

Restormel Pupil Referral Unit

16 Carlyon Road, St Austell, PL25 4AJ

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has been extremely successful in establishing a culture where very high expectations for learning and behaviour are the norm. As a result, students make outstanding progress in improving their attitudes and behaviour and re-engage very well with learning.
- Visitors, parents and carers and staff all praise the exceptionally calm atmosphere and excellent emphasis on learning which is evident throughout the centre.
- When students are admitted to the pupil referral unit (PRU), their attainment is low because of a history of disrupted education. However, they make accelerated progress and achieve well. All Year 11 leavers gain a variety of nationally recognised qualifications with some students achieving GCSE passes at C grade and above.
- Teaching is good and improving well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and excellent relationships with students. They are skilled at planning interesting activities and building students' confidence to be successful learners. As a result, students are highly motivated and learn well.
- Most students transfer back successfully to mainstream schools or move on to college or employment. This demonstrates the good progress they have made.
- Leadership and management are good. There are strengths in accurate self-evaluation which supports well-targeted development planning. Members of the management committee and the manager of the local authority's alternative provision are highly effective in supporting the PRU, while at the same time challenging the headteacher to move it forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Students do not have access to a broad enough range of work-related and practical subjects with opportunities to gain qualifications in these areas.
- Strategies to develop students' reading and writing are not yet well-enough established in all subjects, and some students who find reading difficult would benefit from more intervention.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four teachers and a higher-level teaching assistant teaching five lessons, of which one was a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- She also observed students working at Lavalsa Farm, which is one of the alternative providers used by the PRU.
- Meetings were held with the local authority's headteacher for alternative provision who manages Cornwall's pupil referral units, the Chair of the Management Committee and with staff and students. A telephone discussion was conducted with the deputy headteacher of a secondary school in the behaviour for learning partnership.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), although too few responses were registered to gain evidence. In order to gain parents' and carers' views she therefore held telephone discussions with a parent of a student who has recently returned to a mainstream school and with a carer of a current student.
- The inspector observed the work of the PRU and looked at a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding practices, improvement planning, students' records and assessment information on students' progress. She analysed the seven questionnaires which were returned by staff and heard two students read.

Inspection team

Christine Emerson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Restormel PRU serves a wide, largely rural, catchment area and provides places for students from the six secondary schools in the Restormel Behaviour for Learning Partnership. Most students attend the PRU for a relatively short time before transferring to mainstream schools or colleges.
- The PRU uses several alternative providers, such as Lavalsa Farm and the Golant Youth Hostel, to give students work-related opportunities.
- Students who are admitted to the PRU have displayed problematic behaviour in their mainstream school and are at risk of exclusion. A very small minority have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school. Almost all students are dual registered. This means that they remain on the roll of a mainstream school.
- Most students are supported at the school action plus stage of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. A few students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
- A minority of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government), although at present the funding is not devolved to the PRU.
- All students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The large majority are boys. A few students are looked after by the local authority.
- The PRU holds the Healthy School Plus award.
- The local authority's alternative education provision, which includes Restormel PRU, is scheduled to convert to academy status at the end of March 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the curriculum by:
 - increasing the number of accredited courses offered to students in Years 10 and 11
 - linking with schools and with the other PRUs in the local authority to provide a wider range of work-related and practical subjects.
- Ensure that all students make good progress in reading and writing by:
 - reviewing procedures to track students' progress in reading
 - providing more support for students who find reading difficult
 - providing whole-school training on promoting literacy across the curriculum by July 2013.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most students have weak attainment on entry to the PRU and have missed large chunks of the curriculum because of problematic behaviour and poor attendance. Because their attendance improves rapidly and they are keen to learn, students make accelerated progress and achieve well. This is particularly evident with students in Years 10 and 11 who are highly motivated to achieve good GCSE grades. As a result, some students are predicted to gain much better grades than the targets that were set for them in mainstream schools. This is particularly evident in mathematics where students whose target grade was F are now in line to gain B or C grades.
- Although students' achievement in English and science has been slightly weaker than in mathematics these subjects are now taught by strong subject specialists and students are achieving well.
- There is a good focus on developing students' key skills in numeracy, computing and communication. The newly appointed English coordinator has quickly put in place strategies to improve students' reading and writing and to track the progress they make in reading and spelling. All students now work towards gaining a qualification to demonstrate that they have good enough literacy skills to succeed in the workplace. However, there is not always a sufficient focus on promoting reading and writing in other subject areas or on targeting additional support to raise the achievement of all students who find reading particularly difficult.
- Where they are given opportunities to attend work-related courses, students make good progress in acquiring skills which will help them to gain employment when they leave school. For example, students gain good experience in practical farming at Lavalsa Farm where they can gain a qualification in 'Land Based Studies'. In a very well-organised session, two younger students were confident to work independently bedding down some young calves. They thoroughly enjoyed this activity and were aware that their developing skills could lead to future work opportunities.
- The centre thoroughly assesses students on entry and carefully tracks their progress. This demonstrates that all groups of students, including the very small minority of girls and students with a statement of special educational needs, make as good progress as other students.
- Students' good achievement and excellent improvements in behaviour enable the vast majority of students in Years 7 to 9 to make a successful return to mainstream school. This was highlighted by a senior leader from a school in the behaviour for learning partnership who commented that 'because of a real turn around in behaviour and maintained academic levels the students return seamlessly'. Most Year 11 leavers move on to college successfully.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved well since the previous inspection and is now consistently good. Some teaching is outstanding. The PRU has fully addressed the weaknesses identified in the inspection by matching work to the particular needs of students and using learning targets. Work is now set at just the right level and learning targets are clearly specified in students' workbooks and referred to frequently in lessons.
- Teachers and support staff have excellent skills in building respectful relationships with the students and in de-escalating any potentially problematic behaviour. As a result, lessons are extremely calm and purposeful and teaching time is maximised.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a variety of teaching styles to make lessons lively. The pace of learning is rapid and resources are used well to engage students. Teachers are skilled at encouraging students to work by themselves while providing sufficient support to ensure that all students can successfully complete the tasks set. This develops their confidence to attempt more difficult activities. An example of this was in an outstanding art lesson where students thoroughly enjoyed carrying out experiments to explore complementary colours.

