

7 December 2006

Mrs Rachel Chapman
District Manager
North Cornwall EOOS Centre
30a Market Place
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PL32 9PD

Dear Mrs Chapman

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF NORTH CORNWALL EOOS CENTRE

Introduction

Following my visit with Mary Massey HMI to your school on 22 and 23 November 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2005.

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

Evidence

Inspectors observed seven lessons, scrutinised documents, and met with the manager, deputy manager, teachers, chair of the management committee, centre secretary and representatives from the local authority (LA). A visit was also made to a nearby farm used by the centre to provide vocational education.

Context

Since the last visit a permanent deputy manager of the centre has been appointed. Also, pupils of primary age have been readmitted to their local schools and currently only pupils aged between 14 and 16 years attend the centre.

Achievement and standards

The achievement of pupils has improved since the time of the last visit, although it remains unsatisfactory. Achievement in public examinations in 2006 was poor, with one third of the pupils in Year 11 leaving without any qualifications. Pupils recognise they are now making better progress in lessons, particularly in practical and vocational subjects. As a result, most are on course to achieve accreditation in a variety of subjects in 2007. The system for recording progress has been in place for a year and is being used well to check pupils' progress. Pupils are set targets as a result of the assessments and these are shared with their parents and carers.

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

- improve the achievements of pupils and the system to record their progress – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. It is good in practical and vocational lessons where pupils are interested in the topics and display positive attitudes. These courses are also preparing pupils well for their future employment. Pupils eat fruit regularly, which is provided by the centre, and fewer now smoke outside the building due to provision of a wider range of alternative activities. The centre has set up rigorous systems for checking pupils' attendance. Absences are followed up immediately and pupils are set targets for improvement. Data is recorded electronically and the performance of different groups is analysed. Evidence confirms pupils' attendance has improved and the number of exclusions has fallen. There is a very small number of pupils who do not attend regularly, which reduces the overall success rate.

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

- improve the attendance of pupils and the ways this is checked – good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning have improved but remain inadequate. Some good lessons were seen where pupils worked hard because they were interested in the activity. This was particularly evident in practical lessons, for example food technology, and in the vocational courses provided at a local farm. Pupils develop positive attitudes in these subjects and speak proudly of their achievements. They are involved fully and take responsibility for their learning. In approximately one quarter of lessons teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This is because the content of the lesson does not capture pupils' interest sufficiently and, as a result, they lose concentration. Small

scale disruption follows, such as verbal banter, and too little work is completed. Some rules are not yet applied consistently by teachers. This limits the development of pupils' social skills and their understanding of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. Teachers' planning has improved. Satisfactory use is made of assessment information to plan lessons and work generally contains the right amount of challenge for pupils. Pupils receive satisfactory academic guidance. Targets are used effectively to help pupils improve their work and some pupils discuss their progress at the end of lessons.

The curriculum has been extended considerably since the time of the last inspection. More practical and vocational courses are provided which pupils enjoy. These courses motivate pupils to learn and encourage them to attend. The excellent land studies and young enterprise courses offered at the local farm are extremely well organised and very popular with pupils. All pupils attending the centre, including those with statements, receive sufficient taught time. In addition to the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, pupils have access to art and food technology at the centre. Some pupils have access to specialist physical education provision, and all undertake physical activity at the farm. Creative arts are provided through special events organised by North Cornwall Arts. Personal, social and health education is delivered with support from Cornwall Youth Service. Careers education is provided through Connexions and pupils follow a preparation for work GCSE entry level course at the centre.

The curriculum is successful in meeting the needs of pupils at Key Stage 4 but would need further planning should Key Stage 3 pupils be admitted.

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

- improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that there is more emphasis on planning lessons that will enable pupils to learn and make good progress – satisfactory
- improve the quality of the curriculum, particularly for pupils with statements of special educational needs, by offering a much wider range of experiences – good.

Leadership and management

The centre manager provides determined leadership and is committed to raising standards. Much has been achieved in a relatively short period of time since her appointment. The appointment of a permanent deputy manager has strengthened senior management and the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are clear. Effective systems have been introduced to check pupils' attendance and several improvements have been made to the curriculum. The range of accredited courses has been extended and there is a strong focus on improving pupils' achievement. The centre has produced a detailed

and accurate analysis of its performance. Data is being used effectively to check pupils' performance and set targets for improvement. Teaching is monitored regularly and there are appropriate plans in place for developing the centre's work further.

The management committee now provides satisfactory support for the centre. Recent training has focused the committee on how to monitor the centre's work and individual committee members have assumed oversight of aspects of the centre's work. The committee has pursued, with the LA, the issue of inadequate accommodation and considered the admission arrangements for new pupils.

The stronger leadership and more effective work of the management committee demonstrate that the centre's capacity for further improvement has improved and is now satisfactory.

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

- establish a permanent, effective senior management team and management committee, ensuring that the performance of all staff is monitored regularly – good.

External support

The local authority provides a good level of support. Several consultants have visited the centre and provided advice for teachers, including those for information and communication technology, mathematics, English, science and behaviour management. An independent consultant has provided support for improving teaching and learning and given training to the management committee. The LA has reviewed the admissions criteria for the centre and is actively seeking more suitable accommodation.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring all lessons capture pupils' interest and teachers apply consistently rules regarding pupils' behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
H M Inspector