

## **SEN Information Report**

### **Mission Statement**

We uphold the ideal of inclusion in its broadest sense and seek to involve all stakeholders in achieving this.

### **Aim**

As a team we aim to stimulate re-engagement, participation, interest and achievement by providing bespoke educational intervention programmes, pupil centred planning and solution focused support – ultimately leading to successful educational integration.

### **A brief introduction to Northumberland PRU**

Northumberland PRU is a resource available to mainstream schools to assist them in supporting children with behaviour which disrupts their learning and that of others. The PRU aims to work intensively with each child to identify how and where these problems arise. Then, as the concerns highlighted by the school are tackled, the focus moves to reintegrating children - for the majority, this will be back into the mainstream school referring them, but for a few an alternative route will be more appropriate. Whatever the outcome, staff at the PRU try to identify the causes of each child's problems and find ways of improving the situation. Then, as the placement takes shape, the aim is to help the child to change. Alongside this support for the child, detailed information is passed on to parents, school staff and other professionals to help them to continue the process.

### **Our philosophy and methods**

A core philosophy is that no child deliberately chooses to fail at school. There are clearly other factors that prevent some children from coping with the challenges and expectations of school. While schools are able to support children with a wide range of needs, and often have remarkably flexible strategies to help children experiencing difficulties, few mainstream schools have the resources to cope with prolonged seriously disruptive or challenging behaviour. Even when some of the factors which precipitate this behaviour can be identified, it is often difficult to implement responses to them within a mainstream school.

### **Short Stay School**

Northumberland PRU runs very much as a school, although there are some important differences. The most obvious difference is the size of the school: a maximum of 40 pupils ranging in age from 6 -14. Then there is the length of time pupils are at the school. Pupils attend the PRU for a notional 24 week placement, although these placements may be extended where this is in the child's best interests. Teaching is done in small mixed-age group classes and is centred very closely on each child's needs and abilities. The placement is divided into:

- an initial information gathering period,
- a time for assessment, observation and monitoring,
- action/strategy planning, review, evaluation and consolidation
- a reintegration period after which pupils move on.

Very regular contact is kept with parents and carers, school staff and with other professionals and important decisions are made at planning meetings to which all parties are invited.

### **Assessment, Monitoring, Profiling; a comprehensive picture.**

The PRU is designed as a short-term placement, with the focus from the outset on reintegration into long-term education. It follows from this that the quality of information gathered is of paramount importance in shaping the placement. The process starts with the referral document

completed by mainstream schools, which has been designed to pinpoint the exact nature and level of the problem behaviour and steps taken to address it. Schools are also asked to crystallise the situation as it exists and to identify the changes sought. This helps the PRU to develop targets which will be used with the child throughout the placement and which will act as markers of progress. When the pupil arrives at the PRU a process of profiling begins. For most pupils, this takes the form of a diagnostic profile, which is closely based upon the Boxall Profile, already widely in use. Assessments are made by all staff and these are updated throughout the placement. This process helps to build up a picture of each pupil: his or her attitudes and perceptions; reactions to different situations; the pupil's relations with other pupils and with members of staff. Alongside the profile, a selection of proposed strategies for supporting the child is developed and trialled throughout the placement. Assertive mentoring - an approach that rigorously integrates target setting, tracking, mentoring and checking systems is used to identify the appropriate solution focused approaches for each child. By the end of the placement, a comprehensive picture will have been built up of the child's perceptions, needs and behaviour triggers, together with a series of suggested strategies for helping the pupils to modify negative behaviour which have been tried and their effect evaluated.

## **Curriculum**

The PRU is very clearly a school and will be identifiable as such by children who attend. However it would be counter-productive to attempt to replicate all the features of a system in which many of our pupils have begun to fail. The day is organised around familiar lessons - priority is given to English and Mathematics, but a great deal of time is also allocated to the individual support of pupils through a system which seeks to identify their needs and perceptions as quickly as possible. Pupils are normally taught in mixed-age groups, with lessons which use the National Curriculum programmes of study creatively to maximise engagement. It is obviously impossible to attempt to cover a whole syllabus in the time available; instead schemes of work aim to provide coherent structures with content that will motivate children to learn. Careful use of whole-group teaching is important in fostering the vitally important social skills many of our pupil's lack. Individual lesson plans are in place for all pupils and the work set is dictated by ability, individual profiles and behaviour targets rather than simply by year group. This individualised approach enables pupils to be taken out of lessons to work one-to-one at very short notice and with minimal loss of continuity; support staff play a key role in helping children to learn.

