

# Cape Cornwall School

Cape Cornwall Street, St Just, Penzance, TR19 7JX

**Inspection dates** 9–10 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The achievement of the students is improving. They are now beginning to make rapid progress and achieve their potential in almost all subjects.
- The great majority of teaching is engaging and helps students to become ready for the world beyond school.
- There is a good range of subjects and activities on offer across the school which caters in a personalised way for all the students, sometimes using twilight sessions to include extra opportunities. They are able to learn about skills necessary beyond school and develop for their lives in the 21st century.
- The headteacher has made impressive, challenging, effective yet supportive changes to improve the school since her appointment. As a result, staff morale is high and there is keen desire to adopt the new approaches and to continue with the improvements necessary. This was clear from the overwhelmingly positive responses to the staff questionnaires and comments made.
- Students have good attitudes to their learning. They behave well and attend school regularly.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning and this supports students' progress. The size of the school is a strength with regard to the development of relationships.
- Leaders and managers have improved the ways that they check on students' achievement in order to make sure that all students do as well as possible.
- There has been a focus on improving the teaching and learning led by the senior leaders of the school.
- The governing body is supportive and passionate about the school and its place in the community. It checks the school's work effectively.
- Staff, parents and the community are very supportive of the school and value its work in the locality.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although much of the teaching is good and better, not enough is outstanding, which means that there are still gaps in progress
- The school's approach to improving the literacy skills of the students is not yet planned and coordinated in a coherent way.

between some groups of students in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Year 11 students had left the school but the inspectors looked at evidence of the progress and attainment of all groups of students.
- Inspectors saw 33 lessons taught by 25 teachers, of which seven were observed jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders of the school.
- Meetings were held with students from Years 7 to 10, the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body, the headteacher, senior leaders and school staff. The lead inspector had a conversation with a representative from the local authority, the external improvement adviser for the school and two parents.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, scrutinised the school's data about students' achievement, looked at students' work, examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- Inspectors visited the art exhibition that was on display.
- Inspectors looked at the 23 responses to the online Parent View survey. They analysed 42 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Butler	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Cape Cornwall School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those known to be entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and children with a parent in the armed services, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- There is one student who attends the short-stay school which provides specialist support for the most vulnerable students in mainstream education. This student will be returning to mainstream education in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - setting work at the right level of difficulty for students in order to close any gaps in learning between groups of students
  - using probing questions in order to help students speak about their learning and encourage them to become even more independent and find out things for themselves
  - making clear, when marking, what steps students need to take to improve further.
- Build on the existing work to improve students' literacy levels by coordinating, implementing and evaluating a coherent plan across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students across the school are making good progress overall, as seen in their work during the inspection. In 2012, girls' achievement was not as good as boys'. The school has worked to halt this. Evaluation has shown that boys' achievement is less secure in Year 10 so interventions are in place to improve this.
- Students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 joined the school with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average, whereas students in Year 11, who have just left, joined with attainment that was significantly below average. All are making good progress from their starting points.
- The underachievement in English last year has been halted and students are now making good progress; students in Years 9 and 10 are making rapid progress in this subject.
- Students in mathematics have made consistently good or better progress compared to national figures. Achievement in science and modern languages has improved considerably in the past two years and students are now achieving significantly above the national average.
- Outcomes in history and art are outstanding. The strength of history within the school, with a curriculum that focuses on local history particularly, was recognised by Ofsted in 2010 and this excellent standard of achievement has been maintained.
- The majority of students develop good skills in reading, writing and communication. Students in Years 7 and 8 are encouraged to read at the start of their English lessons and this has increased their enjoyment and depth of reading. Work on literacy skills is often carefully planned and coordinated for those who struggle in reading and writing. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to this work across the school and so its impact is variable. Staff have been appointed to build on this so that all students can enhance their literacy skills.
- In numeracy, the timetable has been planned carefully from Year 7 onwards to include a range of activities involving complex problem solving that extends beyond the traditional curriculum.
- The school has reliable information about the performance of current students in all year groups and it shows that their attainment and progress are set to rise still further. The regular review of this data means that any student who is at risk of making slower progress is very quickly identified and supported appropriately with various strategies to put them back on track. Some of the interventions seen to support progress were impressive. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are making slower progress than other students but their progress is improving. Each student has been given specific support to help them to maintain the improvements necessary.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals are supported well through the pupil premium and attain at the same level as other students in mathematics and English.
- The school does not enter any students for GCSE examinations before the summer term of Year 11.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching is good, with some that is outstanding; in these cases, it is engaging and motivational.
- Most teachers use information on students' achievement to plan lessons so that each individual can reach his or her potential. This is most successful where the teaching is skilfully planned to reflect and challenge the ability of students. However, work is not always set at the right level of difficulty and as a result some gaps remain in the progress made by different groups.
- There is good evidence to show that students gain knowledge and skills that help them progress beyond the life at school; they are well prepared for the world of work, training and further education. With careful guidance, all students are able to progress successfully after Year 11 into these areas.

- Teachers generally use questioning well to review and consolidate students' learning; however, some opportunities are missed to deepen learning, in particular with the most able. Teachers do not always use probing questions to encourage students to discuss their learning, or to help them find out things for themselves.
- There is evidence of outstanding assessment and marking which allow students to reflect and comment on what a teacher has said or written. This is not yet consistent across the school and, at times, teachers' guidance on the next steps that students need to take is not quite clear enough.
- All teachers have good records of students' progress over time. These are checked carefully in most subjects by subject leaders, so that the quality of teaching is assessed and less effective teaching can be improved rapidly.
- There is a positive climate for learning in the majority of lessons which allows for innovative practice. In English, history, French and mathematics lessons, teachers are using group work, dialogue and problem solving creatively to enhance the learning of all students. Learning is less efficient in religious education and some technology lessons and where teachers take too much time talking unnecessarily and this prevents students from getting on with their learning.
- In the best teaching, regular, accurate peer and self-assessment has been used to further support improving progress.
- There has been effective training for support staff so that those students needing support gain confidence and achieve better outcomes.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students feel very safe at school and know how to assess the risk in various situations for themselves and others.
- There are positive relationships between both staff and students and students and students. Tin lessons and around the school where behaviour is calm, orderly and respectful.
- Nearly all students are polite, cooperative and keen to learn. Parents, staff and students have few concerns about behaviour. The school is very inclusive and is prepared to accept students who have been out of schooling for a host of reasons. These young people adapt and settle into the learning environment well and quickly.
- Behaviour is not outstanding, because where teaching does not fully engage students, they sometimes lose concentration.
- The school has clear policies for dealing with any low-level disruption; for the very large majority of time, no intervention is needed. During the inspection, when a student was displaying attention-seeking behaviour, some staff members were a little slow to apply the appropriate warnings. Once they were put in place, the behaviour improved.
- Students have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and the risks of social networking sites. Any instances of bullying or discrimination in the school are rare and are dealt with effectively.
- Attendance has improved in the last year so that it is now better than the national average. New systems for raising parental awareness of the importance of attendance have been adopted and support has been applied rigorously.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders exhibit very high ambitions and expectations for all in the learning community. This is monitored robustly and is adding to the rapid improvements.
- The headteacher has a very clear purpose and an excellent understanding of the needs of the school, which has led to rapid and effective improvements. The staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the initiatives that have been put in place, as shown in the responses to the Ofsted questionnaire as well as the work in school. Staff are keen to continue the work so that they can

make the school an outstanding environment for learning.

- The headteacher has worked successfully to implement the necessary changes to ensure that all students have access to a range of up-to-date and suitable courses. This has required effective evaluation with swift yet considered changes at times.
- The evaluation of teaching over time is accurate which demonstrates the school's awareness and provides a platform for further improvement. This has led to recent changes to the leadership of teaching and learning have created a sharper focus on increasing the progress of all groups of students. There is now a heightened awareness of the direction on which to take aspirational learning across the school.
- The performance management and professional development of staff are focused relentlessly on improving teaching and learning to ensure that the results for all students reflect their full potential. The school was part of the Department for Education's scrutiny of the national changes to appraisal processes in October 2012. Appropriately robust action to improve teaching has been taken where necessary and staff appointments have been made to secure further focused improvement.
- The school has a secure understanding of its main strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, in places, the school improvement plan does not always make clear how leaders will check that the actions taken have been successful.
- The school promotes students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues well through assemblies, tutor time, in many lessons and in a range of far reaching enrichment activities, both within the community and locality as well as globally. Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted and no pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer.
- Pupil premium funding is carefully managed and provides one-to-one teaching, extra literacy support and additional learning resources such as laptop computers and software. The 'raising achievement team' identifies necessary resources to be purchased. There is additional provision at the start of the day for these students, so that they are well prepared and ready to learn.
- An independent external adviser with considerable experience at all levels within education provides effective and rigorous support and challenge to the headteacher and purposeful training to staff, especially middle leaders. The local authority is supportive of the school and has provided essential advice as necessary. In order to strengthen its viability as a smaller than average school, there are plans to place Penwith Area Resource Base on the school site. This will offer support to students in the West Cornwall region who are not able to access mainstream schooling.
- The school works well with parents and the great majority are appreciative of this. While the inspection was taking place, parents came in to speak with the lead inspector to describe how they valued the way that the school had supported their children and how staff had sought to find ways to seek solutions when problems arose.
- The financial arrangements are a strength of the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and all staff are updated regularly on child protection procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors are committed to the school and passionate about their support. They ask critical questions in meetings of the governing body in order to gain a detailed picture of how well students are achieving, including the impact of the funds being spent. Some of the governors have great awareness of the quality of teaching across the school and provide critical rigour to the headteacher as well as a valuable insight for the rest of the governing body. They know the strengths and weaknesses of subject areas in the school and have taken strategic steps to consolidate and improve as necessary. The governing body has a full understanding of the spending of the pupil premium funding and its impact on the achievement of eligible students. The Chair of the Governing Body was involved with the Department for Education's visit to discuss the school's systems for managing staff performance and governors have a clear awareness of the school's systems.
  - The governing body fulfils its statutory duties including those related to safeguarding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112063
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	412768

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	394
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Joyce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Nash
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 788501
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