

Pencalenick Residential Special School

Pencalenick School, St. Clement, TRURO, Cornwall, TR1 1TE

Inspection dates 25/03/2013 to 27/03/2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The leadership of the school is strong, dynamic and child-focused. There is a desire for continual improvement. The positive impact of the leadership is evident within all departments of the school and in the residential setting. Residential staff play a vital role in helping the school achieve its aims.
- There are very good procedures in place to safeguard residential pupils. Pupils feel safe and parents are confident that their child is safe when in residence at the school. The safety and well-being of pupils is very well managed and is central to the school. Behaviour management effectively undertaken by a skilled and caring staff team. There are no incidents of pupils being absent without authority. Restraint has not been used due to effective de-escalation techniques. Bullying is not reported to be an issue.
- Residential pupils have a strong sense of stability and security. This is as a result of being very well cared for by a stable, nurturing and permanent staff team who are well trained and supervised. All staff said they really enjoyed working at the school. One member of staff said 'I am so lucky to be working at this school and seeing the achievements of the children in a magical, calm and natural environment.'
- Residential pupils make very good progress in all aspects of their development. Individual care needs are fully met. Pupils gain social skills, make friends and learn skills that help them develop their independence.
- Residential pupils are consistently positive about their residential experience and say 'I love coming here, the staff are cool and I learn new things.' Another said 'I don't have any friends where I live, but I have made lots of friends here.'

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The school was telephoned at 9.00am on the first day of the inspection. The inspection commenced at noon that day, both floors of the residential provision of the school were inspected and meetings were undertaken with the head of care, head teacher, residential pupils, care staff, teaching staff and parents who were visiting the school. Information was gathered from parent view, online surveys and information from the local authority. School policies and procedures were scrutinised on the school website and records, documents and care plans at the school site.

Inspection team

Christina Maddison

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Pencalenick school is an academy school for 110 children aged from 11 to 16 years who have complex communication and learning disabilities, including autism. 27 children up to the age of 16 years board at the school Monday to Thursday and stay for up to four nights.

The school is situated within a large country estate with extensive grounds, in close proximity to the City of Truro. The boarding accommodation comprises parts of two floors in the main school building.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all of the toilets in the residential provision have a homely appearance.
- Ensure that the record of sanctions contains documented evidence that all sanctions have been evaluated for their effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Residential pupils thrive and make very good progress socially, academically and personally as a result of being part of Pencalenick school and residential provision. They develop confidence, skills and a sense of self-worth through a range of challenging and enjoyable activities and routines offered by staff in the residential provision. Residential pupils learn important skills such as personal care skills and social skills. For example, learning to have a shower independently or learning to take turns. Parents said 'the residential provision of the school has been the best experience ever - staff are brilliant. My child has come on really well and is now able to organise their own personal care. I am always made welcome by staff. It is a place full of friendly faces.' Pupils have a say in the running of the residential provision and all are encouraged to have their say regardless of their ability to communicate.

Health care needs are fully met and there is a commitment to providing healthy, nutritious meals and snacks. Emotional needs are fully met and residential pupils benefit and keep fit from being encouraged to exercise and take part in physical activities. Residential pupils say they are really well looked after if they are ill or have an accident. Residential pupils benefit from a consistent routine and care offered by a skilled and well-trained staff team.

Residential pupils benefit from a close working partnership between education and care staff. This ensures that routines run smoothly and communication is effective and consistent. Early and thorough planning prepares pupils very well for their move into the residential provision and when they leave the school to go on to college placements. Anxiety that pupils may feel about these transitions are minimised by reassurance from staff, support to visit the residential provision or future placements and effective communication about any future plans.

Residential pupils feel very safe when staying at the school. Health and safety is very well managed through regular equipment checks, risk assessments and fire drills to ensure the safety of pupils.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

Care plans are in place for each residential pupil and are informative and detailed. Care needs of residential pupils are complex and diverse. Staff know the individual care needs of each pupil really well and are knowledgeable about the progress and areas that pupils are working on such as independent living skills like shopping, personal care such as washing and dressing or social skills such as making friends. Care staff work closely and effectively with education staff and spend time in the classroom observing the pupils who they are key worker for. This ensures that they are well informed about educational progress. Cultural and racial care needs are documented in care plans to ensure that all care needs are met, for example any dietary needs arising from religious beliefs.

Residential pupils benefit from homely and well-maintained accommodation. The residential accommodation has recently been decorated and is well furnished and equipped. However, two toilets, recently decorated, lack a homely appearance. There are a large number of games, books and computers. Residential pupils said 'I like my bedroom, it has a comfy bed and is warm and cosy.' Another residential pupil said 'I don't think that where we stay can be improved, it is great.' Residential pupils are able to personalise their bedrooms. Staff have made efforts to ensure all bedrooms are homely and welcoming even if some residential pupils are unable to tolerate furnishings and pictures. Residential pupils are able to contact family and friends by telephone. Parents commented 'communication from staff is excellent, I feel that they will inform me immediately if there is anything I should know about.'

Health care needs are fully met. Residential pupils are taken home if they are ill. Staff are trained in first aid and the administration of medication to ensure the safety of residential pupils if they have an accident or need to take medication. A parent commented 'I am confident that staff will look after my child and provide a high level of care if they are taken ill at school.' The school employs a speech and language therapist and a psychologist. Effective use is made of symbols and pictures to aid communication.

Residential pupils benefit from a wide range of activities such as shopping, walking, beach combing, metal detecting and arts and crafts. Residential pupils can choose their activities and make suggestions for new ones at the pupil council meetings. Staff are sensitive to the fact that some residential pupils require quiet time after school and there is a choice of quiet rooms where pupils can relax.

Meals are nutritious and healthy. Residential pupils said that they really liked the meals and there was always plenty to eat. Snacks and drinks can be made in the residence kitchen and main meals are eaten in the school dining room. Meals are sociable and relaxed occasions where residential pupils learn to develop social skills.

A strength of the residential provision is the positive relationships between pupils and the staff. Staff value each pupil and all of their efforts and contributions. For example, a 'boarder of the week' award is given for any positive contribution or achievement, however small. Staff are constantly encouraging and praising residential pupils. This means that pupils gain confidence in their abilities and gain skills such as being able to go shopping in town, where previously they lacked the confidence to undertake this activity.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

High standards of safety are embedded within the school's practice. Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are well established and effectively implemented. Staff are vigilant, alert and responsive to any welfare concerns. All staff are appropriately trained and knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. Residential pupils said they felt very safe staying at the school and could identify a member of staff that they could go to if they felt unsafe. Parents have confidence in the school's ability to keep their child safe. One parent said 'I can relax when my child is staying at the school because I know they will be safe and well cared for.'

Staff recruitment procedures are robust and comprehensive in assessing the suitability of prospective staff. Staff are only permitted to begin at the school once appropriate checks and references are obtained. Effective monitoring systems for visitors to the school ensures the safety of pupils.

Staff are skilful, competent and confident in managing the behaviour of residential pupils. A strength of the provision is how staff have achieved respect and trust from the pupils and a good balance of allowing pupils to take risks while ensuring their safety. Parents commented how their child's behaviour had improved since staying in the residential provision. They said this was due to well-structured and consistent boundaries. Restraint has not been used for a long time. This is due to effective behaviour management strategies and de-escalation techniques. Staff know the pupils very well and what strategy is effective in order to calm or distract. Sanctions, such as early bedtimes, are imposed for unwanted behaviours. The number of sanction given is minimal. The effectiveness of sanctions is not always evaluated and recorded in the record of sanctions. The impact of this omission is minimal as staff know pupils so well and are aware of which sanction is effective for each individual pupil.

Risk management is effective in the school. Risk assessments are in place for individual pupils, activities and the residence. Staff are clear about what action they should take to minimise any risks and these actions are documented in risk assessments.

A safe and secure environment is provided. Health and safety is a priority in the school. Regular checks are carried out on the electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. Regular fire drills familiarise residential pupils with the action to take in the event of a fire. All pupils spoken to knew what action to take if there was a fire.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The residential provision is highly valued for the support that it provides to parents and carers and the part it plays in supporting the work of the school. Residential staff are committed, enthusiastic and caring. They receive very good leadership and support from the head of care and the head teacher. This enables them to fully meet the emotional and behavioural needs of residential pupils. The routines of the school run smoothly and consistently. This means that pupils know what is expected of them, what is going to happen and this gives them a sense of security.

The head of care is fully aware of the provision's strengths and weaknesses and is committed to continual development in order to improve the residential provision. Areas of improvement noted at the last inspection have been fully met. Regular monitoring is undertaken by a governor who compiles a report detailing any actions that need to be taken. The head of care is currently implementing systems that will detail the progress of pupils and demonstrate successful outcomes. Appropriate records are well maintained and the school's policies and procedures are operated consistently by staff.

The views and opinions of residential pupils are actively sought and they are involved in making decisions in the school and residential provision. For example, residential pupils are now members of the school council. They asked for the purchase of some scooters and these have been obtained.

Residential pupils know how to make a complaint or raise a concern, although none have had to do so. Transitions into the school and when pupils leave the school are very well managed. For example, when a pupil is referred to the residential provision, parents and the pupil are able to receive comprehensive information and a trial visit.

Residential staff are fully trained and experienced for the role that they perform. A comprehensive training programme ensures that they have the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of residential pupils. The school offers a programme of core training, such as safeguarding and administration of medication. Additional training in specialist areas such as autism is also available. This ensures that staff have relevant knowledge and skills for pupils they are currently working with. Staff receive regular supervision. Any training needs are stated and acted upon. Staff said they felt very well supported by the head of care and headteacher. Staff said they were well trained for their role.

Individual needs are fully recognised in planning and caring for residential pupils. All pupils are accorded equality of opportunity and their achievements are celebrated.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	137478
Social care unique reference number	SC041223
DfE registration number	908/7002

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 18
Headteacher	Mr Andy Barnett
Date of previous boarding inspection	10/10/2011
Telephone number	01872 520385
Email address	head@pencalenick.cornwall.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 information 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'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