## **Nurture Groups**

Northumberland PRU has four intervention groups based on the guiding principles of the 'nurture group' albeit carefully developed, planned and resourced to meet the differing ages, individual and often disparate needs of pupils referred to the unit.

The main principles which underpin the nurture group approach are as follows:

Children's learning is understood and responded to developmentally

- The classroom offers a safe and predictable environment where adults are reliable and set firm boundaries
- The importance of nurture for self-esteem is promoted
- Language is a key tool for communication and not just a skill to be learned is addressed
- A recognition and understanding that all behaviour is a means of communication.

In effect, a nurture group is an inclusive early intervention for the development of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is also a provision in which the day is one of carefully structured routines providing a balance of learning, teaching and affection within a homelike environment. It is also a group in which children are placed, not due to their limitations with regards to ability but, simply because they may have missed out on early experiences that promote good development - particularly in the areas of social, emotional and behavioural skills.

## **Special Educational Needs at the PRU**

*All pupils at the PRU have Special Educational Needs by definition.*

*Special educational needs and disability code of practice. January 2015.*

*xiii. A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.*

*xv. For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.*

Special educational needs and provision can be considered as falling under four broad areas:

1. Communication and interaction
2. Cognition and learning
3. Social, emotional and mental health
4. Sensory and/or physical

Northumberland PRU is designated to work specifically with pupils within the social, emotional and mental health category; however pupils needs rarely fit neatly within a single area. Problematic behaviour is the trigger for all PRU referrals, but this behaviour is often the manifestation of underlying causes.

Pupils with EHC plans would not normally attend the PRU.

In some instances the pupil's mainstream school may initiate the EHC planning process, prior to the pupil being referred or admitted to the PRU by convening a multi-agency meeting and agreeing to make a referral to the local authority SEN department. Where there is an immediate exceptional need which means that maintaining mainstream school inclusion until the end of the usual 20 week statutory assessment is not possible or feasible, a PRU placement may be considered and would run concurrently with the assessment; the PRU will support the process and provide additional educational advice.

In exceptional circumstances it will only become clear during the PRU placement that a return to mainstream school is not likely to be sustainable, or even in the child's best interests without considerable additional support. In such cases, alternative routes into long-term education need to be explored. This may be through formal statutory assessment to produce an EHC plan. This process may be initiated by the child's mainstream school and supported by evidence from the PRU placement. Where this is not possible, the entire process can be instituted by the PRU.

Although pupils who need this route are in a very small minority, it represents a valuable way of supporting very vulnerable pupils who would otherwise be unable to move on.

We work with parents/ carers and specialists to facilitate the appropriate placement of children with special educational needs.

## **PRU Referral**

Commissioners wishing to refer pupils to the PRU should complete and forward the AP referral passport directly to the PRU.

The PRU admissions panel will consider information provided in each referral when deciding if PRU placement is relevant, appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

## **Admission Criteria**

On admission, pupil's age is within the range:

- Nurture Group Y2 – Y5
- Main School Y6 – Y9 (Y9 pupils back in mainstream school for Y9/10)
- The information passport is completed in full
- Additional information provided if requested
- All appropriate Child Protection information is shared with the P.R.U.
- Risk Assessment completed where risk cannot be managed with usual staffing/resources
- The pupil's needs are such that the P.R.U. has a reasonable chance of achieving stated objectives
- The commissioner agrees to attend regular reviews
- The commissioner agrees to plan and prepare appropriate and timely exit strategy/route
- Placement length does not exceed 20 weeks
- The pupil's parent/carer is aware of P.R.U. placement and is committed to support intervention/programme
- The commissioner to pay 'top up' funding monthly

## **Support**

Class sizes range from 6 to 9 pupils. Each class is staffed with a teacher and a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, additional support is available for 1:1 learning support and out of classroom intervention programmes where necessary.

