



Penwith E00S Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134753
LEA Cornwall
Inspection number 282672
Inspection dates 17 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mick Megee RISP

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

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|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of school | Pupil referral unit | School address | Alphington Lodge |
| School category | Pupil referral unit | | Alverton |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 16 | | Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4JJ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01736 332341 |
| Number on roll | 49 | Fax number | 01736 368469 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Miss Elaine Cole |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable | Headteacher | Mrs Jill Try |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

The Penwith Centre educates 17 girls and 32 boys, who are unable to attend their mainstream school because of permanent exclusion, emotional difficulties, mental health problems, physical health problems, or pregnancy. A small number are supported in their own schools to prevent exclusion. These difficulties have slowed down their learning. Most are taught in the centre either full or part time, although a few receive education in their own homes. All students come from West Cornwall, and all are from White British backgrounds. The centre began a few years ago to provide limited one-to-one education at home for sick children. Since then it has grown very rapidly. It has retained its original purpose but in addition it now provides for a much wider range of students. Last year the centre was registered as a pupil referral unit. There were no children under 5 years old on the centre's roll at the time of the inspection. Ten students have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The centre views its effectiveness as good. The inspector's view is that the centre provides a satisfactory education and satisfactory value for money. In the short time since it became a pupil referral unit, the centre is already providing an adequate service despite the accommodation problems and delay in setting up a management committee. This is the result of hard working leadership by the headteacher and her deputy, who have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. There is sufficient capacity to become more effective.

The curriculum meets most students' needs satisfactorily, and adequately prepares them for later life. The local authority's (LA) policy prevents some students from returning quickly to mainstream school. The cramped accommodation and the small number of teachers means the range of subjects is narrow. There is a particular need to develop the provision in physical education (PE), and creative and practical subjects. Teaching, achievement, and learning are satisfactory. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. The students feel safe and enjoy the school. Attendance is satisfactory. One student said, 'When I got kicked out of school, I thought my education was down the drain until I came here'. Relationships and behaviour are good. Standards of care are good. Leadership and management overall are satisfactory with a new management committee now in place. The centre is not yet gathering all the information it could about students' achievements and this lack of a 'bigger picture' limits the way questions can be asked about how well provision meets different needs.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve further, the PRU should focus on:

- improving teaching and learning in PE, and creative and practical subjects
- together with the LA, improving the accommodation and providing more students with opportunities to quickly return to mainstream schools
- introducing more ways of checking on the achievement of students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The students' achievement overall is satisfactory, regardless of their age, ability or gender. The students' learning difficulties have meant that they have had many breaks in their education, and standards are below the national average. Students achieve satisfactorily against their individual, personal and academic targets. The LA intends that some students will be able to remain in the centre for relatively long periods. This is particularly the case for students who have additional special educational needs like autism, or have been permanently excluded from their schools more than once. This policy unnecessarily restricts their opportunities for greater achievement. The centre has only a few staff, very limited resources and accommodation. As a result it is difficult to provide subjects much beyond the essential minimum, and this limits the potential achievement of the students. The key shortages are in practical and creative subjects,

and PE. However students can take Entry Level Certificates, and short or full GCSEs. The achievement of individuals in these subjects is often good. Last year the students achieved examination successes in GCSE English and mathematics that were similar to the national average, and the results in biology were very good. One student spoke positively of her achievement at the centre: 'I've become more intelligent and my attitudes have changed'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students enjoy learning and their attendance is satisfactory but much improved since they joined the centre. They and the staff are markedly relaxed and friendly in each other's company. One student said 'The teachers are brilliant. They're never sarcastic. They don't patronise you and always treat you with respect.' The staff have created a positive, family spirit around the centre, which helps them behave well and adopt very safe practices. This is a big turn around. One student recognised how she had changed: 'I've improved a lot since I came here. I used to have a really bad temper. I think it's the individual attention that we get.' Everyone complies with the no smoking rules, and accepts the need for staying fit and active. However, no physical education goes on at the centre because of the limitations of the accommodation although there are opportunities provided off site. Unfortunately many students choose not to participate. In its self-evaluation the centre recognised this weakness and has plans to sort them out. Students are adequately prepared for the world of work. Their future opportunities for employment are increased because they develop their basic and personal skills, and improve their confidence. Work experience is available to nearly all students. The students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The good ethos in the centre provides a positive environment in which students can develop morally and socially, and to a certain extent, spiritually. The students would like to have more opportunities to learn about music and drama, which could lead to improved spiritual and cultural awareness. Students contribute to the community through participation in events like VE and VJ Day celebrations and fund raising activities like Red Nose Day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching is hampered by the unsuitable accommodation, and the lack of resources. The centre has not yet managed to develop teachers' expertise across all the additional subjects, which the students would like. Within the subjects provided, teachers are skilled in establishing and maintaining the trust of students, most of whom have had a long-standing poor experience of school. The students praise the quality of the teaching they receive: 'They are really good at explaining things, and if you don't get it, they try again until you do.' The very small size of groups means that staff know what makes each student tick and how to get

