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Miss Lisa Balderstone
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Balderstone

Short inspection of Newbridge House PRU

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 2017 with Linda Griffiths, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Over the past two years, the profile of pupils attending the school has changed. Previously, the majority of pupils were dual-registered with their mainstream school. These pupils attended Newbridge House part-time as part of a planned support programme to improve their behaviour and so avoid exclusion. However, there has been a considerable increase in the numbers of pupils permanently excluded from local schools. These permanently excluded pupils stay at your school for a considerable length of time before they move to a new school or into post-16 provision. Additionally, the vast majority of pupils accessing the home and hospital tuition now are referred by the child and adolescent mental health service. Despite the challenges that these changes have posed, you and your colleagues have made sure that you have taken the school from strength to strength.

You are held in high regard by your staff, local headteachers and other external partners. Staff, pupils and parents agree that you go the extra mile to make sure that every one of your pupils gets the support they need. You are ably supported by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers, who share your ambitious plans for the school.

Most of your pupils are at 'rock bottom' when they join the school. They have experienced failure in their previous schools. You and your staff make sure that they settle in quickly at Newbridge House. You help pupils rebuild their self-confidence

and self-esteem. However, you make sure that pupils are in no doubt about the high standards you expect. Pupils respond well to the clear boundaries you set. Pupils work hard, show respect to staff and pupils alike and look smart in their uniforms. Consequently, almost all of your pupils make a success of their time at Newbridge House. Pupils are well prepared, both academically and socially, for their next steps.

Parents are often reluctant for their child to move from their local school to a pupil referral unit. However, from the minute parents walk through the door, they change their minds. Bright, attractive displays of pupils' work cover the walls, the school is calm and orderly and pupils are polite and friendly. Frequent communication from the school reassures parents and carers about how well their child is getting on. Parents and carers are delighted by the phone calls and postcards which alert them to their child's successes.

You are determined to ensure that every pupil is as safe as you can make them. You and your colleagues build trusting relationships with pupils so that they are willing to share information. Staff use registration time as well as dedicated lessons to help pupils know what they can do to protect themselves. You make sure that you and your colleagues act swiftly and decisively on anything that concerns you. Recently, you identified a number of pupils who were putting themselves in high-risk situations. You brought key professionals together to make sure that these pupils were given the help and protection they needed. This work continues as you will not rest until you are sure that everything that should be done has been done.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked you to ensure that pupils are given sufficient guidance on how to improve the quality and presentation of their work. Current pupils' books testify to the school's work to improve this aspect. Pupils are given helpful advice and guidance about how to improve their work. There is clear evidence of pupils taking this on board and acting on it. Teachers make sure that pupils know how well they are doing and make it clear to pupils why they may be falling short of their targets. Pupils told inspectors, 'Teachers give help so you realise what you have done wrong, so that you can get it right.' Teachers have found the wealth of training opportunities invaluable in honing their skills. Frequent opportunities to work together have ensured that strong practice has been disseminated across subjects, phases and units. High-quality marking and feedback is helping pupils make stronger progress from their different starting points.

Inspectors also asked you to develop the skills of middle leaders in the home and hospital units. This is to ensure consistency of the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils who attend these units. Following the inspection, leaders took the opportunity to develop closer working between the three different units. Home and hospital tuition staff have had the opportunity to take part in training with their colleagues to improve further the quality of teaching for pupils, both on site and at home. Moreover, staff work collaboratively to plan, deliver and evaluate lessons now, which has helped to raise standards. Middle leaders gather comprehensive information about pupils' starting points and track their progress carefully to make sure that they are keeping up with their peers. Consequently, the quality of teaching

has improved in the home and hospital units. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. You have plans to continue this work as part of your school development plans.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Safeguarding is a golden thread which runs through every aspect of the school's work. A culture of vigilance pervades the school. Leaders carry out robust checks to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders provide frequent and comprehensive training for all staff. Record-keeping is meticulous. Pupils trust the adults who work with them, so that pupils talk honestly and openly with staff. Staff follow up assiduously on any concerns, working in partnership with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need. Pupils and staff agree that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Inspection findings

- Staff enjoy working at Newbridge House. They appreciate your willingness and that of other senior leaders to 'roll your sleeves up' and get on with whatever needs doing. You value your colleagues' wealth of skills, experience and expertise. Together, you and the management committee are working to create career paths for staff at the school. You hope this will encourage staff to stay at the school and ensure robust succession plans to secure the future success of the school. Already, you have supported teaching assistants to train as teachers as well as creating middle leadership posts to develop teaching and learning further.
- The excellent relationships that staff form with pupils are key to the school's success. From the moment they step through the door, pupils are made to feel valued. Teachers plan well-considered lessons which take into account pupils' interests and enthusiasms. Together with the highly skilled support staff, teachers rebuild pupils' self-confidence and address gaps in their knowledge and skills, so that pupils secure positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps, whether post-16 or moving back into mainstream school.
- The management committee keep a close eye on how you use any additional funding. Although the school receives only a small amount of additional funding for primary physical education and sport, leaders put this to good use so that it benefits pupils' fitness and health. Moreover, leaders have quite rightly identified the importance of using some of the pupil premium monies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Your engagement officer has proved to be a real asset. He forges good relationships with pupils and their families and works hard to get pupils into school on time every day. The investment in an online reading programme to help disadvantaged pupils improve their reading skills is also proving to be a great success.
- Teachers are highly skilled at identifying and addressing any special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers carry out comprehensive assessments when

pupils join the school to help identify whether pupils have any additional needs. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator makes sure that he follows up any referrals, ensures that appropriate assessments are carried out and works closely with specialist staff. Your staff are experts at identifying pupils' individual needs and any barriers which may be hampering their learning. Staff put strategies in place to help pupils succeed. As one member of staff summed up, 'It's not about what you can't do – it's what you can do.'

- You have reviewed your curriculum offer to meet better the needs of the pupils who stay with you for a long time. You make sure that you put the interests and aptitudes of pupils first when you put together individual plans. You have made sure that you have a wider range of qualifications available and are developing partnerships with local colleges to further extend your offer. The alternative providers that you work with are effusive in their praise of the pupils from your school. They are impressed with how pupils use their different experiences to help inform their future plans as well as to gain valuable qualifications. Moreover, some pupils have continued to attend their work placements over the summer holidays. The overwhelming majority of your pupils move on to appropriate destinations at the end of Year 11, including sixth form, college and apprenticeships.
- You have increased the proportion of pupils who reintegrate successfully into mainstream schools. Local headteachers speak highly of the school's excellent work in preparing pupils for their move. They cite the comprehensive information you provide in advance, the good communication and invaluable advice and guidance as keys to pupils' success. You recognise the importance of supporting not only schools and pupils but also families at this stressful time. You have given a member of staff responsibility for transition. Headteachers and families are delighted to have this person as a single point of contact throughout the process. Almost all of your pupils have made a real success of their next steps.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- further develop their plans to ensure that the curriculum offer is suitable to meet the academic, personal and social needs of all the different groups of pupils who attend the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, teaching and support staff. An inspector met with the chair and a member of the management committee.
- Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the four responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. An inspector phoned parents during the inspection and also considered the school's own parental survey results.
- An inspector met formally with a group of staff and considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning.
- Inspectors looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and action plan as well as a range of other documentation.
- Inspectors conducted a review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, training records, recruitment checks and record-keeping.