ensure that pupils are safe at all times. Parents, staff and pupils are confident that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective.

## **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have created a culture of trust and respect across the school. They are ambitious for staff and pupils and encourage everybody to be the best that they can be. Your empowering and supportive leadership is recognised as a key factor in the increasing success of the school.
- A new behaviour policy has been implemented successfully and has ensured that pupils understand how behaviour is managed and what rewards and consequences are likely to be applied. Pupils abide by the expectation that they will not smoke or use their phones inappropriately while they are on-site. Any incidents of challenging behaviour are managed well by staff to ensure that interruptions to teaching and learning are rare and dealt with quickly. This has led to a rapid reduction in the number of temporary exclusions this year.
- Pupils say they appreciate the support given to them by staff and can recognise how this helps them. They have a say in how decisions are made and feel that their views are listened to and valued by leaders. For example, they recently took part in the recruitment of new staff and played a key role in the introduction of a new uniform policy, now worn with pride by all pupils.
- Classrooms and outdoor areas are maintained to a high standard and pupils appreciate that they need to stay this way. Consequently, there is no graffiti or litter to be seen and pupils' work is attractively displayed.
- Transitions to mainstream or special schools are planned carefully for some pupils after a period of assessment and when they are considered to be ready. However, some placements take too long to arrange because the thresholds for referring pupils to the different types of provision available have not been formally agreed with leaders from other schools and the local authority.
- You are provided with strong support from the local authority, who recognise the strengths of your leadership team and the significant contribution the school makes to supporting pupils from the local area who have special educational

needs or disability. For example, you have worked closely with the local authority to develop a new provision from September 2015. A small number of sixth form learners with autistic spectrum disorders and social, emotional or mental health difficulties now attend this provision at the newly refurbished site at Kings Park. A carefully tailored curriculum is being developed to take account of the 16 to 19 study programme and the provision will expand to meet the needs of younger pupils with similar needs over the next few years.

- The management committee offers a wide range of skills and experience that leaders can draw on. They work closely with you and make regular visits to the school to ensure they know what is happening. They are equally committed to your vision for the future and offer strong support and encouragement. Committee members liaise effectively with officers from the local authority and commission regular external reviews to help confirm that evaluations of teaching and learning are accurate. However, they are not always able to challenge leaders as robustly as they could because improvement plans lack measurable targets and clear monitoring roles for them to fulfil.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- good attendance continues to be actively promoted to allow more pupils to make rapid improvements on their previous attendance levels when they join the school
- thresholds for referring pupils to other types of provision for longer-term support are formally agreed with local partners so that pupils' needs can be met effectively and without delay
- improvement plans include enough information to allow the management committee to monitor more precisely how effective any actions have been.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Greenwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with members of the leadership team, a group of teachers and a group of support staff. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority and three members of the management committee, including the chair. All four sites were visited to evaluate the different types of provision offered by the school and check that safeguarding arrangements were appropriate. Inspectors were joined by leaders to make short visits to all classes and look at examples of pupils' work. Pupils were spoken to throughout the inspection, including during lessons and over breaktimes. The 22 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered. The views of parents were taken account of using the five responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own parental surveys. A range of documentation was reviewed, which related to safeguarding and the work of the school. The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.