Planning of interventions, curriculum, programmes of study and learning is highly personalised and individualised.

The unit has a small pastoral team, supporting pupils' welfare and safety, identifying and addressing barriers to learning, and encouraging progress against agreed targets and objectives. The PRU accesses support and specialist services from a range of multi professional teams and agencies as appropriate.

## **Expertise and Training**

All teachers at the PRU have qualified teacher status and some have additional professional qualifications. We have 5 Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA's) and Teaching Assistants (TA's) qualified at level 2 and 3. Staff bring with them a range of skills, knowledge, understanding, experience and attributes – both educational, and from outside the immediate profession.

All new staff follow the unit's induction programme.

All teachers and TA's undergo annual appraisal procedures and necessary training is identified where needed.

The PRU recognises the value of continued professional development and invests in a comprehensive, planned, continuing professional development programme linked to school improvement plan objectives, as well as reactive training where a need or opportunity is identified.

## **Resources.**

All pupils have access to high quality ICT facilities/hardware and software supporting independent, personalised, interesting, motivational, differentiated, age/ability appropriate learning. Each classroom is equipped with interactive whiteboards, projectors, and personal computers. Classes are generously resourced with learning aids, text books, stimuli and props to support learning. Regular educational visits are used to introduce, enrich, enhance and contextualise learning. Whilst the site is rather compact, there is a small playground, a mini farm, a horticultural learning area and woodland climbing frame/play area.

## **Assessment and Progress**

The class teacher and class HLTA will administer a range of tests and assessments on entry, aimed at validating and moderating data and information provided as well as ascertaining an accurate baseline. This ensures teaching and learning and interventions are effectively differentiated; it also provides a comprehensive skills, knowledge and understanding profile for each pupil that informs individual programmes of study. The PRU uses '**Assertive Mentoring**', which is a systematic approach that rigorously integrates target setting, tracking, mentoring and checking systems.

PRU staff will also profile pupils' behaviour using a '**Reintegration Readiness Scale**'. This is a specific, quantitative assessment tool to help analyse behaviour; measure readiness to reintegrate; and highlight specific areas that need further development.

These systems enable us to accurately monitor progress and attainment and achievement and evaluate the effectiveness of PRU intervention and input.

## **Review, Reporting and Communication**

Review and reporting are multi layered and designed to keep all stakeholders regularly informed.

- Parent/carers can expect to be contacted on the day with regard to extraordinary good progress or achievements as well as incidents of concern.
- Pupils are involved in a fortnightly assertive mentoring/review session - reflecting on strengths, identifying development areas, solution building, celebrating progress.
- Parent/carers will be given a general update on a weekly basis.
- Schools are updated on progress against weekly targets and reintegration criteria.

- Parent/carers and other appropriate stakeholders will receive a half-termly report detailing academic and behavioural progress.
- All stakeholders will be invited to regular review meetings at the unit.
- Extra ordinary multi-agency/core group meetings will be arranged when necessary to review, inform plan and support.
- A planning meeting with appropriate stakeholders will be convened before integration/reintegration.
- Parent/carers and appropriate stakeholders will receive a comprehensive final placement report that will include attainment grids and the 'Reintegration Readiness Scale' profile.
- Parent/carers, commissioners and pupils will be requested to complete a termly satisfaction survey. The results are analysed and inform improvement planning.

### **Accessibility**

The unit supports the rights of all pupils to equal access and opportunities regardless of age, culture, religion, gender, ability, disability or sexuality.

The unit promotes an ethos of respect for all.

All children have access to all activities and all trips, adaptations may be made with certain activities and lessons where appropriate.

### **British Values**

We promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

### **Home School Transport**

The majority of pupils attending the PRU live within the County and as such are eligible to free home to school transport provided by Northumberland County Council. Pupils may travel on a minibus or a taxi with similar aged children from their locality.

Further details regarding home school transport including eligibility can be obtained from School Transport Section, County Hall, Morpeth. Tel 01670 624075.

### **Link to Local Authority Local Offer**

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/SEND-Local-offer.aspx>