

Penwith Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 134753 |
| Local Authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 328967 |
| Inspection date | 5 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Sarah Mascal |

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

| | |
|---|--|
| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 5–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 26 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | Sarah van Horn |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 November 2005 |
| School address | Alphington Lodge Alverton Penzance TR18 4JJ |
| Telephone number | 01736 332341 |
| Fax number | 01736 368469 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 5–16 |
| Inspection date | 5 November 2008 |
| Inspection number | 328967 |

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Penwith is a small pupil referral unit (PRU) which educates students who have been, or are at risk, of being excluded from their mainstream schools. Many of the students have spent long periods out of school prior to joining the centre. At present, there are 13 students attending the PRU who have statements of special educational needs. As a result of gaps in students' education and of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards on entry are well below average. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their permanent posts in September 2007.

While the PRU takes pupils of primary school age, it rarely takes pupils between the ages of 5 and 7 and does not cater for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Plans are in place, and funding established, to move the centre to a new site in June 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Penwith is an improving PRU that at present provides a satisfactory education for its students. The leadership team has achieved a great deal in the last year, particularly in putting in place systems to support students' learning and personal development. Senior leaders are very well supported by staff and there is a strong sense of commitment within the PRU to provide the best for the students. Parents are very positive about the centre and the support they, and their children, have received from staff. Their comments can be summarised by one parent who wrote that her son 'had a very negative opinion of schools generally. At Penwith he has really blossomed. The staff have engaged him totally in all activities. He trusts them, enjoys going to the PRU and is progressing better than I could have ever hoped.'

Despite staff's best efforts, the PRU has been restricted in what it has been able to achieve in developing the curriculum because accommodation is poor and not fit for purpose. Space is very limited and this has meant that staff have had to find alternative activities for students during the school day as not all students are able to attend at the same time. Through the good use of the local community and the extended range of activities offered, students receive a satisfactory range of experiences. It has meant, though, that the amount of actual taught time available for students in the centre is lower than it should be. Teaching is satisfactory and, as a result, students' progress and achievements are satisfactory. All students in Years 10 and 11 leave with a range of accreditation and nearly all go on to further education. Many pupils of primary age and in Years 7, 8 and 9 return successfully to their mainstream schools. There are a number of strengths in teaching, for example staff are particularly effective in making lessons interesting and ensuring that work is linked to the courses students are following. However, the targets set for students to enable them to be clear about what they have to do to achieve are too broad and are not being used effectively by all staff in supporting students' learning.

The care and welfare of students is given a high priority by staff. New procedures for supporting students are beginning to have a positive impact and students make satisfactory progress in their personal development. They make good improvements in their behaviour and social skills and this is enabling a good proportion of those in Year 9 and below to return to mainstream schools. While they have an understanding of the need for staying healthy, many students are not yet putting this into practice, particularly in giving up smoking and eating healthily. They clearly enjoy attending the PRU and the vast majority have improved their attendance from their previous settings.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Clear direction and good teamwork have brought about a range of improvements. However, while staff have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre, self evaluation processes lack rigour. Data concerning students' progress are not sufficiently well used to identify precisely where improvements are needed. Although targets for improvement are in place, these are not sufficiently challenging or specific enough to enable senior staff to measure the centre's effectiveness accurately. Although senior managers are closely involved in the move to a new site, detailed planning to ensure that the move goes smoothly and the curriculum is effectively planned in the new premises is still being put in place. This move, together with the commitment of staff, ensures that the PRU has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete plans to move the PRU to its new site and ensure that there is detailed planning to extend the amount of teaching time for students and provides a broader, more balanced curriculum.
- Make better use of the data on students' achievements to ensure that targets for success within development planning are more challenging and measurable.
- Ensure that individual targets show students clearly how they can improve their work and that these targets are used by all staff to enhance students' learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards remain well below average due to their levels on entry and the disruption in students' education that many experienced before joining the centre and to students' learning difficulties. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and achievement is satisfactory. Students make faster progress in mathematics and science than they do in English because the development of literacy skills is not given sufficient emphasis across the curriculum. Action is now being taken to ensure that literacy is taught more effectively in other subjects to support the skills that students learn in English lessons.

Those students who stay at the centre until the end of Year 11 gain a range of accreditation including entry level and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). All students who are entered for GCSEs gain passes, with several achieving A to C passes. Younger students make satisfactory progress in their learning, and are often able to start back into mainstream having covered the same work as their peers. Those students with a statement of special educational needs make the same progress as their peers and many successfully return to mainstream settings.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students are very positive about the centre and what it has done for them. They enjoy the work and like the fact that they are treated as adults and 'teachers have more respect for you'. They feel they are learning, but that it is in a fun way and that they are doing far better than in their previous schools. Because of these factors, they have positive attitudes to learning and for many their attendance is much improved from their previous settings.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour in and around the centre is good. Students understand the behaviour systems and feel they are helping them to manage their behaviours. This is confirmed by parents who comment on how much their children have improved and gained in confidence and self-esteem. Students' social skills are generally good and this is reflected in the way they sit and listen to each other's views and are confident to put forward their own ideas. They socialise with staff at lunch times and enjoy the opportunity to sit together to eat. Although they understand the advantages of healthy living, they do not always follow this through and several are struggling to give up smoking

and drugs. Many, though, welcome the chance to participate in sporting events and are developing their skills in activities such as surfing and trampolining.

