

# Cape Cornwall School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112063
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	310780
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	438
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Joyce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jackie Steel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Cape Cornwall Road St Just Penzance TR19 7JX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 788501
<b>Fax number</b>	01736 787100

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small secondary school serves a rural area in the far west of Cornwall. It is the most westerly secondary school in mainland England. Almost all pupils are of White British or White Cornish ethnicity. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although a few have more severe difficulties or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual ones is above average. The school has Arts specialist status and holds the Artsmark Gold Award. The present headteacher took up her post in February 2008, and a new deputy headteacher joined the staff in September 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cape Cornwall is a good school. It is going through a time of change, following the recent appointment of new senior and middle leaders, and is improving rapidly. Standards in the GCSE and other assessments at the end of Year 11 are average, but as pupils start school with below average attainment, this represents good achievement. Standards are above average in mathematics, science, geography, history and music. In English, standards in recent years have been below average, but scrutiny of the work of current pupils and the school's own assessments of their progress shows that they are now making better progress in the subject. The same is true in physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT).

At the time of the last inspection in 2005, pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory, and there was unreported bullying. Following action by the staff, led by the new headteacher, behaviour is much improved and is now good. Parents and other members of the community report that behaviour outside school is also greatly improved, and pupils appreciate a more ordered environment with clearer expectations. They enjoy school, as shown by their above-average attendance, and say they are finding lessons more interesting. They also say that bullying has reduced and that they have more confidence in reporting it. That which does occur is rarely physical.

The good teaching and learning arises from interesting lessons in which good use is often made of ICT to stimulate pupils' interest. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and are now carefully tracking their progress, setting targets, and adapting the curriculum to meet their individual needs. Teaching assistants provide very good support to those with more severe learning difficulties who therefore make good progress. However, they are not always deployed in a way that uses their skills to best effect with all pupils that need their help. In some lessons, pupils are not always clear about what they are learning and how to improve their work, for example through helpful marking or by assessing their own progress. There is a good emphasis on learning related to the world of employment and a good range of additional activities, some of which have recently been introduced. One boy said, 'We now have fixtures (against other schools), which is great!' Currently, pupils' opportunities to study a modern foreign language are limited but plans are in place to address this. Arts specialist status has led to increased popularity and higher standards in subjects which include art and photography at GCSE. The school is rightly broadening its approach to its Arts status to include a wider range of subjects and greater contributions to and from the local community. The individual knowledge staff have of pupils leads to good care and support, and pupils are now being set challenging targets for what they can achieve, hence academic guidance is good.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has developed good plans to rectify the latter. However, some of these have not at present been explained clearly to other stakeholders, including parents and governors. As a result, while many parents support the changes taking place, a significant group has yet to be convinced of the value to their children's education. Good appointments have been made that enhance the existing strengths in senior and middle leadership. As a result, standards in subjects such as English and PE are improving to match those of already successful subjects such as mathematics and music. Governors support the school well and challenge it to improve. Demanding targets have been set and are on course to be met. Most staff are enthusiastic about the changes taking place and their morale is high, but the rigour and rapid pace rightly demanded by the headteacher

results in a high workload for the relatively small team. However, there has been good improvement since the last inspection and the enthusiasm of staff promises well for this to continue.

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

- In all subjects, through effective marking and assessment of their own work, enable pupils to understand better how to improve their work and hence make even better progress.
- Ensure that parents and other stakeholders are fully informed about the school's future plans, so that they are better able to support their children's learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In national tests taken at the end of Year 9, pupils attain above average standards in mathematics and science and average standards in English. Overall, this represents good achievement, especially as many pupils start in Year 7 with reading ages well below those expected. In GCSE examinations taken at the end of Year 11 in 2007, standards were broadly average, although they were higher in some subjects such as mathematics, art and music than in others, including modern foreign languages and ICT. These differences were more pronounced among boys than among girls. Data shows that in 2008 there have been good improvements in standards, including in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grade A\* to C passes. These standards represent good progress and achievement by all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The improvements are showing in pupils' current work and the school has good plans to raise standards further, and to even out the relative performance of boys and girls in subjects such as English and ICT.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, as shown by their improved behaviour and good attitudes to learning. Pupils have a very good understanding of the culture of their local area, as shown in an assembly celebrating the unique nature and culture of West Cornwall. They also make a good and improving contribution to the local community, for example through paired activities with primary school pupils, and by welcoming residents, including the elderly, into school. Their wider understanding of world culture is less well developed, although the school is working hard to remedy this by forming international links.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lives. They know the importance of diet and exercise and are especially keen on water sports such as swimming and surfing. They have a good knowledge of the dangers of substance abuse. Because of the good provision to develop teamwork and an understanding of the world of work, and good development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, pupils are well prepared to face the challenges of adult life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and convey this with enthusiasm. They use ICT well to gain pupils' interest, for instance in history when Year 7 pupils discussed the merits

