

# Stroud and Cotswold Pupil Referral Service

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135331
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381875
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Price

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	34
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The management committee
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Colin Belford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mags Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Whitminster Centre Ryeleaze Road Stroud GL5 1JR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. In total six lessons taught by six different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with senior leaders, pupils, a local authority representative and the chair of the management committee. As well as observing the work of the three different centres the inspector scrutinised information on students' attainment and progress, policies, and documents relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires returned by 13 parents and carers were analysed as were those completed by staff and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively does the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) measure its own effectiveness?
- Are targets set for students challenging enough?
- How well is assessment used to ensure students make the maximum progress?
- How effectively is students' spiritual and wider cultural development promoted?
- How effective is the management committee in holding the PRS to account?

## Information about the school

The Stroud and Cotswold Pupil Referral Service caters for students who are at risk of exclusion or have already been excluded either permanently or were at serious risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. Some students attend on a dual registration basis. The majority of students have histories of disturbed education and often previous poor attendance. Although registered to take pupils as young as five, it has never taken any pupils of this age and there are no plans to do so in the future. The service is based on three sites: one for primary-aged pupils at The Five Valleys Site; a short-stay base for secondary aged students on fixed-term exclusion or at risk of exclusion at the Lansdown Centre; and a centre for Years 10 and 11 students who have all been permanently excluded from mainstream schools at The Whitminster Centre. The majority of students are boys.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the Stroud and Cotswold PRS is good. Several aspects of its work are outstanding. In particular it works exceptionally well with a wide range of other agencies and parents and carers in strong partnership to provide outstanding care, guidance and support to its students and families. As a result it is effective in acting as a 'revolving door' for its short-stay students, so that after a period of highly effective support they are able to reintegrate successfully back into mainstream schools. As a result, over the last few years the local authority has recorded a significant drop in fixed-term exclusions over five days, from other schools. The PRS measures its effectiveness well against the criteria of academic standards, behaviour, attendance, reintegration success rates and post-16 destinations. Against all these headings, students make vast improvements. The strength of the service is its ability to provide flexible and bespoke high quality support to students and schools.

The calm, purposeful atmosphere, along with high expectations, is important in enabling many of the students to turn around their lives. Years 10 and 11 students who stay at the PRS for their final years of secondary education are clear in their views on the positive impact the PRS has on them. One student commented, 'I love it here; it was my last chance' and a number of students spoke of how it had changed their lives. Students make great gains in their self-esteem and confidence. Parents and carers are equally fulsome in their praise and the high regard in which they hold the staff and work of the service.

The PRS has improved well since its last inspection. It now uses the information on students and their progress much more effectively and this is presented in an easily understood format which is accessible to the management committee, local authority and other agencies. Teachers keep a close eye on students' progress and quickly address any areas where they may start to struggle. The inadequacies of the accommodation, highlighted at the last inspection, are being addressed imminently, with plans at an advanced stage for relocation, which will enhance the provision greatly.

In many instances students arrive at the centres with gaps in their learning. Teaching and assessment are good and this results in students making good progress in the time they attend. Long-stay students at Key Stage 4 achieve passes in a wide range of GCSE subjects and similar equivalent nationally recognised

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qualifications. Teaching is consistently of a good quality, but there is not yet much outstanding practice. Marking of students' work is thorough and accurate but there are inconsistencies in the use of written feedback to inform students how to further improve their work.

Students feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They contribute well to the centre and the local community. However, their appreciation of different cultures in this country and at a wider global level is less secure. Their social and moral understanding is good, but opportunities for their spiritual and cultural development are not promoted as strongly.

Leadership and management are good. The PRS is a complex organisation, but it runs smoothly. It has taken on the responsibility for supporting behaviour in primary and secondary schools and the swift and effective support is valued by these schools. The headteacher has the full confidence of staff, parents, carers, pupils and the local authority and she is ambitious for the PRS to be outstanding in all aspects of its provision. The service has a good capacity to improve and achieve this ambition, with the effective support of both the management committee and local authority. Self-evaluation is accurate and provides a good basis for further improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning to 40% across the centres.
- Sharpen the consistency of marking, so that students know how to improve their work.
- Provide more systematic opportunities to develop students' wider spiritual and cultural understanding at national and international levels.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Attainment for most students on entry is low. However, due to the good progress made during their stay, their attainment increases, so that by the time they leave it is broadly average. Students' economic well-being is promoted well as some students achieve exceptionally well, gaining five A\* – C GCSE passes and all students achieve in a wide range of other accredited courses, which enable them to access college courses. Students make good progress from their relevant starting points and analysis suggests there is no significant difference in the achievements of any group of students. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, because their needs are carefully considered. Some students have a history of poor attendance. However, as they settle in, their attendance improves dramatically, so that it is average. Post-16 destinations are an indicator of the improvement in progress and attainment they make. For example, last year, all

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students who left were in some form of employment, training or education.

Students learn very effectively in lessons and show an enthusiasm and clear enjoyment for learning. They engage fully in activities, such as cookery and online research in science. They are keen to answer questions and make sensible contributions to discussions. Older students particularly enjoy drama, such as acting out themes of poverty and wealth and understand the protocols of using masks in performances in front of an audience. Primary aged pupils make good progress in their basic skills. Work is presented neatly and shows care and attention to detail.

