



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

**RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL**

**Pencalenick Residential Special School**

**St Clement  
Truro  
Cornwall  
TR1 1TE**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Chris Passmore**

*Announced Inspection*  
**8th March 2006      09:30**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

| <b>Reader Information</b> |   |
|---------------------------|---|
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Name of school</b>   | Pencalenick Residential Special School      |
| <b>Address</b>  | St Clement<br>Truro<br>Cornwall<br>TR1 1TE  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01872 520385                                |
| <b>Fax number</b>   | 01872 520385                                |
| <b>Email address</b>  |   |
| <b>Provider Web address</b>   |   |
| <b>Name of Governing body,<br/>Person or Authority<br/>responsible for the<br/>school</b> | Department for Education Arts and Libraries |
| <b>Name of Head</b>   | Mr Andrew Barnett                           |
| <b>Name of Head of Care</b>   | Mrs L Faulkner                              |
| <b>Age range of residential<br/>pupils</b>  | <b>11-16</b>                                |
| <b>Date of last welfare<br/>inspection</b>  | 23 February 2005.                           |

## **Brief Description of the School:**

Pencalenick School is a Local Authority Special School. It provides education for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years with complex learning and communication needs and autistic spectrum disorders. The school aims to provide an environment for children to develop individually and reach their potential. It is housed in a large, mature country house and additional buildings, in extensive, picturesque grounds looking across towards the Tresillian River. The school has a majority of day pupils but also provides weekly boarding facilities for 29 children. The boarding facilities are located in the main house. Children are accommodated on two corridors of the first floor, according to gender. Communal areas provide indoor space for children to play and integrate. Children who board are resident from Monday to Friday during school term, returning to their families on Friday afternoon. Activities are arranged each evening after school. There are minibuses for trips off campus. The school has achieved the "Investors in People" Award, "Investors in Education Business Partnership Award, the "Schools Curriculum Award" and the Eco School Award.

# SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This annual inspection of the school took place over two and a half days and involved reviews of records, meetings with key staff, the Chair of Governors and boarders. Time was spent on the boarding landings each evening and there were conducted tours of the boarding accommodation led by pupils. Meals were taken in the dining room with boarders and on the landings during the evening snack times. Questionnaires were sent to parents but the response was too small to provide any reliable sample. Similarly there was a limited response to questionnaires from boarders but their confirmations came from direct contact and observation. Ofsted inspected the school in October 2005 and many of our methods of information gathering are similar to theirs, which may account for the lack of response. The result of the Ofsted inspection was very positive.

This inspection similarly showed the school to be making good provision for those pupils who stay at the school from Monday to Friday as weekly boarders.

Boarders responses to questionnaires included comments such as; 'Love it here'; 'I think it's a lovely building. I love boarding. 'It's the best thing ever'. Of the best things about boarding comments included; 'being looked after'; 'going to bed because it's nice and cosy'; 'activities'.

Of the worst things about boarding comments included, 'getting up in the mornings'; 'nothing bad'; 'sharing a bedroom'. 'people sometimes call me names'.

Of the parental responses all but one were positive about the school's treatment of them and their children. In terms of the negative responses the school had responded appropriately to one of the major concerns over security and other issues raised were not in the direct control of the Head, but were to do with County Hall responsibilities.

Overall the boarders responses and our observations showed that boarding at Pencalenick was a good experience and the outcomes for pupils were very positive. There is an overall whole school approach to caring for children with diverse learning and behaviour needs that works well.

There are areas for attention in terms of records management and the new heating system, but there have been many improvements made to the boarders' accommodation. Most importantly there is a strong positive relationship between boarders and boarding staff based on mutual trust and respect.