the very best out of them. In lessons the work is well planned and set at the right level and students work hard and are self-critical. The current students say that they would like to be taught PE, music, drama, physics and chemistry which are not available.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The centre provides a satisfactory curriculum. All students receive teaching in a core curriculum, which adequately covers their basic skills, and what they will need for their future and the world of work. Many excluded students are returned relatively quickly to either their previous or alternative mainstream schools. The centre works well with the partner schools who set the work needing to be covered, and assess the work when it is completed. This works well in the students' interest. Other students stay on at the centre for a longer period and take their examinations. They then go straight into employment or further education. While the curriculum for them is basically sound, the centre's resources are stretched in trying to cover the wider range of aspirations. The centre has recognised this need in its self-evaluation and is trying very hard to cover these gaps. The centre has already appointed a specialist in personal, social, health and citizenship education. It is also arranging for one student to attend a small independent school where he will have access to laboratories and equipment so he can take physics and chemistry. The students take part in an adequate range of additional activities and work related learning, but the centre knows that it needs to develop this range even further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The centre provides a safe and caring environment which guides and supports the students well. Upon referral the students and their parents meet the staff to draw up accurate targets for behaviour and learning. Through these, everyone knows what they have to do to make progress. Staff collect information each day on how well each student has attended, behaved and worked. Each week the students have the chance to comment on their own progress, but many students have not yet written anything down. The centre knows it needs to encourage more participation. The staff meet weekly to discuss the progress of each student, and to decide on a common approach if this is necessary. Such consistent management helps the students to become mature and responsible. The centre has appointed mentors for each student to help them explore their feelings and to discuss any personal difficulties. Staff provide good role models for the students in the way they work as a team. There are good arrangements for child protection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, with her deputy, has ensured that the centre has continued to provide a satisfactory education during a

period of considerable change. This was the key achievement of last year. There has been a thorough evaluation of the centre's work, which identifies its strengths and weaknesses taking good account of the views of students and parents. As a result of this, the headteacher has set out clear priorities for improvement. The centre does not yet produce the full information it needs to measure progress. For example, there is no information on how well the different groups of students achieve, for example girls compared to boys. Although there is plenty of positive anecdotal evidence, there is no formal feedback from the link schools on how successful the transition has been. The staff have done their best with the accommodation. Parents, students and visitors find an 'oasis of calm' and a reassuring welcome as they walk past neat walled vegetable gardens tended by the students, and clucking chickens which provide fresh eggs for the breakfast club. However, inside the centre, space is very cramped, and there are few suitable areas for practical or physical activities. Resources are just sufficient for the limited activities that are available, and satisfactory value for money is achieved. The centre judges itself as good, but most areas, like achievement, teaching, and accommodation, need attention. Therefore the inspector's view is that at present it performs satisfactorily, although there is good capacity to improve. The new management committee is newly formed, provides sound advice but has yet to become fully effective.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

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

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | No |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| 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

The Penwith EOOS Centre Alphington Lodge Alverton Place Penzance Cornwall TR18 4JJ

19 November 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for making me welcome and for helping me to inspect the centre. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you work. I particularly liked your chickens and garden. I have included some of your comments in the report.

This is what I found out about your centre:

the staff help you learn and make satisfactory progress, and you appreciate their help you enjoy coming to the centre you behave well and have a good attitude to your work you trust the staff and get on well with them your headteacher makes sure that the centre runs smoothly

There are some things which your headteacher can do to make the centre even better:

offer you a wider range of subjects like PE, music, drama, physics and chemistry get together with the local authority to give you better accommodation and to give everyone the chance to quickly return to mainstream schools introduce more ways of checking that students are achieving as much as they can.

Perhaps more of you could think about joining in with activities to keep you fit and active.

Thank you again for all your help.

Dr Mick Megee Lead Inspector