

Nine Maidens Short Stay School

Nine Maidens, Redruth, Cornwall, TR16 6ND

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are expected to work hard, always do their best work and learn to behave better. They are successful in all these areas and so they make good progress.
- The school has good success in returning pupils to mainstream schools or, for the older ones, to college, and they achieve this in over 70% of cases. Close links are maintained so pupils are checked and supported very effectively in their next school or college.
- Teachers expect the best and are skilled at working with pupils who have challenging behaviour. They get pupils involved in learning so they start to catch up quickly.
- Pupils are helped to learn what is acceptable behaviour. Teachers understand that pupils sometimes face difficulties, but they expect them to concentrate on learning. Pupils say there is little bullying and they feel safe at school.
- School leaders are ambitious and are widely respected. They are determined that pupils will always do their best. Staff are well supported, and are skilled at helping pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not get enough chances to work closely with teachers in mainstream schools and teachers sometimes find it hard to compare their pupils' achievements with those in mainstream.
- There is no clear marking policy so teachers do not always mark work in the same way and so opportunities are lost to help pupils know how to do their very best.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a total of 10 lessons, observing every teacher. This accounted for five hours of inspection time.
- He looked at the work being done by pupils throughout the school and listened to some of them reading.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, teachers, pupils, the chair of the management committee and a representative of the local authority.
- Insufficient parents responded to trigger any analysis through the Parent View website. Consequently, the views of parents and carers expressed in a recent questionnaire were taken into account, as were those of staff who completed their staff questionnaires.
- A range of documentation covering teaching, pupil progress, behaviour programmes and links with local mainstream schools were looked at. A range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, was also examined.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nine Maidens is a pupil referral unit that works alongside mainstream schools in the area between Camborne, Redruth and The Lizard Peninsula. Since the last inspection it has moved to new premises in a former primary school situated in open countryside, which means that all pupils arrive at school by taxi.
- Almost all the pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. This proportion is above that found nationally, consequently a smaller than average proportion is supported at school action.
- The proportion who is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, is above that generally found.
- The aim of the school is to return pupils successfully to a mainstream school as soon as possible, or for older pupils to enable them to move on to a college place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more opportunities for teachers to work alongside colleagues in mainstream schools to help them become better at comparing the quality of their pupils' work with that of mainstream pupils, especially that of the most able.
- Strengthen the marking policy so that teachers help pupils improve their work by:
 - providing advice on how it can be made better
 - giving time to correct or improve work
 - providing time in lessons for pupils to discuss the quality of their own and others' work
 - giving help to enable pupils to achieve their individual targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they arrive, pupils have previously found learning and behaviour difficult. It is made clear from the start that school is about teaching and learning and so, while pupils get good help in coming to terms with difficulties, there is a focus on learning and progress. This the school does very well and so pupils in all classes make progress at a rate better than that usually found, and they start to catch up quickly.
- This focus on progress and achievement is true in all classes. For example, Year 11 pupils are expected to gain qualifications including GCSE. Pupils are proud of their achievement, for some it is the first time they have been successful at school.
- Some pupils have disabilities or special educational needs which makes learning more difficult. The needs of these individuals are fully taken into account when planning work or support so that they are also able to make rapid progress. The same applies to those who receive support through the pupil premium.
- Pupils are successful in learning a range of skills in reading, writing and mathematics. While standards by the time pupils reach 11 remain below average, reading is encouraged and often enjoyed. This is particularly the case in English; however, it is not used enough in other subjects and this is what currently stops achievement becoming outstanding.
- When they first arrive, and then at regular intervals, pupils are tested to see how good they are in English and mathematics. Teachers use this information to make sure that work meets each individual's need, whilst also challenging them to do better.
- This understanding of the levels pupils are working at allows teachers to set challenging targets in English, mathematics and science, and pupils are expected to do the best work that they can. Pupils' progress is recorded carefully, as is their progress in addressing behavioural and emotional needs. When they return to mainstream schools, or go to college, pupils can take a clear record of their progress.
- Overall, while the school's attainment may be below that found in many schools, it is important to look at the progress made from starting points, together with the positive changes in attitudes shown by the pupils. This shows that pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are skilled at working with pupils who have previously not found learning easy. Pupils say that they like the staff, and know how hard they are working for them. Teachers challenge pupils to do their best, which helps explain why they make good progress. As a result, teaching is always at least good and a considerable amount is outstanding. However, because teachers do not have enough chances to work alongside teachers in mainstream schools, they do not always know how their pupils' work compares, especially when it is of high quality.
- Teachers have high expectations and work hard in planning lessons that meet individual needs. This includes covering gaps in knowledge caused by previous difficulties pupils may have experienced in their previous schools.
- Teaching assistants work closely alongside teachers and because they plan together they complement each other. The very good ratio of staff to pupils enables everybody to get help and support when they most need it.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well because their individual needs are understood. This lets teachers plan well matched work to allow pupils to build upon their learning step by step. As a result, they also make rapid progress.
- There is a good focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils also develop computer skills and use these, for example, to help with individual research. At the same time a broad range of subjects and topics is covered, so learning is wide ranging.

