

PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT SUNDERLAND

Local Authority Statement of Action

Inspection: March 2008

**Sunderland City Council
School Improvement Service
LA Statement of Action for Pupil Referral Unit**

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The purpose of the Local Authority's action plan is:

- to raise standards through addressing Ofsted key issues and remove the existing school from the category of Special Measures (within 6 months) or while in existence.
- to close the existing provision and provide an improved strategic response to learner needs through creating 4 specialist referral units supervised by a new management committee and with a new leading head teacher appointment.

Key priorities identified by Ofsted are:

Priority 1: Ensure that procedures for ensuring the safety and well being of all pupils are applied rigorously

Priority 2: Raise standards and improve achievement

Priority 3: improve the quality of leadership and management to ensure that all pupils receive the same quality and entitlement of provision

Priority 4: Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation

Priority 5: Improve attendance

Strategic Commentary

Having carefully reviewed the recent Ofsted report on the Pupil Referral Unit, Sunderland LA has decided upon a strategic response to the situation which has two aspects. Our first and clear commitment is to ensuring the safety, well being and attendance of all existing pupils so that their entitlement is fulfilled. Therefore, stage one of our response will be a rigorous and robust intervention in the present settings to support school improvement from March until July. All pupils will be in receipt of their full entitlement and attending regularly by mid May. The second phase of our response will address longer term issues connected with the proposed future development of the school while continuing to work intensively to improve standards. This second phase will involve closing the existing provision and opening new age specific pupil referral units from September 08.

The Formal use of statutory powers by the Local Authority

The LA has formally considered the situation of the Pupil Referral Unit in relation to Special Measures. In compliance with our statutory responsibilities we are recommending the following action in relation to the existing provision:

We will arrange the closure of all the existing provision and the creation of new provision for pupils permanently excluded from education which will open in September 08. While that process is enacted we will undertake the following interventions in the original provision during its remaining lifespan. Some of the secondary pupils in the original PRU may enter the new establishment in September and we will therefore plan for a careful transition for these learners so that progression and continuity are supported

Phase 1-restoration of existing provision for current cohorts of students to a good standard prior to closure

- We intend to close the existing provision at Lombard Street in response to the needs of this group of vulnerable young people. New arrangements will be put in place which will secure effective strategic management of a provision for a single setting for the Key stage 4 sections of the PRU as of May 1st. A new Acting head teacher has been appointed for all existing provision while it remains open
- The appointment of two additional LA governors to the governing body which has been reconstituted to meet statutory requirements.
- The appointment of an external School Improvement Partner with a background in special education for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The use of a selection of external consultants to support specific areas e.g. timetabling and data management systems.

- Close monitoring and reporting of school progress by a Senior LA Officer in order to meet Ofsted recommendations. Monitoring reports will be shared by the Director of Children's services with the Portfolio Holder through monthly consideration of school progress
- While we do not intend to remove control of the delegated budget from the present school .We are working closely with the school where one of our first tasks will be to update the School Evaluation Form through a rigorous review, based on Ofsted findings. Using identified concerns funding we will support a number of internal reforms over the next six months.
- Given the very successful record of the School Improvement Service in bringing schools out of special measures we do not intend to employ an external agency/partner to undertake this work.

Key objectives of strategic response:

To realign the strategic and operational management of the new provision so that it effectively integrates the Pupil Referral Units into a holistic response from Children' Services and raises the status of the provision for both the Local Authority and other schools. Closing the existing provision marks both a real and a highly symbolic end with the past. We wish the new Pupil Referral Units to be a genuine part of our extended provision for young people and for them to stand alongside mainstream provision. Improved reintegration will be supported by the development of Locality Based Teams which will support inclusive practice across the system. Our aim is to build teams and services around young people.

Proposals Phase 2

To close the existing provision with effect from August 08. The Director of Children's Services will arrange for the closure of the existing provision and make all necessary representations to secure closure from August 08.

To open new provision from. September 08. The present provision will be broken down into four separate units. Each will have an age/category specific focus. Each school will have its own management board. The 2 schools proposed for KS2/3 and KS4 will be a Hard Governance Federation with a single shared head teacher and a shared Management Committee. These separate identities will support clear self evaluation.

The **Key stage 1 unit** will be a **stand alone provision** which provides for the innovative practice recognised by inspectors in the recent Ofsted within a nurturing environment.

