

Tribal Group  
1-4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR  
T 0845 123 6001  
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



19 May 2009

Ms Sue Tysall  
The Head of Centre  
Caradon PRU  
West Street  
Liskeard  
PL14 6BS

Dear Ms Tysall

Fresh Start: monitoring inspection of Caradon PRU

## Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 12 and 13 May 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school opened in September 2007.

## Evidence

During the visit HMI observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the head of centre, deputy head of centre, a member of the management committee, teachers, a teaching assistant, head of the local authority PRU service, a link youth worker, parents and students.

## Context

Caradon PRU opened as a Fresh Start school in September 2007. It is part of the Caradon Behaviour Partnership Programme which includes five secondary and 44 primary schools. The roll has increased from 16 to 26 since the last visit and now includes more students than before who are in Key Stage 3. Three students have a statement of special educational needs for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Staffing has remained stable, with only one change following the return of a teacher from sick leave. A range of multi-gym equipment has been added to extend facilities for physical education.



## Achievement and standards

Standards are below national expectations, although students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points on entry to the PRU. Almost all students in Year 11 are expected to gain up to five graded passes at GCSE or the equivalent and a few will also leave with a vocational qualification. Students are set appropriate targets and their learning is assessed regularly to check progress. A significant number of students enter the PRU with a very low level of literacy and this is rightly identified as a priority for improvement. Staff are extending their knowledge of strategies for teaching basic literacy and are sharing approaches to developing the students' oral and written skills in other subjects. As a result, some students have made notable gains in their reading, although the full impact of these developments has yet to be realised.

## Personal development and well-being

Students have positive attitudes to learning and they enjoy coming to the PRU. This is demonstrated by their attendance, which is generally better than at their previous schools, although a small number of persistent absentees reduce the overall figures. Students behave well, they respect the equipment provided and the accommodation. The consistent and positive approach to behaviour management has resulted in a sharp fall in exclusions, which now happen infrequently. Students talk politely with visitors about their work and most feel they have benefited from attending the PRU. They are particularly pleased with the reward system which motivates them to try hard and to meet their individual behaviour targets. Students' self-esteem is promoted well through the attractive displays of their work around the PRU. Students were particularly proud of a recent display of their art at a local gallery. They have few other regular opportunities to share their successes and to celebrate their achievements with a wider group.

The PRU has made some progress in developing students' independence since the last visit. A useful policy has been drawn up for this, although its implementation is not yet consistent across all lessons. Students sometimes receive too much support with their learning and do not always take responsibility for organising their own equipment. Students understand the need for a healthy lifestyle. They eat healthy food at lunch time and particularly enjoy using the new multi-gym equipment. The PRU has successfully implemented a no smoking policy.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in February 2009:

- increase opportunities for students to develop their independence – satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and, whilst some teaching is occasionally good or outstanding, the self-evaluation of teaching as satisfactory

overall is accurate. Classroom routines are well established and a purposeful and calm atmosphere prevails in lessons. Teachers have a good understanding of students' individual needs and manage their behaviour tactfully to avoid unnecessary confrontation. This approach is appreciated by students. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, although occasionally opportunities are missed to make topics relevant to students' interests. The use of assessment information has improved since the last visit, and closer account is taken of students' literacy skills when planning lessons. However, using assessment and planning in detail are still inconsistent between subjects, and sometimes too much emphasis is placed on the task students are completing, rather than the skills and knowledge they are expected to learn.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 provides a core of academic and vocational subjects which is appropriate for students who are unlikely to return to a mainstream school. Work experience placements and vocational options in the community include work at a hairdresser's, a garage and on a farm. Plans to extend the range of subjects further and to offer more accredited courses are realistic. Several students in Key Stage 3 have recently been admitted. A satisfactory range of subjects is offered for this group and curriculum planning is currently being developed further. A suitable programme to enhance the students' skills in managing their own anger in challenging situations is being introduced. However, other opportunities for students to improve specific skills which will assist their successful return to mainstream school do not yet receive a high enough priority in the curriculum. The PRU has raised the profile of numeracy and literacy which has been recognised by achieving the Quality Mark status in basic skills. The length of the taught week meets the minimum requirements. A few students attend the PRU for most, but not all, of their education. Some of these students do not receive sufficient planned education for the sessions when they are not attending the PRU.

A positive system of mentoring is now firmly established. Staff have received training in 'coaching' and all students are assigned a personal mentor with whom to discuss their academic progress and behaviour. Targets for improvement are set and reviewed at weekly meetings. Students speak highly of the mentoring system; one commented, 'It helps to get things off your mind.' Termly reports and weekly telephone calls keep parents well informed about their child's progress. Appropriate arrangements are in place to support vulnerable students and those who have a statement of special educational needs. The PRU is building effective relationships with external agencies, for example with the youth service and the police, to strengthen the guidance it offers to young people.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in February 2009:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so a greater proportion is good or better – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

The head of centre, ably supported by her deputy, provides strong leadership and demonstrates a clear commitment to raising standards. These attributes have been central in establishing a positive environment for learning. Parents are seen as partners and are involved closely in their child's education. A small number who made their views known during the visit particularly valued the regular contact and the open and constructive approach to tackling any problems. The leadership has an accurate overall view of its strengths and areas for further development. Systems to check the students' progress against their individual targets are good, although data is not yet used to analyse the performance of groups of students and particular subjects in detail. Job descriptions are mostly in place, although a few do not set out roles and responsibilities in enough detail. This means that the oversight of some areas is not sharp enough. Not all teachers are suitably qualified for their role, although the PRU has supported the implementation of training that is due to begin later in the year. The management committee has been successful in promoting closer collaboration between the PRU and its partner schools which has included staff in the PRU making visits to link schools.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in February 2009:

- ensure all teachers are suitably qualified for their role – satisfactory.

## External support

The PRU continues to receive a good range of external support, which has included visits from the School Improvement Partner and subject advisers. This support has helped the PRU to gain Quality Mark status in basic skills and to develop its mentoring system.

## Main Judgements

The school's overall progress is satisfactory.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Increase opportunities for students to develop their independence.
- Extend curriculum planning for Key Stage 3 to include opportunities for students to develop the skills they need for their return to mainstream school.
- Work with partner schools to ensure that students on shared placements receive sufficient education.
- Ensure all teachers are suitably qualified for their role.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall and the Secretary of State. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath  
Her Majesty's Inspector