

Unity City Academy context

Unity City Academy is an 11-16 secondary school with an increasing roll of 805 pupils, based in the heart of an area of significant deprivation within the Local Authority of Middlesbrough. Approximately 74% of our pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium, exceeding the National Average and registering the academy as the second most deprived Secondary School in England. In addition our cohort includes 17% EAL, 15% SEN (including our specialist BASE provision), 64% FSM and 6% Czech/Roma cohorts. Unity City Academy is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and is committed to ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive both academically and personally.

The direct impact and measure of our proactive approach to behavior for learning published in feedback from our most recent Ofsted monitoring visit in December 2019, identified that the Leadership Team had “taken action to reduce the use of exclusion. The rate of permanent exclusion fell substantially during the previous academic year, compared with the year before. The rates of fixed-term exclusion and repeat fixed-term exclusion have also reduced since the previous inspection. The effective implementation of the behaviour policy has been instrumental in bringing about this improvement”.

Promoting positive and managing poor behaviour

Unity City Academy’s embedded behaviour policy ensures fair and reflective sanctions are used consistently across the academy. Our proactive approach ensures the consequences system is used effectively to develop student understanding of self-control including how to de-escalate situations through modelling and coaching from all staff. This, alongside our Character Development programme, delivered across the curriculum including in focussed PSHEE and Ethics lessons, develops 9 key characteristics, educating our pupils to become positive, contributing members of society and their local community. Implementing praise culture; highlighting, promoting and actively celebrating positive contributions and outstanding effort across the academy, has been vital in creating the developments in behaviour for learning we are seeing.

The data generated through a system named ClassCharts enables the academy to efficiently contact parents/ guardians with both positive and detrimental learning behaviours. As an academy, we have established outstanding relationships with our community of parents/carers and we work together to ensure every child is supported to make the right choices. Additional sanctions include pastoral and curriculum area detentions which are monitored effectively by year teams to ensure 100% attendance and offer time and space to facilitate purposeful and reflective discussion underpinned by restorative practice theory.

To minimise the necessity for fixed term exclusions, we endeavour to support and facilitate the learning of all pupils within the academy inline with our strong ethos of inclusivity and to safeguard effectively. The measures in place ensure that any pupil whose behaviour requires isolation, has appropriate support in place and access to the same/similar learning opportunities as their peer counterparts. Pastoral teams and,

where necessary, our Social Emotional and Mental Health Teams action interventions that assist in the character development education and examine the causes of pupil behavioural concerns e.g. unmet educational or other needs. This proactive approach has reduced the number of repeat Internal Exclusions and/or escalations to Fixed Term/ Permanent Exclusions over time.

Exclusion* data (over time) for key groups

*the number of students and cohorts on roll may differ from that in the exclusion data. As the exclusion data takes cohort numbers from spring census.

| Exclusions | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2018/19 TD | 2019-20 | 2019/20 TD | 2020/21 TD | National Average |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Students on Roll | 639 | 641 | 649 | 737 | 717 | 771 | 770 | 786 | |
| Number of Permanent Exclusions | 14 | 6 | 12 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 3 | |
| Permanent Exclusion (% of cohort) | 2.2 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 1.09 | | 0.56 | 0.13 | | 0.20% |
| Number Fixed Term Exclusions | 745 | 533 | 374 | 139 | 90 | 61 | 24 | 40 | |
| At least 1 Fixed Term Exclusion | 210 | 169 | 135 | 64 | 46 | 24 | 11 | 28 | |
| At least 1 Fixed Term Exclusion (% of Cohort) | 32.9 | 26.37 | 20.8 | 8.68 | | 3.35 | 1.43 | 3.56 | 10.10% |
| More than 1 Fixed Term Exclusion | 143 | 94 | 66 | 36 | 21 | 13 | 6 | 9 | |
| More than 1 Fixed Term Exclusion (% of Cohort) | 22.38 | 14.66 | 10.17 | 4.88 | | 1.81 | 0.78 | 1.15 | 4.70% |
| More than 1 Fixed Term Exclusion (% of Cohort) | | | | 1.48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Curriculum

At Unity City Academy, we strongly believe that improvements to the curriculum and to the consistency and quality of teaching have led to pupils wanting to learn and therefore behave better. The development of our Careers and Post-16 programme, which now meets all Gatsby Benchmarks, has also had a profound impact on raising the aspirations of our pupils. Delivered through PSHEE and Ethics lessons, our well-rounded curriculum offer is designed to improve the life-chances of our pupils.

In September 2020, following a restructure, the Leadership of Teaching & Learning has been strengthened. This proactive measure has impacted positively upon the improving standards and consistency of Teaching & Learning across the academy. High Performance Learning theory is embedded into every lesson to raise aspirations and ensure our pupils leave the academy with the skills and attributes required for success. In further reference to our most recent OFSTED visit, the pupils the inspection

team met with “said that behaviour has improved and that it is unusual for their lessons to be disrupted.” During the inspection, the lead inspector stated that “behaviour in classrooms was calm and purposeful with polite speech between pupils and staff.”

The Local Authority’s role

The Local Authority supports the education of six students through Home Hospital Teaching through external provider placements for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream schools. No Unity City Academy pupil is currently using Alternative Provision provided through the LEA pupil inclusion panel.

The Vice Principal with responsibility for Personal Development, Behaviour & Student Welfare represents our academy at the Local Authority Pupil Placement Panel and has been a key leader in the development of a Quality Assurance Programme for External Educational Placement Providers. As a direct result of this work, all schools/academies in the Middlesbrough Local Authority now have a joint responsibility in ensuring the provision is of a good standard or higher and the appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. Each centre receives two visits per Academic year to monitor and review the overall effectiveness of the provision.

Less than 30% of our current External Alternative Provision placements are utilised to support those at risk of Permanent Exclusion and are directed instead towards the support of students with EHCPs as a result of an agreed graduated response or for additional support including recommendations from CAHMS. This is a direct result of the improved provision at Unity City Academy and the impact of our ability to support our students via our wrap around care policy.