

Penrice Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112051
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357035
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Barnes
Headteacher	David Parker
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2008
School address	Charlestown Road St Austell Cornwall PL25 3NR
Telephone number	01726 72163
Fax number	01726 64901
Email address	enquires@penrice.cornwall.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Inspection number	357035

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 41 lessons taught by 40 teachers and held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including that relating to students' attainment and progress; monitoring, self-evaluation and development planning, and to keeping students safe. They analysed the responses to questionnaires completed by students, staff and by 410 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of action taken to raise attainment and improve the progress of all students, especially in mathematics.
- The impact of action taken to improve the progress of students identified as having moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.
- The consistency with which classroom assessment is used to help students to improve their work and make better progress.
- The quality of the college's communication and engagement with parents and carers.
- The extent to which arrangements to protect and keep students safe reflect the best practice found nationally.

Information about the school

The college is larger than average and serves part of the town and surrounding area. The very large majority of students are White British. The proportion having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning or behavioural difficulties, is broadly average, as is the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals.

The college is a specialist college for modern foreign languages. It gained the International School Gold award for the third time in 2009.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The college provides its students with education of outstanding quality. The comment that: 'Penrice has nurtured my child and I cannot recommend this college enough', is typical of many made by parents and carers. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body, there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. Attainment is high, and all students make excellent progress. Where slower progress has been identified, for example in mathematics, or among students with moderate learning difficulties, the reasons have been analysed and effective action has been taken so that the progress of all groups of students is now equally outstanding. Students enjoy their college life very much, as shown by their enthusiasm and high attendance. They behave well, although in a very small minority of cases this is due to careful management by staff. The very large majority of students told inspectors they feel safe when in college. There are excellent systems to ensure their safety, which in the case of those in potentially vulnerable situations extend beyond college life. This is an example of the outstanding care, guidance and support that students receive. Students lead healthy lives, although as leaders rightly acknowledge and as a minority of students, parents and carers told inspectors, there is room for improvement in the way healthy choices are encouraged. There are unusually strong features of students' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as the teaching of ballroom dancing and etiquette to Year 11 in preparation for their leavers' ball.

Teaching is excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that reflect their good knowledge of their students. A major strength is the consistency with which assessment is used to ensure that work matches the needs of individual students. All students know their target grades and how to improve their work. Targets are demanding yet achievable and reflect the high expectations of staff which leads to equally high aspirations among students. Leaders monitor the proportion going on to higher education at age 18, which is increasing steadily. The outstanding curriculum makes a strong contribution to these increasing aspirations. Courses are reviewed and adapted to meet students' needs. This is seen in subjects, such as modern foreign languages, where the college's specialist status allows a wide range of languages to be offered, and in the provision of vocational courses, such as catering, many in partnership with the local further education college which also provides sixth-form courses. This is an example of the college's excellent partnerships with other agencies and education providers.

While there have been recent improvements in many aspects of the college, leaders and managers have had a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The impact is seen in the high degree of consistency with which very effective lessons are taught. Monitoring and self evaluation are accurate and perceptive. Together with the successes of actions taken, these features demonstrate the college's outstanding capacity

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

for continued improvement. The governing body has offered both challenge and support for these improvements and recent new appointments have brought even greater diversity and strategic direction to its role. Statutory requirements are met in full.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' preparation for a healthy lifestyle by:
 - encouraging healthy choices and civilised eating through improvements to dining arrangements
 - broadening opportunities for exercise and health education throughout Years 7 to 11
 - further consulting students, parents and carers over the nature and direction of health education.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Many aspects of students' attainment, such as the proportion attaining at least five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, have been high for several years, and increased further in 2010. High attainment in lessons was seen, for example, in modern foreign languages, where students of all ages speak confidently in the language they are learning. Many examples of high attainment were seen in other subjects including English, mathematics and science. For example, students in Year 9 deduced that a number raised to the power one half was equivalent to its square root, and could explain their accurate thinking. Students start at the college with average attainment and all groups of students achieve equally well, not only in lessons but also in aspects of their personal development, such as the assessment of risk. They make an excellent contribution within college through responsibilities, such as membership of the college council, or by acting as prefects or as mentors to younger students. They contribute very well to the community through charity work and local activities, such as the gig-rowing club. Behaviour is good but there is room for some improvement in a few areas, such as when students are distracted by friends while working. While inspectors were of the opinion that the atmosphere and food offered at lunchtime were appropriate, the school community has itself identified this aspect as an area for improvement. Students write, use numbers and computer equipment with confidence and skill. They have excellent study and independent learning skills, collaborate well and listen carefully, for example as fellow students explain their solution to a problem. These factors all contribute to students' outstanding achievement.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The very large majority of lessons observed by inspectors were good or outstanding in quality. Excellent assessment enables teachers to plan work that is very well matched to students' needs. Students themselves know what these needs are. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, students were asked to choose the activity that best met their own needs. They chose those that represented a challenge to improve on areas they knew to be a weakness. Marking and guidance on improving pieces of work are further strengths. Teachers choose resources and instances that will capture students' interest. For example, in an assembly on the theme of perseverance, Year 9 were shown video clips of a football match in which a popular team recovered from 3-nil down to win. The point was well-made and well understood by students. In the few examples of weaker teaching, this was due to a relaxed atmosphere leading to a slower pace of working. Relationships and behaviour in all lessons are of high quality and teaching assistants are very effective in giving support to those that require it.