Students’ good moral and social development makes an important contribution to them being able to reintegrate back into schools or go on to further education or training. Their behaviour is good and they develop positive attitudes to learning. They show respect and tolerance for one another and often work willingly collaboratively. Students have a strong voice through the council. However, their knowledge of spiritual and wider cultural diversity is less well developed because provision is not systematically planned.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers establish excellent relationships with students very quickly. They get to know them well and students often confide in them. A strength of the teaching is

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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teachers’ good subject expertise, which is delivered with enthusiasm. This makes learning interesting and students enjoy lessons. Work is pitched at the right level of challenge for students and enables them to make good progress. This is because baseline assessments are carried out on entry and these data, along with information gained from the original school, are used to plan individual learning pathways and set challenging academic targets for students. Marking celebrates students’ successes, but comments are not used consistently enough to provide pointers for improvement in their work. Teaching is consistently good across the different centres and a very small minority of the teaching is outstanding.

The curriculum is well matched to the needs of students. The PRS is able to provide flexible packages of support to individuals. Students are able to achieve accredited qualifications in a wide variety of subjects. There is a strong emphasis on their personal and social development and work-related and vocational learning. A new pre-college course known as ‘Route 16’ has been introduced recently, whereby students divide their study time between the centre and the local college. This provides a wider range of options and is intended to raise their attainment further. Early indications are that this is popular with students, but it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.

The care, guidance and support offered to students are outstanding. A strong ethos of warmth and concern permeates all the centres and students respond well to this. As a result they are able to return to schools, or those staying longer develop into thoughtful and mature young people. There are excellent links with other agencies such as schools, colleges, families and other agencies. This means that barriers to students’ learning are identified quickly and addressed, so that students are in a much better position to learn. Procedures to follow up absences are effective and swift. There is excellent teamwork and communication between all staff, which benefits students and at the end of each day there is a full debrief on issues affecting students. Students know both their personal and academic targets and this gives them a good focus to improve. One student for example noted how much her use of appropriate language had improved since being at the centre.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher sets an excellent tone for the service. There is a clear and widely understood vision and good teamwork pervades the whole service. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and all leaders are successful in securing and sustaining good improvements; for example, the development of the new 'Route-16' course and the increasing role of the service to support mainstream schools to manage behaviour effectively.

Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted. The tracking of students' progress is very effective. It is based on a traffic light system which shows at a glance where students are doing well, on track, or having difficulties. This is regularly reviewed and means that no student fails to make progress. This information is made available to staff and the management committee. The management committee is well informed and influential. It holds the service to account through regular meetings and is able to measure the effectiveness of the service against specific criteria.

Staff morale is high and they receive good professional development to keep their practice up to date. Lessons are regularly monitored and feedback given to improve practice. Staff ensure that all students, regardless of background or difficulties, achieve as well as they can. Arrangements for safeguarding are secure. Staff receive good levels of training in safeguarding and risk assessments are thoroughly carried out. The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted. An emphasis on promoting tolerance and respect underpins much of the school's work. The school is a harmonious community, where everyone is respected and valued equally and where there is an absence of discrimination. Students have a good understanding of their local communities, although their understanding of wider national and global communities is weaker, as this is taught sporadically.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Views of parents and carers**

In an above average return of questionnaires, parents and carers show they have a very high regard for the work of the PRS. Several parents wrote of their appreciation of the support provided for their children and the inspection endorses this view.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stroud and Cotswold Pupil Referral Service to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 34 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	4	31	6	46	2	15	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	46	7	54	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	8	62	5	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	46	6	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	46	7	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	4	31	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	38	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	31	8	62	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	8	62	5	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	38	7	54	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	77	3	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	8	62	5	38	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 September 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Stroud and Cotswold Pupil Referral Service, Stroud GL5 1JR**

I enjoyed visiting your centre recently and talking to a number of you. There are many good things about your centre and some things are outstanding, for example, the way staff work with a range of other people and organisations, including your families, to help to get you back on track. Your parents are really pleased with what the staff at the centre do for you. You told me you feel safe and how much you appreciate the way staff take time to get to know you and work with you to get the best out of you. You make a good contribution to the centre through your improvements and through the student council.

You are making good progress and this helps you either to return to school or go on to further study at college or employment and training. Staff are very skilled at helping you to succeed at this. The good progress you make is down to the good teaching you receive. Teachers know how to make lessons interesting for you. The staff are always looking to make your experiences better and one of the things they have introduced is the new 'Route-16' course which looks very promising. The headteacher leads and manages the different centres well and it is a complex job, but everything runs very smoothly.

There are a few things I have asked staff to do make the centre even better. I have set them a challenge to increase the amount of outstanding teaching and learning to 40% across the centres. They are going to make sure that when your work is marked, there is always advice, so you clearly know how to make improvements to your work. I have also asked staff to plan systematic opportunities to develop your spiritual and cultural understanding of this country and the wider world.

You can help to make your centre even better by continuing to attend every day and working hard to give yourselves the best chance for the future. I wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Frank Price  
Lead inspector

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