

Caradon Pupil Referral Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135394
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	348834
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Sue Tysall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited seven lessons led by seven teachers, held discussions with the chair of the management committee, head of a local secondary school, staff and students, and met with a group of parents. He observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including students' books, records of progress, curriculum documents, the school's improvement plan and three parental questionnaires. At the time of the inspection, Year 11 students were on study leave and their learning was not observed directly, although examples of their work and records of progress were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- how successful the reintegration programme is in helping students return to mainstream school
- students' attendance and arrangements for following up absences
- the extent to which the quality of teaching is uniform across the school
- the range of courses offered and opportunities for students to learn about different religious and cultural traditions
- the school's success in establishing effective leadership and how well it is demonstrating capacity to improve since its Fresh Start.

Information about the school

Caradon Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was opened as a Fresh Start PRU in September 2007 and refers to itself as a short stay school. It provides an education for students who have experienced difficulty in their mainstream school, often leading to exclusion. The school seeks to prepare students who are in Years 7 to 9 for return to a mainstream school, while providing older students with an alternative education linked to placements in the community. All students are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. Approximately two thirds are boys. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. Two students have a statement of special educational needs and three others are currently having their needs assessed. They have learning difficulties associated with the acquisition of basic numeracy and literacy skills. The school serves a wide catchment area in south-east Cornwall and forms part of the Caradon Behaviour for Learning Partnership with one primary and five secondary schools.

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

This short stay school provides a good quality of education. Its journey since the Fresh Start has been one of consistent improvement. Guided by the determined leadership of the headteacher, it has forged an excellent partnership with other schools in the Caradon Behaviour for Learning Partnership. The curriculum is good and students benefit from a wide range of academic and vocational courses geared to their individual needs. As a result, students re-engage with learning and make good progress. The PRU meets its aims particularly well in ensuring that all students progress to suitable destinations, and several return successfully to mainstream schools.

Classroom routines are well established and a very attractive environment for learning is enhanced by excellent displays of students' art work. As a result, students generally enjoy coming to school and behave well. The quality of teaching is improving but is currently too variable. Assessment information is used regularly to record students' levels of attainment in most subjects. However, this information is not always used to ensure work is matched closely to each student's level of ability, and the school's marking policy is not consistently implemented. A very small number of students experience difficulty with writing and, in some lessons, teachers do not employ clear strategies for improving it.

Students feel safe due to the high quality of care and concern shown by staff. They have a good understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle because this is promoted well by the opportunities for physical exercise and discussion of healthy eating. While students develop an understanding of different cultures from around the world, for example in art and food technology lessons, their knowledge of the different religious beliefs and cultural traditions in the United Kingdom is less well developed. Students' successes are celebrated through displays although there are few opportunities for achievements to be recognised and shared formally with other students. Attendance has improved rapidly because the school has established good communication with parents and carers and has robust systems for following up absences, but it remains an issue due to the persistent absence of a small minority of students.

Good systems are in place for self-evaluation and senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is observed regularly, although suggestions for improvement sometimes lack detail. Given the school's strong leadership, the trend of improvement since its Fresh Start and its reputation as a valued resource by partner schools, it demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - providing clearer strategies to help develop the writing skills of lower attaining students
 - making consistently good use of marking and assessment information in all classes to meet individual student's needs.
- Improve students' personal development by:
 - raising the attendance of the small number who do not attend regularly
 - providing all students with greater knowledge of the different religious beliefs and cultural traditions across the United Kingdom
 - providing formal opportunities for students to celebrate and share each other's successes.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - providing more detailed feedback following lesson observations on how teachers might improve their teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students join the school having experienced difficulty in their previous schools and some have had an extended period of exclusion. They settle and achieve well during their time at the school. They particularly appreciate working in small groups and feel that the individual help they receive is the key to their improved learning. In the words of one pupil, 'You can say when you don't understand something and they will always explain.' Students' attainment varies widely but is broadly average overall, and the school's emphasis on high expectations has a marked impact on raising students' aspirations. The school is successful in providing older students in Years 10 and 11 with a flexible education based upon their individual needs and interests. Almost all gain several GCSE passes, with a small minority gaining five higher grade passes. They are also successful in completing vocational and work experience placements in the community. This ensures that all students leave school with a suitable destination in work, further education or training. The school also achieves one of its central aims, which is to offer students in Years 7 to 9 a short stay education that prepares them for a successful return to mainstream school. Students' learning and progress in the classroom are typically good. They particularly enjoy the practical aspects of learning, for example, completing individual art projects, cooking recipes from different countries or designing a garden area in the school grounds. Students demonstrate confidence in using information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects across the curriculum.

The school's data show that all groups of students achieve equally well. The quality of learning and progress for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers, although a few make slower progress in developing their

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writing because the school has not put in place clear strategies to help them. The minority of girls report that they feel included fully in the life of the school and that their needs are met well.

Students use equipment safely in lessons and are respectful of the attractive environment. Occasional incidents of misbehaviour do occur, but these are dealt with effectively and do not detract from the smooth running of the school. Students are polite and pleased to talk about their work. They particularly enjoy completing art projects, which play a major part in promoting students' emotional development and raising their self-esteem. Students' success in this area has been recognised by the staging of an exhibition in the local community. Many students have a history of low attendance prior to joining the PRU. While attendance remains low overall, there is a rapidly improving trend and most students re-engage with learning. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school and local community, for example when they participate in the school council or raise money for charity. They feel their achievements are recognised informally by staff, but would value more formal opportunities to share and celebrate their successes. Students' acquisition of ICT skills, completion of vocational courses and their progression to suitable destinations when they leave ensure a satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ 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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How effective is the provision?

The established climate of learning across the school ensures that students settle quickly to their work. Teachers manage any difficult situations sensitively and use praise and encouragement effectively to recognise effort and achievement. The pace of learning varies between different lessons. Where it is slower, this is usually because assessment information has not been used to set work that is sufficiently challenging. Students generally complete a good amount of work and marking often refers to students' success in achieving learning objectives. However, suggestions for improvement are not always clear or followed up. ICT is taught very well and used effectively in different subjects, particularly to help students researching topics.

The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 provides a good range of accredited courses with an appropriate focus on developing numeracy, literacy and ICT skills. The strength of this work has been recognised through the achievement of Quality Mark status in basic skills. The school is successful in engaging partners in the community to provide a good range of vocational courses and work experience placements. These are tailored to the interests of individual students who are unlikely to return to a mainstream school and include vehicle maintenance, catering, printing and land-based studies. The curriculum for students in Years 7 to 9 includes an appropriate range of subjects and a focus on developing the skills that students need to ensure they can return successfully to a mainstream school. Staff are aware that the longer term planning for some subjects is not yet complete and have suitable plans for further development. The school has a relevant personal, social and health education programme and has a strong focus on teaching students how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. It achieved Healthy School status in December 2009 in recognition of its work in this area.

Students report that they feel safe and value the mentoring system which enables them to discuss any concerns with a designated member of staff, who may be either a teacher or learning support assistant. Staff know individual students well and manage any incidents of misbehaviour calmly and sensitively. Students particularly value the reward system, which is based on earning vouchers each week for good work and behaviour. Attendance data are analysed thoroughly and absences followed up diligently. The school has reduced the rate of absences significantly over the past year by working closely with parents, carers and the education welfare service, although it recognises the rate of absence is still too high for a small minority of students. An 'interview pack' provides a thorough induction for students joining the PRU and good links with other agencies, especially the youth service and other schools, ensure students receive good preparation for when they leave.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has set out clear aims and implemented ambitious plans which have been successful in driving improvement. A strong focus on raising standards underpins the school's ethos. Data are analysed carefully to monitor the performance of groups and individual students and challenging targets are set. By raising students' self-esteem and developing their individual talents, the school promotes effectively the equal opportunity of all students and prepares them to participate more fully in society when they leave school. While teaching and learning are monitored regularly, feedback to teachers does not always result in a detailed action plan for improvement.

Good arrangements are in place for safeguarding students. Appropriate policies and training ensure staff respond quickly to any concerns. The school has a plan to promote community cohesion and has been successful in establishing links with the local community. However, links with different ethnic and religious groups across the United Kingdom to promote students' cultural development are underdeveloped. The management committee gives a good level of challenge and support to the school and provides an excellent link with other schools in the Caradon Behaviour for Learning Partnership.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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Views of parents and carers

The small number of parents who made their views known during the inspection hold the school in high regard and are pleased with the way the school helps students re-engage with education and achieve. They feel that the school's success is due in large measure to the strong leadership of the headteacher and the provision of a curriculum tailored to each student's individual interests. Recognising their child's progress at the school following exclusion from a mainstream school, one parent commented, 'The PRU is like a lighthouse in the darkness.' Parents raised no concerns during the inspection about the work of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Caradon pupil Referral Unit 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 three completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 24 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	2	67	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	100	0	0	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	2	67	1	33	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	3	100	0	0	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	3	100	0	0	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	3	100	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



21 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Caradon Pupil Referral Unit, Liskeard, PL14 6BS

Recently I visited your school to see how well it was doing. I enjoyed my visit and thought the school provided a very pleasant environment for learning. Thanks to those of you who showed me your work and talked to me about your time at the school. It is a good school, and here are its main strengths.

- Your school is particularly successful in helping Year 11 students gain suitable qualifications and to move on to work, training or further education placements.
- It has excellent links with other schools which help many younger students to return successfully to a mainstream school.
- You enjoy coming to the school and many of you are especially pleased with your achievements in art, which provide very attractive displays around the school.
- You behave well and understand how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- The school works closely with your parents and carers, who are pleased with the education you receive.
- Your headteacher provides good leadership and staff care for you well.

I have asked the school to do a few things to improve.

- Make the quality of teaching better by ensuring teachers match work more closely to your level of ability, mark your work in more detail and give more help to those of you who struggle with writing.
- Increase your knowledge of different religions and cultures in the United Kingdom.
- Provide more opportunities for you to celebrate and share each other's successes.
- Raise the attendance of the small number of you who do not come to school regularly.
- Give clearer help to teachers on how to improve their teaching.

You can help by trying hard with your writing and by showing an interest in different religions and cultures. You may also wish to discuss at your school council meeting how the school might celebrate your successes. The small number of you who do not attend regularly should make a bigger effort to get to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath

Her Majesty's Inspector

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