Students are enthused by the curriculum and readily name the subjects they like most, often relating these to their ambitions. 'I like child development and biology because I hope to be a paediatric nurse' said a student in Year 10, who then explained the term 'paediatric' to a classmate. The curriculum is adapted very well to meet the individual needs of students, for instance by providing outdoor learning for younger students who sometimes find the classroom stressful. The language college specialism has been used

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

very well and the college has become a recognised centre of excellence for language teaching. The nature of this provision is rightly being reviewed in the light of impending funding changes. There is a very good range of additional activities, many focussed on broadening students' horizons, such as through foreign exchanges or visitors, including members of the Buddhist community. Leaders and a small minority of students, parents and carers would rightly like to see a broader range of sporting opportunities.

The excellent care, guidance and support for students are designed to meet a very wide range of needs. For instance, a parent or carer telephoned to inform inspectors of the outstanding support provided after a family bereavement. The Student and Family Centre offers a secure environment in which family issues can be discussed in confidence with staff and representatives of other agencies. All students receive excellent support when joining or leaving the college, due to the very strong partnerships with primary schools, the further education college, and with other agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

College leaders and the governing body have succeeded in their aspirations for the college to provide excellent education and are now moving on to achieve further objectives in the light of changes occurring in the structure and resourcing of educational provision. This very strong ambition and drive has been communicated very well to staff, parents and carers and where appropriate to students. Success has been founded on rigorous and effective self-evaluation and resulting actions. Teaching has been improved markedly by the use of well-designed professional development for staff and challenging personal and strategic targets for both staff and students. Data is analysed very effectively, and students are encouraged to set personal targets that are often more demanding than the data suggests and which are often achieved. Communication with parents and carers has been improved, with a focus on those who are harder to reach, for example because they do not have access to the internet. This contributes to the college's excellent promotion of equality of opportunity, reinforcing the outstanding achievement of all groups of students. Potential discrimination is identified and eradicated. Arrangements to keep students safe are of the highest quality and extend beyond what is required, for example in researching the educational history of new admissions so that the best possible provision can be made for them. The school has audited its contribution to community cohesion, which locally and internationally is very strong as reflected in the International Schools Gold Award, but the largely monocultural nature of the college community and its remote location within

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

the United Kingdom have slowed progress in developing students' understanding of the diverse nature of our society. ♦

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the inspectors' questionnaire was above average. Almost all believed the college keeps their child safe and the very large majority believe, among other positive views, that the teaching is good, they are well-informed about their child's progress and that the college is led and managed well. Inspection evidence supports these positive views of the college and its work.

A small minority of parents and carers do not believe that the college helps their child to lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence, while not broadly supporting this view, does show that some aspects of provision in this area have the potential to be improved. School leaders recognise and acknowledge this. A few believe the college does not take account of their suggestions or concerns. While again the evidence does not support this view, leaders rightly plan further improvements in consultation with parents.

A few parents and carers asked inspectors to investigate individual concerns, such as the cleanliness of the toilets. These were followed up and no shortcomings were found.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Penrice Community College 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 inspection team received 410 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1307 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	31	234	57	28	7	14	3
The school keeps my child safe	154	38	236	58	13	3	2	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	206	50	181	44	17	4	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	160	39	209	51	31	8	7	2
The teaching is good at this school	109	27	261	64	25	6	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	99	24	245	60	41	10	11	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	14	235	57	84	20	10	2
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)	111	27	234	57	26	6	7	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	112	27	234	57	37	9	14	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	118	29	218	53	36	9	17	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	78	19	243	59	40	10	20	5
The school is led and managed effectively	117	29	243	59	16	4	12	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	161	39	206	50	25	6	13	3

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



10 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Penrice Community College, St Austell PL25 3NR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited the college recently. Especial thanks to those of you who gave up your time to speak with us and give us your views.

You will be pleased to hear that the college is outstanding. Your attainment in GCSE and other assessments is high. This is because you all make excellent progress in your work. This, in turn, is because the teaching is outstanding. We were particularly impressed that you all know your target grades and how to improve your work. Many of you have set personal targets even more demanding than those the college has set. You have a wide range of courses and other activities to choose from, so all of you have subjects you enjoy. Your parents and carers agree with you that you are safe at college. This is because you are very well cared for, and the college gives especially good support if you are experiencing difficulties.

You behave well, although there are a few areas where a small number of you could do better, such as by not being distracted by friends when you are working. A minority of students and your parents and carers told us that the college does not do as much as it could to encourage you to lead healthy lives. The senior staff agree with us that more could be done in this area, so we have asked for improvements. Politely give staff your views on this. You have excellent social skills, we enjoyed seeing Year 11 learning the waltz for their leavers' ball.

The college has excellent leadership from the headteacher, senior staff and governing body. They are clear about the college's future and are good at spotting any weaknesses and putting them right. They make sure you all have equal opportunities and as a result you are confident young people with ambitious plans for your own futures.

Wishing you all every success in the future

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.