- Sometimes people with expertise come in to help deliver courses, such as in sports or the arts. This supports the expertise of teachers and means that, even though there are not many staff because of the small size of the school, a broad range of skills is learned. It helps to ensure that lessons are interesting and pupils remain focused on learning.
- Staff are skilled at questioning, which helps pupils to improve their thinking and helps teachers to know if pupils have understood the topic being studied. However, there is room to further develop discussions between pupils that will help them to work out how good their own work, and that of other pupils, might be.
- Work is marked regularly, often with encouraging comments. However, there are inconsistencies between teachers, such as when giving advice on how work might be improved, or how it helps meet learning targets. When suggestions for improvement are made there is not always enough time for pupils to improve or correct their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There is a clear and consistent behaviour policy. This means that when they join the school pupils quickly come to know what is acceptable. They also understand the consequences when their behaviour falls short of what is expected. This results in pupils being able to show big improvements in behaviour over a short time.
- Behaviour is good and the school is generally calm. In lessons pupils can concentrate, which supports their good progress. When the behaviour code is broken staff explain why this is so in a supportive way. Pupils take time out and later return, knowing that they must make up any work they have missed, so such interruption is generally short.
- At the moment, because some teachers have less experience in implementing the behaviour policy, there is a little inconsistency in ensuring that maximum benefits are gained.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they are successful and develop positive relationships with staff and each other. This means that attendance is good, often dramatically better than had been the case previously.
- The environment at school is carefully controlled and disputes or bullying are rare and dealt with quickly if any issue arises. Pupils understand different types of bullying, as well as the dangers of misusing the internet. A sensible discussion about this was observed in a lesson during the inspection.
- Parents and carers, together with staff and pupils, express the view that school is a safe place. Careful risk assessments are carried out and when events are planned out of school they are effectively supervised.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The senior leadership of the school is focused totally on making school a place where effective learning enables pupils to be successful and return to mainstream places. Any areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection have been tackled very well and the school continues to improve.
- The headteacher is widely respected and has brought a clear vision of helping pupils to succeed, transforming their hopes and ambitions. This is shared by staff and other leaders.
- There are very high expectations of staff and a constant drive for improvement and excellence. Staff respond by showing extremely high levels of commitment, reflected in the comment, 'I'm a very proud teacher to be working with such a dynamic, professional and caring team.'
- Teachers' performance is monitored effectively. This happens through both formal observations and by the headteacher's more informal approach of spending as much time as possible around the school and in classrooms. The headteacher knows his staff very well and uses information effectively from such formal observations, from monitoring the progress of pupils in different classes and from other sources to decide whether teachers should be paid more when they are

in a position to be promoted.

- The school is good at knowing its strengths and weaknesses and has developed a successful improvement plan. From this it effectively identifies key priorities and so there is a constant drive to make the school even better.
- Teaching programmes have been devised with care so that they meet the pupils' needs and get pupils into a better position to do well when they move on from the school. Pupils are helped to develop much more positive social attitudes and to increase their involvement with the arts. The headteacher has been asked by the Tate Modern gallery to help them extend their work with young people who are hard to engage.
- The budget is carefully focused on using resources to best support pupils. For example, the pupil premium is targeted on improving standards in reading.
- The local authority has given the school very effective support, such as providing the new well-equipped premises. It fulfils all its legal obligations, such as those for ensuring that pupils are as safe as possible and for ensuring that everyone, irrespective of background or ability, has equal opportunities to be successful.
- The school works closely with parents and carers, who give the school their strong backing. They value the fact that the headteacher gives them direct support in helping to resolve any issues that might affect their children's education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - through the local authority as employer, and through its specialist service, has a clear picture of the effectiveness of the school. It ensures that the headteacher's annual performance review is thorough and helps him to reach even higher standards
 - the nominated management committee, is made up of representatives of all the schools connected with Nine Maidens. It is effective in ensuring that arrangements for pupils entering and leaving the school are fair and they are effective in doing this.

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	134755
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	402636
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Jonathan Stocker
Date of previous school inspection	26 May 2010
Telephone number	01209 217046
Fax number	01209 218285
Email address	jstocker@cornwall.gov.uk

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