School Returnees, Pregnant Schoolgirls and Young Mums will form a **second separate unit**. The emphasis here will be on nurturing and improved parenting provision to build confidence and self esteem and continued integration into educational provision.

Both the KS1 unit and this second unit will be directly managed by the Local Authority through the Head of the Special Needs Section
Each of these units unit will have their own management committees.

A new unit for KS2/3 age 7-13 will be opened with a clear emphasis on recovery and rapid reintegration.

A new provision for KS4 will be created which will follow 14-19 curriculum pathways and which will work with the partnership of schools and Further education to gain appropriate qualifications for all students through identified learning pathways.

These two schools will be separate but under **Hard Governance Federation sharing a Management Committee**. A **new permanent headteacher** post has been created and will be advertised in April 08 to take effect from September 08. **A new management committee will be created for both Units**. The new headteacher will report directly to the Head of Standards.

Reports from these committees will be scrutinised by the Director of Children's Services on a monthly basis and shared with the Portfolio Holder.

Key issues for consideration

Leadership and management

The present leadership and management were judged to lack the capacity to improve and therefore the opportunity to restructure arrangements has been taken. The complex, lateral management structure has been replaced and a new acting head teacher appointed to oversee existing arrangements while Ofsted recommendations are enacted. The management committee has been reformed. A new external School Improvement Partner has been appointed to hold the schools to account and to challenge consistency and progression across the units. Additional time has been purchased from external consultants to support the acting head teacher in the rapid implementation of systems in the existing provision and to support effective transition to the new units. A new external appointment has been made for September of a head teacher to lead and manage the new KS2/3 and Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Units

Governance

The nature of the management committee has shifted; representation is now appropriate and includes serving Head teachers from mainstream schools as well as LA officers. It must be clear that effective governance is the prime consideration rather than simple representation. The management committee has a key role to play in holding strategic and operational managers to account.

In the new provision we wish to create radical and innovative centres of learning, designed around the needs of the pupils and capable of promoting the highest possible levels of achievement for all pupils without sacrificing the quality of care and enrichment. (This will be achieved by the raising expectations, aspirations and challenges of staff and students) The schools will be a genuine community resource fully committed to sustaining a first rate educational experience. Post 16, the 14-16 School will be an active partner in the Sunderland collaborative provision for 14-19 and will work closely with other institutions, schools, colleges and university as well as work based learning providers to produce personalised learning programmes for the full range of young people. The nature of the school will allow for increased individualisation of the curriculum to match learner needs with variation in the range and nature of the curriculum as well as in rates of progression across 2 levels of attainment at each Key stage.

Promoting effective partnerships

The proposed federation is seen as a key mechanism for supporting and extending fruitful partnerships for both schools and giving better strategic direction to improve. The failings of the existing Pupil referral Units lie largely in KS4 with some good practice having been identified in earlier age groups. The governing body, despite obvious commitment and effort, was found to be failing in offering a sufficient level of challenge to the school leadership and management. The new committee must focus upon ensuring the rapid implementation of the Ofsted report recommendations.

- Increasing management capacity through restructuring for improved planning, scrutiny and evaluation.
- Increasing governor involvement and level of challenge within the school.

- Promoting effective attendance strategies and ensuring safeguarding and well being – recognising that attendance will only improve when the quality of student provision improves!
- Improved student progress rates and individual pupil tracking.
- Implementing a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation of post Ofsted progress by the school.
- Ensuring that the school takes full and appropriate action to deal with any unsatisfactory teaching Improving curriculum design and option blocks to ensure better curriculum access and outcome.
- Ensuring that all students have access to their full entitlement.
- Making use of the significant LA financial contribution to supporting the Post Ofsted Action Plan to the sum of £100,000 over the next eighteen months.

With the support of senior officers, new staff and other schools we are convinced that we can create a superior learning environment for our students and build a successful family of schools. We have to look at current best practice, challenge all, be innovative and have our aim as being outstanding.

