

# Restormel Pupil Referral Unit

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 134752             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cornwall           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 328966             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 12–13 October 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mick Megee         |

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>                      | Pupil referral unit                       |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Pupil referral unit                       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16                                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 27  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                        |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | No current chair                          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Gary Owens                                |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 1 July 2007                               |
| <b>School address</b>                      | 16 Carlyon Road<br>St Austell<br>PL25 4AJ |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons, and held meetings with members of the management committee, staff, groups of students and parents. He observed the centre's work and looked at students' work, centre policies, external reports and three parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the centre's work, looking in detail at the following:

- how well different groups of students achieve
- the quality of the accommodation and its impact upon outcomes and provision
- the quality of the support given to students for reintegration into mainstream education.

## Information about the school

The centre provides education and support for young people who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. Students are expected to return to their mainstream school or college after two terms at the centre, although this period is extended if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the student. Students come from St Austell or the surrounding area. Four of the students currently at the centre have a statement of special educational needs, specifying the students' behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The Restormel Centre provides a good education for its students. There is good practice in almost all areas, and this represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when the centre was judged satisfactory. The centre provides its students with good personal support, care and safeguarding. As a result, students successfully overcome many of the personal difficulties they had experienced previously and most are able to return quickly to their schools, or on to mainstream college where this is appropriate. This good achievement is principally a result of the improvements in the teaching and curriculum brought about by the hard work and good leadership of the headteacher and his team, supported very well by the local authority. Parents all expressed their appreciation of the way in which the centre helps to turn around the lives of their children. As one said, 'My son was always being chastised, and it was like his intelligence was being pushed further down. This place brings their goodness out. He now has self-worth. He believes in himself again.'

Senior staff have put in place a good system whereby teachers carefully record students' standards each term, allowing progress to be closely tracked during the students' stay. Although the students' previous difficulties mean that they have experienced a fragmented education, the tracking shows that most students make good progress while at the centre, attain broadly average standards and go on to gain creditable results in their examinations. The centre's information also shows that progress in English is not quite as strong as progress in mathematics and science. The centre has already identified that their very difficult experiences of schooling mean that many students arrive with a poor view of themselves as learners. This has resulted in a lack of self-confidence, particularly in reading. The centre is working to address this issue through having a daily reading time and through ensuring that worksheets and lesson materials are set at the right literacy level for every student. While teaching is generally good, not all teachers are adept at tailoring the work in this way with the required precision. This holds progress back for a few students.

The centre has set up a system so that every student has a small number of short-term behaviour and learning targets that are reviewed at least every fortnight with a member of staff who is designated as their personal mentor. The mentor system is a key element in the improved behaviour seen all round the centre. However, mentors and teachers do not always place sufficient emphasis on the learning targets, with the result that some students, when asked, cannot say what their targets are, for example in reading or spelling.

The curriculum is good, with a strong focus on increasing students' basic skills and in providing exciting enrichment activities, particularly at the Forest School on a nearby

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farm. The students enjoy what the centre has to offer; their attendance improves significantly, and in almost all cases this improvement holds up after they return to school.

The headteacher and senior staff make effective use of a good range of monitoring activities so that they have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre's operation. It works extremely well with its partners in education, health and social services. The track record of continuing improvement and accurate self-evaluation mean that the centre has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - teachers always provide activities that match the students' different needs and capabilities
  - teachers always provide worksheets that are at the correct literacy level for every student.
- Ensure that all students know what they have to do next in order to improve by ensuring that:
  - teachers consistently emphasise each student's learning targets in lessons
  - individual learning targets are reviewed regularly with mentors.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

The good quality of learning and the students' good performance in lessons is confirmed by the school's analysis of results and progress information. Standards are broadly average, although many students join the centre having had a poor experience of education and almost all have significant gaps in their learning. Most of the students, after a short while at the centre, begin to recover their self-confidence, settle down to their work and make good progress. Only two students over the past three years have not managed to return to school or go on to college or work. Achievement for all students, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is therefore good overall. Students say, and this was borne out by lesson observations, that they feel encouraged, valued and respected by the staff, and within the small groups they have the opportunity to blossom as individuals. One student's typical comment was, 'They always ask you for your opinion, and they listen to what you say in an adult way.' Almost all the students who take examinations gain results at or above their expected levels, and there is no discernible difference in the achievement of the different gender or other groups at the centre.

The students know that they have been offered an educational lifeline and almost all grab it with both hands. As one student put it, 'I'm really glad to be here. It's much better for me now. I feel I'm getting sorted at last.' Lesson observations, the centre's data and discussions with students confirmed that there is only a little classroom disruption and that students' behaviour improves steadily and is good overall. There is

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often good-humoured banter in lessons and evident mutual respect. A very small number of students, who were virtual non-attenders at their previous schools, have not been able to improve their attendance despite the centre's and the local authority's best efforts. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall and the centre accurately recognises that students have yet to develop a very good insight into the similarities and differences between their own and others' cultures.

Students say there is very little bullying at the centre and that they feel safe. They say that there are adults in the centre to whom they would turn if they had a serious problem, and in many cases this would be their personal mentor. Students have an understanding of what constitutes a healthy life, and there is a good take-up of sporting activities such as dance and football. However, many of the students continue to smoke, despite the centre's staff offering programmes of assistance.

Students enthusiastically take up opportunities to help in the local community, for example by undertaking sports leadership responsibilities in football and dance. They undertake duties within the centre such as cooking meals for each other and the staff. Students say they feel they have a good voice through the student council, which advises the centre staff of students' views about issues such as the uniform and the reward system. Students develop a good range of skills that they will need for the next stage of their lives. They learn how to cooperate with each other and work as a team. They make good progress in the basic skills of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology. All students in Year 11 undertake a good range of work experience in a very wide range of settings.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>                             | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>  | 3        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress   | 2        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>                           | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>3</b> |

**How effective is the provision?**

Classroom staff work well together, providing the students with good role models of what can be achieved by effective teamwork. Teachers give the students good guidance and feedback verbally and through marking. Teachers display very good subject knowledge and are innovative and flexible in providing activities that will appeal to the students and successfully promote their enjoyment of learning. A good example of this was a science lesson called 'Tinkle Testing' in which the students had to discover the identity of a criminal through testing (fake) urine samples. The students enjoyed the practical activities very much, writing down their results on a 'Piddle Chart' and very good learning took place. One parent commented, 'They know how to get the best out of your kids here. My son even loves English now. That's unbelievable. The English teacher is a god in our house.' Teachers make good use of assessment to work out how well students are progressing and what they need to do next. Not all teachers are fully effective in using this assessment information when planning for the different individual needs within the class. Staff set individual targets for priority skills, such as literacy and numeracy, but these are not always sufficiently well emphasised in lessons or meetings with mentors. This means that not all students know their targets or how to reach them quickly.

The curriculum is tailored well to provide the students, including those with a statement of special educational needs, with the skills they will need to return quickly and successfully to mainstream schools or colleges. In the Forest School the students learn about using tools safely and effectively in order to build wooden shelters and traditional stiles. The centre has improved its accommodation since the last inspection, and now provides a satisfactory environment for learning, although one or two classrooms are uncomfortably small, and there is only a very small outside area for recreation. The centre makes good use of the nearby leisure centre and local schools for sporting activities.

Staff give the students very good personal support that the students and their families appreciate and value. One typical parental comment was, 'At his previous school, you knew he'd had a frustrating day when you found all his pencils broken in the bottom of his bag. Now he gets the right counselling to deal with his emotional needs. He's never had that before.' The reward system works very well, and the students work hard to be in the 'Green Zone' each week. Parents welcome the detailed weekly report they receive through the post, that enables them to support their children effectively at home. Very good links with other agencies such as social and health services are used very well to give further support when it is required.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The management committee, the headteacher and his team display a strong commitment to doing the very best for the students. Their leadership has brought about good personal and academic outcomes that significantly improve the students' life chances. One of the key elements to the centre's success is the excellent collaboration within the management committee between senior staff at the mainstream schools and those in the centre, brokered through very strong support from the local authority. This has ensured that, from the start, each student has a clear plan for the future from the centre and has resulted in significant reductions in both fixed-term and permanent exclusions throughout the local secondary schools.

The centre's leadership team have introduced good management systems that underpin its successful work. There is good monitoring of staff performance through regular lesson observations and a clear identification of areas for improvement. The new tracking system is showing how much progress students are making and where things could be better. Senior staff analyse the results closely to detect any variation between gender, age or ability groups, even though this may involve relatively small numbers. In this way, the centre can regularly check whether there is any discrimination or inequality. With the new data system in place, the senior staff and management committee have very good information on which to base their planning for further improvement.

The centre has good safeguarding procedures and all statutory requirements are met. The management committee effectively holds the centre to account by providing good support and challenge to the leadership team. The centre has carried out a concise review about the extent to which it promotes community cohesion. Implementation of the recommendations, while satisfactory, is still at an early stage, although there are some good outcomes within the centre and the local community. For example, the centre operates a vigorous recycling policy including a compost maker, and students collect disused mobile phones in order to raise money for visually impaired students.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>2</b> |

## Views of parents and carers

A very small proportion of parents returned questionnaires. Those who did were almost all positive. Comments praised the centre's relationship with parents and students, the quality of teaching and the students' enjoyment of lessons, saying things such as, 'The school has given him ambitions in life and has given me great peace of mind about my son's future.' There was only one concern from a parent that their child was not enjoying school. The inspector judged that relationships with parents and carers are very constructive, and upheld the positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Restormel Pupil Referral Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 3 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 27 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 1              | 33 | 1     | 33 | 1        | 33 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 1              | 33 | 2     | 67 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 2              | 67 | 1     | 33 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.  |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 39  | 58   | 3            | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 13  | 50   | 33           | 4          |
| Secondary schools    | 17  | 40   | 34           | 9          |
| Sixth forms          | 18  | 43   | 37           | 2          |
| Special schools      | 26  | 54   | 18           | 2          |
| Pupil referral units | 7   | 55   | 30           | 7          |
| All schools          | 15  | 49   | 32           | 5          |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.  |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.   |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.   |
| Learning:                  | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.   |
| Overall effectiveness:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.  |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



Dear Students

Inspection of Restormel Pupil Referral Unit, St Austell, PL25 4AJ

It was a great pleasure coming to visit you this week to see how you are all getting on. A special thanks to those of you who came to talk to me, and to those students who showed me how to use a bow saw safely at the Forest School. A special thanks for the delicious vegetarian lasagne, which I enjoyed very much. Would you please also thank your parents for filling in the questionnaires and coming in to tell about the good work that goes on at your centre.

This is what I found out about your centre, and these findings agree with what most of you said in your questionnaires and in our discussions.

- The centre provides you with a good education.
- You make good academic progress at the centre because of the good teaching and support you are given.
- Your behaviour and attendance improve very well because of the good care and guidance given to you, and this stands you in good stead for returning to school, or going on to college.
- The curriculum is enjoyable and shows you how learning can be fun.
- Those who lead the centre do a good job and make sure things run smoothly.

In order to make things even better, I have asked the centre to do the following:

- make sure that you all know your individual targets, so that you can work hard at achieving them
- make sure that all teachers give you work and worksheets at exactly the right level for each of you.

You told me that a lot of you still smoke, and I hope you will do your best to cut down or stop completely. Please try.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Mick Megee

Lead inspector

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