



# Redruth School: a Technology College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112054  
**LEA** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 278838  
**Inspection dates** 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** David Humphries HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Tolgus Vean
<b>School category</b>	Community		Redruth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19		Cornwall TR15 1TA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01209 215507
<b>Number on roll</b>	1586	<b>Fax number</b>	01209 313604
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Peter Sheppard
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Sharratt

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 22 March 2006 - 23 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278838
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Redruth is large specialist technology college which attracts students from the town of Redruth and neighbouring rural communities. While students are drawn from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds and the school's catchment area includes areas of significant deprivation, the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is broadly average. There are very few students from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, which confirms the view of governors and senior leaders. Whilst the school has some evident strengths and is now moving forward after a period of instability, there are still areas where improvements are required. Students make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Overall test results at age 14 are now broadly average and significantly above average in English. Examination results at age 16 showed a sharp decline in 2005 because this group of students made limited progress during their early years in the school. The school has responded vigorously and the current cohort of students is on track to achieve better results. Most students behave well and act responsibly and sensibly, particularly when teaching stimulates their interest and enthusiasm. When teaching is more mundane, a few students sometimes misbehave and this impedes their own progress and the learning of others; this is a concern for many parents. The school works hard to gather the views of parents, but the perception of a significant minority is that there are too many lapses in communication and that school does not take sufficient account of their views. The headteacher, supported by a committed senior team, is providing clear and determined leadership to drive the school forward and staff share his vision for the future. Senior leaders clearly recognise the school's strengths and weaknesses and are setting in train a series of initiatives to improve the quality of its work. There are variations in how rigorously subject leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of provision in their areas and consequently some key policies and improvement strategies have yet to become embedded across the school. The inspectors' judgement based on the progress made during the last two years, following a period without stable leadership, is that the school has good capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The school judges the quality of the sixth form to be good and inspectors agree because good teaching, effective leadership and productive relationships have contributed to a steady rise in standards over recent years. A broad curriculum, developed in partnership with other schools, is well matched to the needs of both students and the local community. Students receive high levels of personal care and support. Academic guidance is at an early stage of development, but teachers are now beginning to set targets that are more closely related to students' learning needs.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve communication and build relationships with parents so that they have greater confidence in the work of the school
- Ensure that teaching is consistently lively, providing a range of learning activities which engage students' interest and promote more positive attitudes and better behaviour
- Improve the consistency and rigour of monitoring within subject departments, so that weaknesses are identified and key changes and improvements are embedded in practice across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Achievement and standards are satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. The attainment of students on entry to the school is close to the national average and their overall performance in Years 7 to 9 has shown a steady improvement in recent years. While there are variations between subjects, students are now making satisfactory progress so that their overall attainment in the most recent tests was broadly in line with the national average and significantly above average in English. Results in English and mathematics comfortably exceeded the targets set by the school and matched the more challenging targets set for 2006. In most years students make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 so that the results they achieve in examinations at age 16 are broadly in line with national averages. The most recent results showed a sharp decline and were below average. Although this group of students made reasonable progress, this was not sufficient to offset their limited progress in the early years of the school which were marked by organisational changes and instability in leadership and management. The school has responded with a range of initiatives to boost achievement. The careful monitoring of progress indicates that students who are currently in Years 10 and 11 are on track to meet targets in line with national averages. Most students with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. The high quality support provided for a small number of students with more complex needs enables them to make good progress. In the sixth form more positive attitudes to learning and effective teaching enable students to make good progress. Results have improved steadily over recent years and are now above average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory overall and in the sixth form they are good. Most students enjoy school and behave well, both in and out of lessons. The unsatisfactory behaviour and negative attitudes of a small minority of students are sometimes exacerbated by dull and unimaginative teaching. Many parents are concerned about this; the school is working hard to address the issue and there are clear signs that behaviour is improving. Students report that incidents of bullying are much less frequent and that the few which do occur are dealt with effectively. Attendance rates are close to the national average. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory but their awareness of multicultural issues is less well developed. Students appreciate the importance of safe and healthy living and many are eager to join in the wide range of sporting activities offered by the school. Students actively participate in promoting more healthy food options in the school canteen. The school council works enthusiastically to represent students' views and is actively involved in wider community developments. Students respond well to the many opportunities to develop the workplace skills that will

contribute to their future economic well-being, particularly those following vocational courses. Sixth form students enjoy school and have a very positive attitude towards their studies. They are playing an increasingly active role in the life of the school and make a valuable contribution to sporting activities and anti-bullying initiatives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and in the sixth form it is good. However, the quality of teaching in the main school is variable and while it is often good, on a few occasions it is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons there are a variety of interesting and motivating activities. Students learn and achieve well because of positive relationships, suitably challenging work, probing questioning and a brisk pace. In these lessons teachers insist on good behaviour and are adept at establishing a productive atmosphere where students work hard because they want to learn. In a few lessons dull teaching and mundane tasks, which do little to engage students' active participation, lead to poor behaviour which is sometimes not dealt with promptly or effectively. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of assessment information when planning their teaching, but the quality of marking is variable. There are examples of good practice where comments clearly show students what they need to do to improve. In many books, however, teachers' comments are too brief and general to be helpful. Sixth form teaching provides more stimulating tasks and opportunities for independent learning. These are appreciated by students who respond positively and make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

The curriculum is now satisfactory, both overall and in the sixth form. Until recently students were placed in one of three broad ability bands on entry to the school. Most remained in these bands throughout the next five years, with highly constrained choices of subjects in Years 10 and 11 and few opportunities to transfer between teaching groups. Senior leaders recognised that this structure was poorly designed to meet the needs of many students. In 2005 the school undertook a far-reaching overhaul of the curriculum to provide much greater choice and flexibility, although the old structure remains in place for the current Year 11. The new curriculum in Years 10 and 11 includes a good choice of examination and vocational courses and provides suitable opportunities for work-related learning and the development of enterprise skills. The school makes good use of its specialist status to provide high quality information and communication technology (ICT) resources in most subject areas, although there are variations in how effectively these are used to enhance teaching and learning. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education is established across the school

and students benefit from a wide range of extracurricular and enrichment activities. A well designed sixth form curriculum is thoughtfully matched to the needs of students and the local community, although provision for religious education is inadequate. Productive partnerships with a network of local schools extend the range of academic and vocational courses that are available.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory and has some good features. A recent change from mixed-age to single-age tutor groups has been welcomed by most staff and students, and enables tutors to address the needs of particular year groups more effectively. In their discussions with students, teachers are making increasing use of assessment data to monitor students' progress and set targets for improvement, although this is not yet being implemented consistently well across the school. Sixth form students receive good quality care and support but academic guidance, whilst developing, is not always sufficiently well focused on students' learning. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by a large team of trained teaching assistants. However, individual education plans require further development so that teachers have a better understanding of students' specific learning needs. Students with complex needs receive high quality support which enables them to participate very successfully in the life of the school. A drop-in centre, which is open at breaks and lunchtimes, provides valuable support for vulnerable students. The induction of a small group of traveller children has been well managed and these students also benefit from the drop-in centre. Strong links with other agencies enhance the quality of care and support. There are well established routines for child protection.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. Following the previous inspection there were a few turbulent years with the completion of a major building programme bringing the school onto a single site, substantial changes in the organisation of the curriculum and other important aspects of the school. There was also a period of instability in the senior leadership team preceding the appointment of a new headteacher. These factors had a cumulative impact on students' achievement and behaviour and the quality of education; it is only recently that the school has rediscovered a sense of purpose and direction. The headteacher, supported by a committed senior team, is providing strong and determined leadership. They have established a clear agenda for improvement which commands widespread support amongst staff. Standards are now rising in Years 7 to 9 and there are signs that this is working through to Years 10 and 11. There has been a far-reaching and much needed overhaul of the curriculum and organisation of tutor groups. The governing body has a growing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses

and is increasingly able to provide effective support and challenge. There is good capacity for further improvement. The school works hard to gather the views of parents through informal discussions, questionnaires and surveys, but the perception of a significant number of parents is that there are too many lapses in communication and that the school does not take sufficient account of their views. While the school has taken determined action to improve behaviour, this remains a concern for many parents. The school uses its specialist status well to develop ICT and technology capability in feeder primary schools. Productive relationships with a network of local secondary schools are used to good effect to extend the breadth of the sixth form curriculum. Senior leaders have a keen awareness of the schools' strengths and areas for improvement. The quality of teaching is systematically monitored and the judgements made are mostly accurate. Test and examination results are carefully analysed so that underperformance can be identified and tackled effectively. In contrast, monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders are at an early stage of development and are not always sufficiently rigorous or consistent to ensure that key policies and improvement strategies are implemented effectively across the school. Senior leaders are aware of this and are providing support and training to improve the overall quality of subject leadership. The sixth form has been well led and managed through a period of instability and change. Standards have risen steadily and the newly appointed head of sixth form has a clear understanding of how to build on this firm base to secure further improvements.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	2
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Students As you know your school was inspected on 22 and 23 March 2006. Some of you met the inspectors and many of you will have seen us around the school. We are very grateful to you for telling us how you feel about the school because this helped us to make our judgements. Many of your parents or carers responded to a confidential questionnaire and we also took their views and concerns into account when making judgements. We encourage you to read the report because it will let you know in more detail what your school does well and how you can help it to be better than it is now. Some good teaching helps most of you to make reasonable progress in the main part of the school and test results at the end of Year 9 are improving. There was a decline in examination results in Year 11 in 2005, but there are signs that students in Years 10 and 11 are on track to do much better. Good teaching and positive relationships help sixth form students to make good progress and examination results have improved steadily over the last few years. Most of you behave well and work hard, particularly when lessons are well taught and interesting. We have asked the school to make sure that more lessons are like this, because when they are not a few students misbehave. However, this is not an excuse for poor behaviour and these students need to think carefully about how their actions affect their own progress and that of other students. Parents are concerned about this and also about how well the school listens to their views. We have asked the school to think about how it can improve relationships with parents. Your headteacher is beginning to move the school forward after a difficult period. He is well supported by some capable and committed staff and there have already been some significant improvements in key areas like the curriculum. The priority now is to ensure that all teachers who have leadership and management responsibilities drive through important changes and policies so that they are implemented consistently across the school. Yours sincerely David Humphries Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools