

North Cornwall Short Stay School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134754
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	381729
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Mascall

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	21
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Evelyn Kyne
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2009
School address	Campus XXI The Gaia Building Delabole Cornwall PL33 9DA
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Mascal

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited seven lessons and observed five teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. Discussions were held with students about their work and their views of the centre.

The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at students' work and information on their progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from one parent or carer, seven staff and nine students were scrutinised.

Information about the school

The North Cornwall Short Stay School is a pupil referral unit (referred to in the report as 'the centre') which caters for students who are at risk of being, or have been, excluded from their mainstream settings. Nearly all remain on the roll of their mainstream schools. Many students in Years 10 and 11 are likely to attend the centre on a full-time basis. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are admitted for short periods of time, usually no more than two terms, to help them develop the skills they need to remain in their mainstream settings. At the time of the inspection there were seven students with statements of special educational needs, all of which were for emotional and behavioural difficulties. Almost all students are of White British heritage, and there are more boys than girls. At the time of the inspection there were four students in the care of the local authority. The centre makes use of a number of alternative providers to support students in developing their academic and personal and social skills.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory pupil referral unit which is moving forward at a good pace under the determined leadership of the headteacher.
- On her appointment the headteacher quickly identified, and has successfully addressed, a number of concerns regarding the very high number of behaviour incidents, exclusions and poor attendance of students which was resulting in low achievement.
- The high expectations of staff and a consistent approach to managing behaviour now ensure that students' behaviour is good. The number of incidents and exclusions has been reduced considerably over the last two years.
- Students value the behaviour strategies and feel they are working well.
- Attendance has improved and the vast majority of students improve their attendance during their time at the centre. Attendance is now average.
- Students trust staff and know that any concerns they have will be dealt with fairly. They say they feel safe in the centre.
- Most students achieve satisfactorily, with a small minority making good or better progress, but there are a small number who could achieve more. Although there is no pattern to those who do not do as well as they should, the centre recognises that its tracking and analysis of students' progress are not rigorous enough to ensure quicker identification of this very small number of individuals.
- Since the last inspection, improved monitoring of teaching and the introduction of regular meetings with teachers to support their skills have ensured a more consistent approach to many aspects of teaching. In some lessons though, teachers do not use their good knowledge of students' academic progress to ensure that the needs of individuals are fully met.
- The headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the centre. However the management committee does not always receive sufficient information about the improvements the centre has made and the academic progress of the different groups of students. This restricts its ability to effectively challenge and monitor the centre to ensure that all students make the progress they should.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a

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monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the systems for tracking and analysing the progress of students so that senior leaders are assured that all are making the progress they should.
- Ensure all staff are consistent in using their good knowledge and understanding of each student to match work to the needs of each individual.
- Provide the management committee with a wider range of information about the progress of different groups of students and the impact of improvements to ensure that it provides consistently good challenge to the centre.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Many students have been out of school for long periods of time and have had a disrupted education, which has led to gaps in their knowledge and understanding. As a result, the attainment of students varies from year to year but overall is average. Most students in Years 10 and 11 make progress in line with their mainstream peers, gaining a range of accreditation. For those students in Key Stage 3, progress is often good, enabling the vast majority to return successfully to mainstream settings. Occasionally, students do not make the progress they are capable of. Senior leaders have recognised that their systems have not been sufficiently rigorous in identifying when an individual could be making faster progress. There is no evidence of any group of students achieving less well than their peers, including disabled students, those with special educational needs and those who are in the care of the local authority.

During most lessons, students concentrate well and clearly enjoy their work. In a science lesson, for example, Year 11 students showed good recall of previous learning and, with encouragement, recalled the meaning of 'anomalous' at the start. They took great pleasure in using the word correctly when describing the outcomes of their experiment at the end of the lesson. Pupils make satisfactory progress in some lessons because activities are not sufficiently fine-tuned to their individual needs. A specific programme is being used with students who arrive at the centre with low reading ages. This is used across the centre and is having a positive impact on many of the students, enabling them to make good progress in their literacy skills. Students are proud of their achievements. One student for example, showed the inspector an essay she had written. She said she had never completed a piece of work of this quality before at her mainstream school. The essay described a supermarket; the alliteration and descriptions were very good and showed considerable thought and effort on the part of the student.

Quality of teaching

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In some lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is used well to support learning. In a mathematics lesson for example, students developed an understanding of different ways of carrying out long multiplication and were encouraged to decide which method suited them best as individuals. All said they did not like the Russian method because it took too long! Although teachers know the levels students are working at, they do not always make best use of this knowledge to adapt work to the different levels of students. In these situations, students are too reliant on staff to help them complete tasks. For example, in another mathematics lesson, a group of students were set the same task, which was too easy for one while another struggled to complete it independently. On occasions, there are good opportunities for students to discuss their ideas. One student commented that this often happened in personal, social and health education. This, the student said, was really valuable, and did a lot in encouraging her group to listen to each other and express their views without an argument. The student added that these discussions were good for improving their social skills.