Priority 1: Ensure that procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils are applied rigorously

Action	Who	When	Support	Monitoring	Evaluation	Success Outcome
Following rigorous implementation of the attendance policy any absence is to be pursued so that the whereabouts of all students is known and easily reported. Increase parent/carer awareness of student attendance patterns and timetable of activity	Acting Head Teacher (AHT)	31 st May	Additional support from B and A Officer attached to KS3 and 4. KK £45,000	Chief Inspector Management Committee	Head of Standards	No students are missing from the system. Students want to attend their provision, make progress and be successful.
Effective prevention and referral systems installed so that when absence is caused by an underlying problem students are referred to the appropriate service for support and counselling e.g. drugs, domestic violence etc. Child Protection/children in need procedures invoked as appropriate.	AHT	31 st May	KK to prepare individual case studies and recommend students for key interventions.	Chief inspector Management Committee	Head of Standards	Support counselling or treatment or appropriate responses are available to tackle underlying risk taking behaviours
Joint inter-agency meeting is held to identify appropriate solutions to complex needs around offending, alcohol misuse etc. Emphasise preventative programmes on site where risk taking behaviour	AHT	31 st May	KK to liaise with appropriate organisations to ensure consistency in treatment and provision for young people.	Chief Inspector Management Committee	Head of Standards	Better co-ordination of services increases the impact of interventions on targeted behaviours
Impact/Further Action						

Priority 2: Raise standards and improve achievement

Targets

- Set clear targets for improvement for all pupils at each Key stage 90% to be met by July 2009

Action	Who	When	Support	Monitoring	Evaluation	Success Outcome
Undertake curriculum audit to identify strengths and areas for development.	External consultant.	May 31st	Secondary strategy manager	AHT	Chief Inspector	Renewed curriculum offer available which is fit for 21 st century learners
Identify a statement of entitlement activity and personalised learning pathway for each student. In current year 10 and 11	Connexions adviser in year 9/10	April 30th	Connexions service staff	AHT	Chief Inspector	Every student has clear learning goals and improved motivation to attend and achieve evidenced by higher attendance and attainment
Collate and analyse existing database to establish baseline for improvements. Set clear targets for improvement.	AHT	31 st May 2008 By May 31st	£5,000 concerns funding. External Consultant Strategy managers	AHT. Management Committee. SIO and MC	Chief Inspector	Increase the number of young people demonstrating progress. VA measures to match those of mainstream 2 levels per Key Stage.
Provide each student with a personalised programme with targets for attendance, achievement and behaviour. These programmes to be discussed with parents/carers with an agreement reached on respective responsibilities	AHT	31 st May 2008	PAs from connexions to work with school staff.	SIO	Chief Inspector	All students engaged in meaningful learning leading to recognised accreditation where appropriate. Examination results improve at KS3 and KS4 by 2009.
Implement secure tracking system so that progress is measured and necessary intervention made for all students to progress.	AHT	31 st May 2008	External consultant	SIO	Chief Inspector	Progress for individual students can be clearly demonstrated and 90% achieve their agreed targets

Action	Who	When	Support	Monitoring	Evaluation	Success Outcome
Identify students at risk of underachievement at each Key Stage particularly KS3 and KS4. Instigate intervention programmes. Where students in Year 9 are likely to be recidivist these are identified early and placed on guaranteed and quality assured pathways to work or qualification.	AHT	31 st May	External consultant	SIO	Chief inspector	Students in Year 8 and Year 10 are clearly supported with effective interventions capable of increasing their outcomes in examination by 2008 No youngster NEET (?) at 16 in 2008.
Introduce modernised IT learning systems across the phases including SAM learning packages and assisted learning for less able pupils	Head teacher	September 08	IT consultant £8,000	SIO	Management Committee	Effective use of IT improves precision and rigour of systems management producing timely and accurate information for staff and officers to use to improve outcomes. Innovative curriculum delivery improves quality of access to better teaching and learning leading to improved attainment
Develop and apply new protocols for admission and reintegration which include information on prior performance data, and personal profiles	Head teacher	31 st October	SIO	Chief Inspector	Management Committee	Targeted intervention for students is planned prior to admission and personalised learning and recovery plans implemented quickly
Develop more robust, supportive strategies for reintegration.	Head teacher	31 st October	SIO	Chief Inspector	Management Committee	Reintegration is more rigorously pursued as an outcome and schools better execute their responsibilities as receivers of students
Work closely with new locality based teams to reduce referrals and decrease recidivism.	Head teacher	31 st October	SIO	Chief inspector	Management Committee	Number of referrals to PRU decreases from baseline established in Sept 2008
Impact/Further Action						

Priority 3: Improve the quality of leadership and management to ensure that all pupils receive the same quality and full entitlement of provision
Targets

- **Revise management structure**
- **Appoint new head teacher and management committees to newly created KS2-4 PRUs by September 08**
- **Create new and full entitlement provision for all students.**