## **What the school does well:**

- Cares for boarders as individuals
- Staff know boarder's individual; needs and respond to them accordingly
- There is a strong anti-bullying policy and children are enabled to express their concerns
- Gives children the opportunities to experience and enjoy a wide range of activities and community involvements

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

- The physical presentation of the boarding accommodation
- Catering offers choice and well balanced meals
- The responsible organisation have started to make monitoring visits

## **What they could do better:**

- The responsible authority must take control of the heating contract and make arrangements for heating to be provided in toilets and bathing areas
- Comply with the requirements of the Fire Safety Officer
- The school should review its recording procedures to ensure clear audit trails exist
- Continue to develop staff training and supervision for boarding staff

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection



# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14, 15.

The school encourages children to live healthy lifestyles and enables parental responsibilities for healthcare when children are boarding during weekdays.

## EVIDENCE:

- The school has a comprehensive Personal and Social Health Education programme
- Individual pupil needs are assessed and known
- Records gave evidence of boarding staff putting personal-hygiene principles into practice for individual pupils
- General healthcare remains the responsibility of parents but there was evidence in records of staff assisting or enabling children to meet appointments made with health professionals.
- Where children become ill they are usually sent home to parents. There were live examples of boarders feeling unwell during the inspection days. They were cared for in the boarding accommodation by staff during the school day and a decision about their fitness to remain at school made on the second day. This resulted in them being returned home by boarding staff on the second day.
- The school's catering has improved and there were a selection of healthy options available at each mealtime. Pupils can easily achieve their 5 portions of fresh fruit and veg daily. The only critical comment came from boarders who suggested the evening snacks should contain more healthy options, rather than relying on cakes and toast as they do currently.

# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

5, 6, 7, 10, 26.

The school is generally a safe place for pupils to be. Security has very recently been upgraded through the fitting of electronic locks. There had been lapses in the maintenance of fire precautions that had led to a statutory notice by the County Fire Brigade being issued.

## EVIDENCE:

- The school has sound procedures for the protection of children from abuse. There is a designated person with child protection responsibility who has established good relationships with local child protection teams and the Joint Consultancy Team. There had been only one referral since the last inspection and there was a clear record of this.

- The school has a robust whole school approach to Bullying and it is not a major issue for the school; Boarders comments reflected this. The school is aware that isolated incidents do still take place and these are dealt with in an appropriate manner. There were examples of low-level bullying through name-calling witnessed during mealtimes with boarders but staff usually intervened quickly to suppress these. It was noticed that there was not always a staff member present on table at boarders' mealtimes, which gives opportunity for such bullying.
- There were very good relationships between staff and boarders and boarders usually responded positively to guidance and redress from boarding staff. Boarding staff were seen to be encouraging pupils with academic work where pupils requested it and in other ways staff encouraged children in their personal interests. There were appropriate expressions of positive physical contact between staff and children, especially around bedtimes or when children were feeling under-par.
- There was a lot of work being carried out on site by various contractors, all of which appeared to be well controlled and safety areas clearly defined. There had been a lapse in monitoring the fire safety systems, staff training and fire risk assessment. A Fire safety officer had noted these issues during a recent inspection visit and as a result a statutory notice of non-compliance was expected. The latter was issued to the Commission within a few days of the inspection being completed and a copy sent to the school for action. Other safety checks were in order but some Risk Assessments would need to be reviewed once work on installing new boilers and heating radiators has been completed. In particular areas of exposed pipe work need to be risk-assessed and appropriately enclosed for safety where required.
- Security of the main house after school hours has been a concern for some time. Previous inspections have raised this issue, as did one of the parental responses prior to this inspection. The fitting of a new security locking system has significantly improved the situation and on random walk-through of the main house after hours all final exit doors were secure. This is a new system and whilst securing the building does restrict the free movement of children within the main house. It was the case however that during the inspection children did access the main hall with staff permission, yet could not leave the building. It is therefore recommended that the school provides an immediate statement giving clear information to parents about this decision, and keeps operating times under review to ensure children can maximise their free time according to seasonal variations. The school prospectus needs to be amended also to reflect these new measures and the rationale behind them.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12, 13,

Boarders benefit from the residential experience and have plenty of opportunities to enjoy their 'out of school' time.