Through excellent questioning, the teacher extended the students' understanding extremely well and supported them to explain what they had seen and what it meant.

- Communication skills are generally promoted well through frequent discussion and question and answer sessions. However, on a very small number of occasions, teachers allow more confident students to dominate. When this happens, quieter students have fewer opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers check effectively for students' learning in lessons and give students good guidance on what they need to do to get higher marks. Although the quality of marking in students' workbooks is always positive and informative, there is no whole-school marking plan in place. This makes it harder for students to assess exactly how well they are doing in different subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Since he was appointed just over a year ago, the headteacher has made it a key priority to introduce a culture of respect and exemplary behaviour. He has been highly successful in establishing a very clear set of positive skills and values which everyone in the centre is expected to follow. The effect on students' behaviour has been profound. As one visiting professional commented, the centre is 'much calmer than similar facilities I have visited'.
- There is a very determined and well-planned focus on developing key social skills. For example, last term the theme was politeness and students were taught how, and when, they should use vocabulary such as 'pardon' and 'excuse me'. The impact of this is very evident in the extremely polite and friendly way students relate to each other, to staff and to visitors.
- Students respond extremely well to the strong and very consistent behaviour reward scheme. They demonstrate very good attitudes to learning and the number of exclusions has fallen dramatically and is now low.
- Good links with parents and carers help to support the improvements students make in managing their own behaviour. Parents and carers are highly positive about the way in which their children improve, with one parent or carer commenting that 'it has been life changing for all of us'.
- All students, including younger students and the very small minority of girls, say that there is no bullying of any kind, that 'we are all mates' and that they feel completely safe.
- As a result of excellent support from the learning mentor and strong partnerships with a variety of local agencies, such as those that deal with substance abuse, students make excellent progress in learning how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Although a few students struggle to attend school regularly, most make very good progress in improving their attendance. All students are punctual to lessons and settle very quickly to learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team has created a culture where high expectations and an ambition to improve are the norm and staff morale is very high. As a result, staff relish the growing opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and promote improvements.
- The headteacher undertakes detailed and accurate lesson observations which are used to identify the training needs of staff effectively. However, at the present time teachers do not have opportunities to improve their teaching by observing colleagues in lessons.
- The headteacher regularly collects and rigorously checks information about all aspects of the PRU's work. This is used to accurately identify the most important areas the PRU needs to improve. Staff development is very well linked to these areas for development and there is secure evidence that progress up the salary scale is closely linked to performance. However, some initiatives, for example those to improve marking and promote reading and writing, are not yet fully established across the PRU.

- The curriculum has developed well since the previous inspection and the PRU now offers an individualised curriculum which is well linked to each student's particular interests. Students have opportunities to take early entry GCSEs and to retake GCSEs which they gained in their mainstream schools to improve the grades. Well-planned opportunities, such as work experience at the Golant Youth Hostel, prepare students well to succeed in the community. Local community facilities are used well to enable students to engage in a range of sports, for example surfing. However, the PRU rightly recognises that the breadth of the curriculum is limited by the lack of specialist accommodation and the small number of teachers.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and the PRU endeavours to prepare students to live in a culturally diverse society.
- Partnerships with parents and carers and a variety of agencies are strong and the work of the PRU is held in high regard by schools in the behaviour for learning partnership.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet all current statutory requirements.
- The good improvement since the previous inspection, very accurate self-evaluation and strong development planning indicate that the PRU has a good capacity to improve further.
- The local authority provides very good support for the PRU with a dynamic, challenging and supportive lead from the headteacher for alternative provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee has an excellent grasp of how well the PRU is doing and what needs to be done to improve it further. This is because individuals on the committee have taken on specific areas of responsibility and covered them in depth. For example, one member carried out a thorough analysis to check how well the PRU is assessing and tracking students' progress. As a result of their positions in schools and the local authority, members have good opportunities to access a range of relevant training to support school improvement.
 - The Chair of the Management Committee provides a very strong lead. As a behaviour specialist she has been instrumental in developing the culture of exemplary behaviour through drafting a challenge letter to the PRU with suggested improvements and then monitoring their implementation.
 - Through learning walks and close monitoring of the work of the PRU, members have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They are fully aware of the performance management systems and the link to salary progression. Although they do not have access to any money from the pupil premium fund, they support the headteacher well in ensuring that staff and resources are used efficiently. The committee has been closely involved in the decision to pursue academy status.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	134752
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	402635

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	William Rule
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 October 2009
Telephone number	01726 61003
Fax number	01726 77117
Email address	wrule@cornwall.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