Action	Who	When	Support	Monitoring	Evaluation	Success Outcome
Revise the existing management structure to remove lateral arrangements and provide clear directive leadership. New Head teacher for KS2-4 appointed for September	Director of Children's Services	30 th April 2008	£55,000 for HT salary.	Lynda Brown Head of Standards	CSLT	New and definite lines of accountability are established which ensure consistency across settings in full provision of entitlement for all students.
Appoint a new AHT (internal secondment) to oversee the progress of the PRU with a particular focus upon establishing best practice in KS4 until July 31 st 2008.	Head of Standards	30 th April	Additional honorarium		CSLT	KS4 has all students registered on appropriate courses or pathways with no 16 year olds in NEET category in September.
Reconstitute the Management Committee so that it complies fully with new requirements and includes serving head teacher as well as senior LA officers. The committee to provide rigorous challenge to operational and strategic managers.	Assistant Head of service for Behaviour	30 th April	External consultant		CSLT	Management committee provides robust challenge as advocates of young people
Establish a clear line of accountability so that the new AHT reports to both the Management Committee and the Head of Standards on a regular basis (monthly).	Assistant Head of service for Behaviour	30 th April		Chief inspector	CSLT	Regular challenge promotes a can do culture of continuous self-improvement.
Progress reports will be prepared monthly by the Head of Standards to take to the Director of Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder.	Head of Standards	30 th April	Chief Inspector	Director Of Children's Services	CSLT	Progress is tracked and evaluated at the highest level raising the status and profile of the PRU against key stakeholders.
Impact/Further Action						

Priority 4: Improve monitoring and evaluation.**Targets: to produce effective monitoring and evaluation strategies which are expressed in an accurate SEF**

Action	Who	When	Support	Monitoring	Evaluation	Success Outcome
Communication with consultant to support improved monitoring and evaluation procedures in each unit building upon existing good practice in KS3.	External Consultant	30 th April 2008	£5,000	Head Teacher	Management Committee	Clear baseline measures and systems agreed from which effective targets are set. Students challenged to achieve better standards
Staff CPD in evaluation	SIO	31 st May 2008	£4,000	Head Teacher	Management Committee	Staff can evaluate progress and quality of provision accurately against recognised and agreed data leading to improved interventions.
Establish a clear cycle of monitoring of activity in order to produce regular evaluative reports by HT to Management Committee.	AHT	30 th April 2008	SIO	Chief inspector	Chief inspector	ME becomes part of a self-critical evaluative culture which seeks constant improvement.
New and accurate SEF produced which is regarded as a formative process and is therefore regularly updated and reported to Management Committee	AHT	31 st May 2008	SIO	SIO	SIP	SEF provides an accurate interpretation of current achievements and areas for development.
Half-termly reporting via evaluative summary of progress to Chief Inspector then to CSLT via Head of Standards.	AHT	31 st May 2008		Chief inspector	CSLT	Clear evidence of progress provides the basis of an accurate reporting system for risk analysis
Training for Management Committee in challenge role so that units are held properly to account.	SIP	31 st May 2008	Senior SIO	Chief inspector	CSLT	Minutes of meetings record impact of challenge on improvements for students
Impact/Further Action						

Priority 5: Improving Attendance to 85% from 57%

Action	Who	When	Support	Monitoring	Evaluation	Success Outcome
Implement attendance policy and procedures rigorously from 21 st April – treat as a PA school. All students to have targets for progressive improvement. A system of rewards, which involves families, will be a central feature.	New HT	By 1 st May 2008	LA attendance officers.	Senior Attendance Officer	Progress report to Head of Attendance on fortnightly basis to RS and Management Committee.	Attendance rises to 85%.
Improve internal communication over attendance matters through better shared intelligence at core strategy group meetings.	Senior Attendance Officer	By 1 st May 2008	Senior attendance Officer	Chief Inspector.	Progress report to Head of Attendance on fortnightly basis to RS and Management Committee.	All sections aware of issues and able to act speedily to rectify them. The whereabouts of all students is known at all times during school hours.
Increase motivation of pupils to attend through mentoring and support, improved outreach and more appropriate curriculum offer.	Additional Officer seconded to PRU at KS3 ad 4. KK	By 1 st Of May	Band A support officer to reach hard to reach youngsters and support the disaffected back to study	SIO	Chief Inspector	All students assigned appropriate pathways and increase in attendance evident from 1 st May.
Impact/Further Action						