### **EVIDENCE:**

During the inspection a selection of boarding pupils were 'tracked', through reviews of their files, observation and involvement; another part of the 'tracking' exercise involved discussions with their tutors. All expressed the view that pupils benefited from boarding. At one level this may be because they do not have to face long travel times each day, consequently attendance and attention are improved. Other staff gave examples of how their involvement with after school activities with boarders gave them a more complete picture of the child. All emphasised there was no carry-over of events from school to leisure times and that there were good relationships between teaching and boarding staff. This interface enables all staff to work towards agreed outcomes for boarders, whether these relate to school or home issues. There are daily meetings between boarding and teaching staff before school starts and opportunities for 'Pupil Issue' meetings where any boarder's progress or behaviour may need to be discussed in more detail. There are daily 'after school' activities arranged for boarders before the evening meal and again after, until bedtimes. Boarders were seen to take advantage of these opportunities and commented positively about them in responses on questionnaires.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

### **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

2, 9, 20.

Boarders are encouraged to contribute their views in a structured and democratic way; they have good relationships with all staff and are able to maintain contact with family during the week.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Boarders have many opportunities to express their views and contribute to the organisation of boarding. There are boarders meetings and an open agenda is placed on the notice board for areas of discussion to be added. There are many other informal opportunities around meal times or evening snacks when boarders talk in small groups with staff. Boarders' views can also be put forward through representation on the Schools Council.

Relationships between boarders and staff were very good as previously reported. There were many of observed examples of boarding staff reacting appropriately to boarders' needs and behaviours. Staff were very aware of the individual needs of boarders and managed these with sensitivity and skill. Because Pencalenick is a four night a week boarding facility contact with friends and family is not a major issue. Contact with family can be maintained through the week and boarders were seen using the payphone during the evenings of the inspection. Parents are also able to phone in if they have

concerns, and staff will make calls to parents in circumstances such as illness or significant events.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

23, 24.

Pupils of Pencalenick School have a unique experience in terms of the school's setting. Many improvements have been made to the accommodation and there were other improvements under way.

## EVIDENCE:

Many improvements have been made to the standards of accommodation since the last inspection and this has been a good use of a significant part of the school budget by the Head and Governors. The décor of the residential accommodation has been lifted, bedrooms are comfortably furnished and carpeted and lounges are homely places for pupils to relax in. Boarders were proud to show us their accommodation and have commented positively about the 'cosiness of bedtimes and the activities available.

Major improvements to the heating system were underway and the school will soon be fitted with a new 'eco-friendly' boiler to run the heating and domestic hot water systems. The extended heating facilities do leave their mark throughout the school and an apparent lack of consultation and detailed planning give rise to other issues that need to be followed through. Namely;

- Toilets and bathrooms still need to be fitted with additional heating facilities, as these are the most critical areas. Apart from one bathroom

on the girls' wing, there appears to be no plans to equip toilets and bathrooms with additional heating but these rooms need them more than other areas.

- All new pipe runs and radiators in the residential accommodation need risk assessing and encasing where necessary
- There should be ways of exercising local control of the heating levels in individual rooms as many of the dorms were so hot that windows were being left open to compensate. New radiators were not fitted with individual valve controls.
- All new runs and radiators need decorating to reduce their visual impact on the rooms
- Baths need re-enamelling where badly stained.

It is acknowledged that these works are outside of the Head's immediate control and that he shares the same frustrations at the lack of planned approach, but these are important issues and the Authority must take control and effect remedial actions.



# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

18, 28, 30, 33

The school is well managed and boarder's needs are known, however, there needs to be clearer audit trails to compliment the school's good practice.

