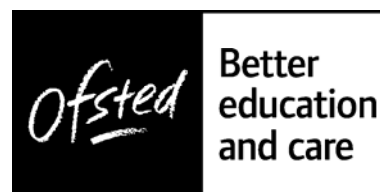


Tribal Education  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

Ofsted helpline  
08456 404045  
edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Mr Robin Kneebone  
The Headteacher  
Cape Cornwall School  
Cape Cornwall Road  
St Just  
Penzance  
TR19 7JX

3 May 2006

Dear Mr Kneebone

**SCHOOLS WHERE THE PUPILS' BEHAVIOUR HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CONCERN BY INSPECTION: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CAPE CORNWALL SCHOOL**

**Introduction**

Following my visit with John English and Valerie Greatrex, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 28 and 29 March 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was a first monitoring inspection as part of the programme of visits to schools where the pupils' behaviour has been identified as a concern by inspection.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of receipt of this letter.

**Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, chair of governors, nominated staff, groups of pupils and representatives from the local authority (LA). During the visit inspectors sampled lessons to track the impact of the school's actions to improve the management of behaviour, visiting about a half of the classrooms. This sample was not necessarily representative of the whole school.

## **Context**

There have been a few changes in staffing since the inspection in January 2005. The turnover in staff and pupils is relatively low. The number on roll is falling, reflecting the changes in the age profile in the area and the increase in holiday homes. Management roles have been restructured. The school has successfully applied for specialist status in the arts from September 2006, focusing on photography, art and music.

## **Achievement and standards**

Over the last three years, standards in Year 9 and Year 11 have been average. The school is rightly proud of the pupils' achievements. Test and examination results show that the pupils have made steady and appropriate progress from their starting points.

In 2005, pupils achieved really well in mathematics in Year 9 and Year 11. Achievement in English in Year 11 was satisfactory but the target set for Year 9 was not reached. Girls' achievement was better than in most other schools. No particular group of pupils had unsatisfactory achievement.

In the fifteen lessons pupils' learning was outstanding in two, good in three, adequate in five and inadequate in five. In the good and outstanding lessons pupils made good gains in knowledge, they showed a clear understanding of the topic that they studied, and they applied new skills competently. In the inadequate lessons pupils' progress was too slow.

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

The pupils responded well to teachers who were consistent in their management of behaviour and who set clear expectations in their lessons. In the effective lessons pupils behaved very well and were willing and, in some cases, enthusiastic learners. In a few inadequate lessons the pupils knew that, so long as they kept reasonably quiet, the teacher would not bother them and so for much of the lesson they did very little work.

Around the school and in lessons there were no incidents of aggressive behaviour or severe disruption. Behaviour around the school has improved considerably, helped by more effective and targeted supervision at break and lunch times. The pupils interviewed confirmed that behaviour at these times was much better now.

The pupils also spoke very warmly about the increased opportunities that they have to take responsibility and for their voices to be heard. The school

council actively encourages pupils to contribute to making changes, for example in making decisions about the new uniform and the welcome healthier food options at lunch time.

The confidential email helpline for concerns about bullying is viewed very positively by the pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils needing advice and help to be mentored by staff at the school and from external services. These avenues are used by a great many pupils. A few older pupils felt that they would not be comfortable talking to a member of staff about personal problems preferring to talk things over with their friends. However, many would happily approach teachers about work problems.

The school's records of unacceptable behaviour and the number of referrals to the isolation room in school and fixed term exclusions from school show that the degree of unacceptable behaviour remains very high. This school year there have already been 70 fixed term exclusions compared with 69 recorded in the school's self-evaluation form for the whole school year 2004 to 2005. The records for referrals to the isolation room show that this sanction is also used for very challenging behaviours and there have been over 50 referrals to the isolation room this term alone. These figures raise serious concerns about the school's capacity to reduce the amount of unacceptable behaviour.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2005:

- address the issue of pupils' lack of confidence in approaching staff and improve opportunities for the pupils' voice to be heard—good progress
- deal with bad behaviour and unreported bullying more effectively—limited progress in dealing with bad behaviour but sensible steps have been taken to encourage the reporting of bullying.

### **Quality of provision**

Where teaching was effective pupils engaged with the lesson, showed a degree of enjoyment, and made good progress. Teachers' plans included a variety of activities that built coherently towards the objectives that are set. Practical work, discussion, problem solving or other imaginative tasks proved both popular and productive. Lessons without that variety, but which used a brisk sequence of focused tasks, also worked well particularly where tasks were carefully designed to match the capability of the pupils and where learning routines were well established.

Where learning was inadequate, there were a number of key reasons. There was some dull teaching which relied too heavily on worksheets or exercises

that demanded too little of the pupils. In some instances the teacher spent too long talking at the pupils without encouraging active participation on their part. Some teachers had low expectations of how the pupils should work when set to do individual or paired tasks.

There is still inconsistency in expectations of behaviour. In some lessons teachers insist on pupils paying attention and working with good application. In others teachers overlook pupils' lack of commitment to learning. For example, pupils were seen listening to personal audio systems at inappropriate times. There is also some inconsistency in the application of the behaviour system particularly in relation to how many warnings or other sanctions a pupil receives before the school system, leading to removal from the classroom, takes effect.

Senior managers have arranged support for some teachers where the need has been identified to raise expectations of pupils' behaviour or rate of progress. However, a number of lessons where learning was inadequate were taught by teachers who have not been identified by senior managers as in need of this type of support.

The school has improved the attractiveness of the rewards offered for good work and good attitudes. Pupils spoke appreciatively of the rewards and of the recognition of their efforts through, for example, the naming of 'super students'. Supervision around the site has improved. A police officer played a key role in a Year 10 lesson that included some pupils with challenging behaviour, illustrating the good liaison between staff and external agencies.

The systems for managing unacceptable behaviour have been reviewed in order to make them more transparent and to provide a staged response to pupils with challenging behaviours. The staff have recorded usages of the system over the last two years but records are not fully reliable. The deputy headteacher is already, and sensibly, networking with other schools to research user friendly databases that will improve the security of the school's records.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2005:

- address weaknesses in teaching, through raising expectations of pupils' behaviour—limited progress.

## **Leadership and management**

There are many initiatives under way, or just about to be implemented, aimed at providing support for weaker teachers and also at improving

teaching, learning and classroom management in general. Some of these have resulted in improvements, for example, in the quality of the teaching of some of the individuals concerned.

A lack of coordination, however, means that the initiatives are not as effective as they could be. Monitoring is inconsistent. The senior managers have not monitored the quality of teaching and its impact on behaviour systematically. They therefore do not have a clear idea of the nature of the weaknesses and exactly where they occur. As a result, the many good practices that are being advocated are not having enough impact and the school has not made sufficient progress in improving teaching.

The school is rightly proud of its commitment to inclusion and welcomes pupils who have experienced severe problems in other schools. Many staff have worked energetically, and with commitment, to support the large number of pupils who have particular needs and those whose behaviour presents severe challenges. The heads of upper and lower school have shouldered considerable responsibilities in this area. They and other staff go out of their way to help pupils deal not only with life in school but with problems they experience outside.

Sustaining this level of intensive activity is very demanding. The capacity to deliver long term reductions in the level of unacceptable behaviour has not been clearly demonstrated as yet. This is because strategies for managing behavioural difficulties are not sufficiently underpinned by settled organisational structures, systems and practice. The senior managers have not evaluated the school's capacity to reduce the amount of unacceptable behaviour rigorously enough.

As outlined in this letter, the school has made a purposeful stride forwards in one improvement area. In the other two areas progress has not been good enough. More incisive monitoring and evaluation systems are needed to help senior managers to establish the school's capacity to deal with challenging behaviour and the sustainability of the strategies used for this purpose.

### **External support**

Local authority consultants have been actively supporting the school in the last few years. The school has appreciated the guidance and support provided. A new behaviour consultant started working with the school in February 2006. He is assigned to the school three or four days per week until July 2006. This intensive support is part of an LA pilot project focused on improving behaviour management and intended to develop good practice that can be shared with other schools.

To date, a main thrust of this intensive support is to clarify procedures for behaviour management and ensure that the recording of behaviour incidents and their follow up is fully reliable. Another priority is to establish pupil, staff and parental views about behaviour. Questionnaires have been developed and, wisely, there has been discussion about ways to ensure that all feel comfortable in sharing their views so that responses will reflect opinion accurately. These are sensible measures which are long overdue. The LA's behaviour report in February 2006 was not sufficiently informed by such information or by an incisive evaluation of trends in behaviour. Consequently, the project's next steps and its intended impact are not clearly mapped out yet.

### **Main Judgements**

The school has made inadequate progress towards improving the pupils' behaviour. This visit has raised serious concerns about the standard of education provided by the school and I am recommending a return visit.

The school and LA should send a short report to the lead HMI outlining the actions they have taken to improve the pupils' behaviour and their impact. This report should be received within 20 working days of the end of this monitoring inspection. This report will inform the timing of the return visit.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

In order to reduce the amount of unacceptable behaviour, senior managers should:

- coordinate the various initiatives that are taking place to improve teaching, learning and classroom management
- clarify the school's approach to managing behaviour—strategies, systems and responsibilities
- monitor the implementation of this approach and develop a secure overview of practice
- evaluate the impact of the school's management of behaviour rigorously to establish whether the school has the capacity to meet the wide range of pupils' needs effectively and efficiently over time.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

**Brenda Cusdin H M Inspector**