Teachers have worked well together to plan activities that are interesting and relevant for students. There have been good initiatives through project work across the centre. For example, one project was based on Jaycee Dugard's book, *A Stolen Life: a memoir*. The story clearly had an impact on students' awareness of the plight of others and resulted in writing in English studies that reflected their empathy for the author. Work in subjects such as personal, social and health education supported students' experiences and understanding further. High quality marking is a strong feature of teaching and is in place in most subjects. Students know the levels they are working at and what they should achieve. The majority of teachers provide detailed feedback that helps students understand what they have to do to improve.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students invariably attend the centre because their behaviour has been unacceptable in their mainstream schools. As they settle and accept the centre's expectations, the vast majority improve their behaviour over time. Students recognise the difference in their behaviour and talk about how they have learned to manage their behaviour and are more tolerant of others. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and talk sensibly about moral issues, particularly linked to how they and others should behave. The effectiveness of the centre's interventions can be seen in the fact that all students who left in July successfully moved into college, training or work. Records show that at the end of last term they were still in their placements. Students enjoy their time at the centre, which is reflected in their much improved attendance. One student commented that her attendance was 100%, which she had never achieved in her mainstream setting. Students set their own targets for behaviour and make good progress against these. The school is in the process of improving the record keeping of these targets to ensure they are dated and collated more effectively. Students consider the centre to be safe and say that there is no bullying. Staff are very vigilant in monitoring behaviour and deal with any instances of inappropriate behaviour quickly. Lunchtimes reflect the positive relations between

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staff and students when they all sit and chat and eat together. The parent or carer who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire was positive about all aspects of the provision including behaviour and keeping students safe.

Leadership and management

Over the last two and a half years the headteacher has done much to improve provision. Weaknesses in behaviour, attendance and exclusions have been remedied and achievement and progress are improving quickly. The centre is now a calm, positive place where students are expected to learn. The introduction of performance management has been valued by staff. Monitoring of teaching has been rigorous and ensured a greater consistency in many aspects of teaching. There is closer working with mainstream schools and training and support provided on a regular basis with other centres. Continual reviews by staff of the work they do ensure that the centre is quick to address any areas of weakness. The key areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been addressed well. Improved staff morale and their good understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development are ensuring that the centre is well placed to continue to improve. These factors, together with positive support from the management committee, contribute to the centre's strong capacity for sustained improvement.

The curriculum, although satisfactory, is improving. The challenge and range of accreditation have been improved so that more students are now achieving GCSEs and Entry Level qualifications. Students now have access to design and technology and are learning a range of skills in woodwork and jewellery making. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and well supported by the personal, social, health and education curriculum. While there are many strengths in the curriculum, it is satisfactory rather than good because planning for lunchtimes and tutor sessions, which the centre counts as taught time, is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that students' progress at these times is monitored effectively. Plans have already been put in place to address this. Good attention is paid to safeguarding arrangements and the vetting of staff is thorough.

The analysis of data enables the centre to monitor the progress of different groups and ensure that equality of opportunity is secure. Last year, for example, the centre identified that the very small number of students with statements of special educational needs were not making the progress they should. Quick action was taken to address this. The present group of students with special educational needs are making similar progress to their peers nationally. Staff recognise that a few students across the centre do not make the progress they should. This is because systems are not always sufficiently robust to identify those small numbers of students capable of making better rates of progress.

The management committee is very positive about the improvements since the last inspection. It has clear evidence that information to parents and carers and to mainstream schools is of a far better quality and partnerships with all those involved with the centre are now effective. For example, six weekly reviews are held with

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parents and carers, students and mainstream schools to ensure all are kept informed about each individual's progress. The committee supports the centre well in returning students to mainstream settings. It is not, however, provided, on a regular basis, with sufficient information about the progress the centre is making in its initiatives or about the academic progress of students in order to effectively challenge the centre to improve further.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



12 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of North Cornwall Short Stay School, Delabole, Cornwall PL33 9DA

Thank you so much for being friendly and helpful when I came to visit you recently. I very much enjoyed meeting you and a special thank you to those of you who took time to talk to come and talk to me and show me your work.

The centre is ensuring that you get a satisfactory education. Your attendance is good and much better than it was when you were in your mainstream schools. This is helping you to make progress in line with students nationally. It is good to know that you are aware of your targets and know how well you are doing. Teaching is satisfactory overall and has lots of strengths, particularly in the positive relationships you have with staff and the support they give you to help you behave. Your behaviour is good.

Staff are committed to do the best for you. They have lots of information about how well you are doing and I have asked them to use this information better so that everyone makes good progress. The management committee supports the centre well but I have asked that it is given more information about how you are all doing and about all the developments in the centre. In order to make teaching even better, I have asked teachers to make sure the work is matched more closely to your individual academic needs.

You can help the centre to improve by always trying your best and maintaining your good attendance.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascall
Lead inspector

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