## EVIDENCE:

- Systems for recording progress or incidents that occur during a boarder's time at school were in place but are fragmented and there were gaps found in the daily records.
- Issues have arisen in these records but then the trail of information stops. Further enquiries showed that these events have usually been followed through to conclusion but have not been recorded in any specific place.
- Summary sheets were found in pupil files but were not consistently completed and were not cross referenced to incidents such as those referred to above. In one case the evidence and conclusion were found

in the Serious Incident Book but there was no cross-referencing in the daily record or pupil file.

- Incident sheets were not always fully completed or countersigned.
- Annual pupil reviews and target setting did not always cross-reference to targets appropriate to the residential aims for those pupils tracked
- Staff training was continuing towards all boarding staff achieving NVQ level 3. Other Inset training was taking place together with boarding staff also developing their own training schedules.
- Individual staff supervision (mentoring) was being developed for boarding staff but was to be refined and possibly brought in line with the school's annual Professional Review and Development procedures for teaching staff.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the monitoring of standards within the boarding accommodation and care practices. Visits to the school boarding areas are made and reports produced and presented to the full board of governors at their regular meetings.
- There are visits from a management representative from the Children's Services Authority, the responsible organisation. These visits have recently started and are taking place on average monthly. This frequency is in excess of that recommended by the National Minimum Standards and content is also greater than expected. These detailed checks in some ways duplicate the areas of responsibility of the Head who has overall management responsibility for the school's function and there should be evidence of how he is carrying out these responsibilities, either directly or through delegation.
- That boarder's needs are understood, staff are aware of them and take appropriate steps to meet them have been commented on throughout this report.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

| <b>BEING HEALTHY</b> |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>   | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>14</b>            | 3            |
| <b>15</b>            | 3            |

| <b>STAYING SAFE</b> |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>  | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>3</b>            | X            |
| <b>4</b>            | X            |
| <b>5</b>            | 3            |
| <b>6</b>            | 3            |
| <b>7</b>            | 3            |
| <b>8</b>            | X            |
| <b>10</b>           | 3            |
| <b>26</b>           | 2            |
| <b>27</b>           | X            |

| <b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>            | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>12</b>                     | 4            |
| <b>13</b>                     | 3            |
| <b>22</b>                     | X            |

| <b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b> |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>                    | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>2</b>                              | 3            |
| <b>9</b>                              | 4            |
| <b>11</b>                             | X            |
| <b>17</b>                             | X            |
| <b>20</b>                             | 3            |

| <b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>                  | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>16</b>                           | X            |
| <b>21</b>                           | X            |
| <b>23</b>                           | 3            |
| <b>24</b>                           | 1            |
| <b>25</b>                           | X            |

| <b>MANAGEMENT</b>  |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i> | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>1</b>           | X            |
| <b>18</b>          | 4            |
| <b>19</b>          | X            |
| <b>28</b>          | 3            |
| <b>29</b>          | X            |
| <b>30</b>          | 2            |
| <b>31</b>          | X            |
| <b>32</b>          | X            |
| <b>33</b>          | 3            |

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

| No. | Standard | Recommendation   | Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only) |
|-----|----------|--|--|
| 1   | RS15     | Review the content of evening snack provisions to include healthy options                                | 31/03/07   |
| 2   | RS26     | Take appropriate action to comply with the Fire Brigade's requirements                                   | 31/08/06   |
| 3   | RS26     | Risk Assess exposed areas of new heating pipe work and encase where required and fit individual controls | 31/08/06   |
| 4   | RS26     | Issue a statement to parents explaining the rationale and operation of the new security locking system   | 31/07/06   |
| 5   | RS24     | The Toilets and Bathrooms need to be provided with appropriate heating                                   | 31/08/06   |
| 6   | RS24     | Areas of new pipe work and radiators need to be decorated and baths re-enamelled                         | 31/08/06   |
| 7   | RS18     | Review the systems of recording to reduce fragmentation and improve audit trails                         | 31/08/06   |
| 8   | RS30     | Continue to develop supervision and professional development systems for boarding staff                  | 31/08/06   |

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