Students enjoy taking on responsibility and talk positively about the tasks they undertake in work experience. However, there are limited formal opportunities for them to be involved in the running of the centre. They enjoy being involved in the local community, although the PRU recognises the need to develop these opportunities further. Students are making satisfactory progress in acquiring relevant basic skills and workplace experience, and are prepared appropriately for life when they leave school

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Several staff are new to the PRU and bring with them recent experience in mainstream settings. This in turn is improving practice. Students' frequent positive comments about lessons acknowledge teachers' expertise at making lessons interesting. Teachers use resources well and plan activities carefully so that students learn through practical activities. Photographs, information and communication technology, flash cards and other resources are all used well to hold students' interest and keep them on task. Staff also use their subject knowledge well to make sure that students progress through their accredited courses, often planning for different groups within each lesson. Teachers, though, do not always make clear the learning outcomes of lessons and check that students understand what skills they have gained by the end of the lesson. The use of targets to support learning is fairly new and the targets set are often too broad, such as 'improve handwriting'. This in turn limits the usefulness of assessment in planning to meet needs and monitoring progress. At present, targets are not used effectively by all staff to promote students' skills in the different subject areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Staff have done much to make the centre an attractive and pleasant learning environment. However, there are insufficient rooms and space is very limited to enable the PRU to fully meet the needs of the students on site. The limited accommodation means that the PRU can only cater for a small number of students at any one time. Nevertheless, every effort is made to ensure all students have a full timetable, which typically includes a number of off site activities. The centre acknowledges that there is not enough emphasis on developing students' literacy skills in different subject areas. There are few specialist teaching rooms, although staff make best use of what is available to teach subjects such as cookery, ICT, music, art and science. Links have been established with a local college to extend students' skills in horticulture and the outside areas of the PRU have been developed well to provide opportunities for growing vegetables and fruit. The PRU has made good use of independent providers and local facilities to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for physical activities. Good links have been established to provide work placements. The PRU is working hard to improve links with colleges to provide more opportunities for students to attend courses.

The limited accommodation means that the PRU can only cater for a small number of students at any one time. While every effort is made to ensure all students have a full timetable, the PRU struggles to provide for everyone and opportunities for time in the PRU to cover the National Curriculum are limited. The move to the new, larger facility will enable staff to improve

provision. Senior managers are putting in place a development plan that will enable the PRU to provide a wider range of curriculum opportunities and a much more flexible approach to ensure students have access to a full teaching day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Effective systems have been established that ensure the PRU is a safe place to be and that students' personal and social skills are developed appropriately. Behaviour strategies are supporting staff and enabling students to manage their own behaviours. The good links with other agencies are used well and ensure students' health and well-being are supported effectively. The staff have also established good links with parents which also support students well. Procedures for ensuring students' safety, including child protection, risk assessments and the vetting of staff, are all in place and robust.

Systems for assessing the progress of students are being developed and at present, there are different systems in different subjects. Staff are rightly focused on developing ways to ensure students have an understanding of the levels they are at and what they need to do next to achieve. Each student has an individual education plan and, while students are clear about their personal and social targets, they are not able to readily recall their targets for learning in English, mathematics and science. The targets themselves are too broad to show students clearly what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have been successful in establishing a strong team that is committed to doing the best for the students. Their management style is open and ensures communication is good. As a result, staff are well informed and, for example, are able to have a consistent approach to students in dealing with their personal difficulties. There is a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the PRU but this has not been supported by a sufficiently well-focused analysis of all the information the centre has about its provision. Senior leaders have made a start in analysing the data they have gathered on students' progress in order to use this to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. Data are not yet used well enough to identify precisely where improvements are needed and targets for improvement are not sufficiently specific and challenging.

Staff have contributed well to the layout of the new PRU. However, detailed planning to support the move, particularly in terms of extending and broadening the curriculum, is not yet completed. Links with the local community are satisfactory and senior leaders have appropriate plans in place to develop close links with the new community when they move to the new site.

The role of the management committee has been reviewed and it now focuses on ensuring that the resources of the PRU are effectively used by the local schools. This emphasis has been successful and the PRU's involvement in the local school community is good. The management committee, with the support of the local authority, is currently developing a more strategic role to improve its effectiveness in monitoring the PRU's performance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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**

6 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Penwith PRU, Penzance. TR18 4JJ

Thank you for making me so welcome during the inspection. I enjoyed the opportunity to talk to you during the day. You were very positive in your comments about the PRU, as were your parents and carers. The PRU provides you with a satisfactory education and you make satisfactory progress in your learning.

Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about:

- You enjoy going to the PRU and as a result you are attending school more than you have done before.
- You enjoy all the opportunities for work experience and taking part in sporting activities.
- You have good relationships with staff and work hard in lessons.
- Teachers are good at thinking of different ways to help you learn.
- Staff have good links with your parents and carers and work closely with other agencies to help you.
- Staff have made the best use of the limited accommodation and are planning well for the move to new premises.

In order to make the centre even better, I have asked staff to:

- Rapidly complete plans to move the PRU to a new site in order that you can have a better range of activities and more teaching time.
- Improve the ways they check on how well the PRU is doing so that they can set more challenging targets to measure how good the PRU is.
- Make sure you have a better understanding of what you need to do to improve by improving the targets they give you and using them more effectively to support you in your learning.

I know some of you are struggling to give up smoking and I hope you will respond to the PRU's help in achieving this.

I wish you all well for the future. Yours faithfully

Sarah Mascall (Lead inspector)