of Henry V as a leader. Teachers involve pupils well, enabling them to make good progress, for example when lower attaining Year 10 pupils were learning about alternate and complementary angles in mathematics. Systems of tracking pupils' progress, introduced recently, now enable teachers to identify and meet pupils' individual learning needs. The use of marking and other techniques to show pupils how to improve their work is variable, and in some lessons, what pupils are meant to be learning is not clear to them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets requirements and has a number of strengths. The provision of more time for English teaching is leading to better progress in the subject, but has also led to reduced opportunities for pupils to study a modern foreign language. At GCSE, the curriculum has been adjusted successfully to deal with past weaknesses, for example through the adoption of new syllabi for science. A range of vocational courses meets the needs of the pupils well. The provision in response to Arts specialist status has been reviewed, and a new approach, broadening the involvement of all subjects, has made a promising start. The curriculum is enhanced well by diverse additional activities including sport, science, drama and music, and is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with particular abilities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils receive good care, and all requirements to protect children are in place. A particular strength is the fact that in this relatively small school, most pupils are known to individual staff and those with emotional or learning challenges are given personal attention. There are good and improving relationships with local primary and secondary schools, local businesses and with most parents. A good indicator of the school's success in guiding its pupils is the fact that over 90 per cent of those who left Year 11 in 2008 proceeded to full-time further education. Targets and the tracking of pupils' progress are used increasingly well to enhance achievement, but are not yet used equally effectively in all subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The last year has been one of major change in the leadership and management of the school. The very effective team of new and longer-serving leaders and managers has brought dynamism and enthusiasm, and a wealth of new ideas. To quote a governor, 'there is an aspiration for excellence'. For the most part, plans are the result of effective monitoring and evaluation of vital matters such as pupils' achievement and behaviour, and the quality of teaching. The approach to Arts specialist status has rightly been reviewed, and good plans for a new approach have been drawn up.

Expectations of pupils and staff have been raised dramatically, leading some to conclude that leadership is too assertive. However, the positive impact of change in many aspects of the school's work is already clear. A long-serving member of staff said 'I feel re-energised – I enjoy coming to school again', a view echoed by many others. Some changes, particularly those concerning the curriculum and management systems, have not always been explained effectively to parents or, in some cases, to governors. Apart from this one issue, the inspection found no

evidence to support the range of concerns expressed by a significant minority of parents. Indeed, the school is reaching out to the community in a way not achieved in the recent past, making a good contribution to community cohesion. The changes initiated, although introduced at a fast pace and not always ruthlessly prioritised, are nevertheless proving effective and deserve support.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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**Overall effectiveness**

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

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

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

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Cape Cornwall School, Penzance TR19 7JX

My colleagues and I greatly enjoyed our recent visit to Cape Cornwall. We found you to be friendly and confident young people who are able to express your views very clearly. We were especially interested in what you think of some of the changes that have happened at school recently.

Cape Cornwall is a good school, and it is improving quickly. You make good progress in your work and those who left recently got average results in their GCSEs. We think you will do better than this because of the changes being made.

You behave well, and most of you like the fact that students behave better in school and around the town. In the assembly on Cornish culture and language, you behaved politely and with interest, and were courteous to the adult speakers. You are starting to have a lot more contact with the local and world communities, which is good.

You told us that you enjoy school, and find the lessons interesting. We agree that the teaching is good; we especially enjoyed the Year 7 discussion about Henry V in history. The curriculum is also good. It is changing, making it more relevant to your adult lives, and you are being offered more extra activities. You are enthusiastic about these, especially the sport.

The adults care for you well and those of you who have problems with the work or in your lives generally can get help from people who know you well.

The changes being made are improving the school. We have asked the school to make sure they are explained clearly to your parents and other people interested in the school. We have also asked that you are given more help to improve your work, for instance when it is being marked. You can help by politely asking for help when you do not understand something, or by discussing things that concern you with a member of staff.

We wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector