

Pencalenick Residential Special School

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

Inspection dates 17/09/2013 to 19/09/2013

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Outcomes for residential pupils	Adequate	3
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is inadequate because

- The overall effectiveness of the school's residential provision is inadequate. There are serious shortfalls in the safeguarding of residential pupils and in the way that the residential environment is organised and managed. The shortfalls overshadow some good experiences for residential pupils. The governing body has also not visited the school every half term to complete a written report on the conduct of the school. There are therefore missed opportunities to identify and address weaknesses within the welfare provision.
- There are no risk assessments in place to offer appropriate protection for residential pupils sharing the same landing, bedrooms and shower facilities. Furthermore, the practice and routines are not organised in a way that separates or protects residential pupils. There are also no risk assessments in place to ensure that residential pupils are suitably matched to board on the same day.
- Health and safety policies, including those for fire safety, have not been implemented effectively. The safety of the school premises, accommodation and facilities has not been adequately risk assessed. Electrical testing is overdue. Immediate actions required as a result of a fire risk assessment have not been implemented.
- Physical intervention records and sanctions are not robustly monitored and reviewed. For example, monitoring has failed to identify that residential pupils have their liberty restricted as a sanction imposed on them for poor conduct. Residential pupils are instructed to spend time in a seclusion room until they are compliant. This breaches best practice guidelines.
- Residential pupils enjoy their time at the school and the majority of parents have positive views about the service. Residential pupils enjoy some good outcomes; however, the

serious shortfalls elsewhere in the service have resulted in the overall outcomes for residential pupils being rated adequate.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

The school was notified at 09.15 on the morning of 17 September that Ofsted was to conduct a welfare only inspection over the next three days.

There were no responses on parent view either before or following the inspection. No surveys had been returned in-between the last inspection and this one.

Time was spent with residential pupils by participating in evening activities and joining them for meals and snacks. The views of two parents, one parent/governor and five staff (including the head of care and deputy head of care) were obtained.

The local authority designated officer (LADO) for Cornwall was also spoken to. Relevant policies and procedures for the school were inspected.

Inspection team

Guy Mammatt

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Pencalenick School is an academy 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 from Monday to Thursday. They may 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 medication is stored securely and that residential pupils' medication records are confidential.
- Ensure that the residential pupils' bedrooms are decorated to high standard.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of children accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders, age groups and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean and suitable, and is sufficiently warm. (NMS 5.5)
 - The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (NMS 6.2)
 - The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)
 - All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by. (NMS 12.5)
 - A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any physical intervention. Records may include the information in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) - 'use of physical restraint'. The record is made within 24 hours of the sanction being applied and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of physical intervention restraint and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice. (NMS 12.6)
 - No school restricts the liberty of any child as a matter of routine or provides any form of secure accommodation. (NMS 12.7)
 - Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 14.1)
 - Staff with management responsibilities have an adequate level of experience or training in the management and practice of boarding to ensure that children's

welfare is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 13.2)

- Where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public. (NMS 15.10)
- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the Headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)
- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Adequate

Outcomes for residential pupils are adequate. Residential pupils enjoy their time at the provision and state they 'would attend every day of the week if they could'. Residential pupils have made friends at the school. They feel relaxed and safe at the residential provision.

Residential pupils have developed good relationships with the people around them. Their behaviour is generally very good during residential time. Significant incidents of challenging behaviour are infrequent and residential pupils demonstrate that they are able to interact positively with each other as well as being polite and courteous to the adults around them.

Residential pupils take part in activities that they would not otherwise be able to access within their local community. This builds their confidence and promotes their self-development, as well as giving them a sense of belonging which they did not have prior to beginning their placement. Therefore residential pupils using the service have improved opportunities to achieve equality with other children of a similar age.

Residential pupils acquire sound practical, social and life skills to prepare them for adult life. They take part in a range of new skills and learning opportunities following their school day. For example, residential pupils enjoy cooking and manage their personal care. This means that through boarding, they develop independent skills and emotional resilience.

Residential pupils have good access to education. This enables them to maintain high levels of attendance that may be difficult for non-boarders to attain. For some children, boarding enables them to access education which would not be available to them at all, if they were not in residence.

Residential pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They have an age-appropriate understanding about their physical and emotional health, and how to keep themselves fit and healthy.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The quality of the residential provision and care is adequate. The arrangements for residential pupils' healthcare are effective. The service often works alongside families to ensure that the residential pupils attend important healthcare appointments. However, the storage of medication is unsafe, because some medication safes are not secured appropriately. Also, personal medical and dietary information about residential pupils is on display for all to see. This does not respect their privacy or promote equality.

Staff have good relationships with the residential pupils, who comment that 'the staff here are great; they always have time for you and are very kind.' Transitions into school are suitably managed to ensure that new residential pupils receive good support to settle in and enjoy their time there.

Communication with families is good. Parents state that they think the staff are 'excellent' and 'cannot sing their praises enough'. Parents are informed about all aspects of their children's time at the residential provision. Residential pupils have suitable arrangements and facilities in place to contact their families at all reasonable times of the day. This ensures that they feel supported during their stay and can remain in touch with the people who are important to them.

There is good range of leisure activities available to residential pupils during their recreation time.

For example, they enjoy trips to the beach, indoor gym activities, outside play equipment and computer access. This helps to ensure that residential pupils have a variety of opportunities to interact with friends and learn through play.

The food provided by the school is of suitable quality and quantity and special dietary needs are catered for as required. This means that residential pupils' healthcare needs are promoted through a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Although recommendations from the previous inspection have been met and the toilets are now decorated and appear more homely, the residential pupils' accommodation is not decorated to a consistently high standard throughout. For example, some walls in the bedrooms have not been suitably maintained. This means that not all residential pupils stay in accommodation that is well maintained and decorated.

Residential pupils' safety

Inadequate

Arrangements for residential pupils' safety are inadequate. The residential provision fails to meet the national minimum standards covering safety. As a result of this, residential pupils' welfare and safety is not adequately safeguarded and they could be at risk of harm.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection and informed the inspector's judgements.

The school has not followed its child protection procedures correctly when reporting a safeguarding allegation to the local authority. This has potentially resulted in the investigating professionals not being able to gain full information about the event.

The residential provision's premises, accommodation and facilities are not maintained to a good standard. Risk assessments are not in place to protect children sharing accommodation and showering facilities. The living arrangements are not adequately safeguarded to ensure appropriate separation or protection between residential pupils and these matters have not been adequately risk-assessed. Staff use their individual knowledge of the residential pupils and rely on verbal procedures that have been developed over time. This does not provide all staff with sufficient written guidance to help them manage any risk presented, in order to keep children safe.

Despite the large size of the grounds and the fact that young people access them independently, the premises and grounds have not been adequately risk assessed to enable residential pupils to use these areas safely. Urgent recommendations that were identified during a recent fire risk assessment have not been addressed. Portable appliance testing is overdue, despite the school having had sufficient time to address this. Therefore, the residential pupils' health, safety and welfare are not ensured at all times.

The frequency of restrictive physical intervention performed during the residential provision is very low. Staff use good de-escalation skills effectively to prevent incidents from becoming more challenging. However, when physical restraint has been used, this has not been followed up with discussion with the residential pupils. Therefore, residential pupils do not know why they were restrained and have not had the opportunity to discuss alternative coping strategies to prevent further use of these measures.

Management review of physical interventions and sanctions is not robust. For example, the

management team had not acknowledged that a restraint had occurred in the residential provision since the last inspection. Therefore, the management team has not identified the issues emerging from the use of restraint to enable the staff to learn and reflect to inform their future practice.

Some sanctions used are excessive and restrict the residential pupils' liberty. On occasion, residential pupils are sent to a seclusion room and are not allowed to leave until they are compliant, while staff monitor through a window from outside a closed door. This seclusion has no therapeutic value and is an inappropriate behaviour management strategy. It is demeaning to the residential pupils and may also cause them distress and further harm.

Procedures for assessing and vetting the suitability of new staff are poor. The residential provision does not verify references directly with referees for all new employees or provide sufficient evidence of checking gaps in the candidates' employment history. Therefore, residential pupils are not fully protected from individuals that may wish to work with vulnerable children and cause them harm.

Residential pupils report that they do generally feel safe in the residential provision and that they can identify an adult they would talk to if they felt unsafe or had a complaint.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Inadequate

The leadership and management of the residential provision are inadequate. The school fails to comply with national minimum standards, which results in residential pupils' safety being put at risk. The school has also not acted effectively on a recommendation from the previous inspection to evaluate sanctions for their effectiveness to promote positive behaviour.

Monitoring by a member of the school's governing body has not taken place within the required timescale. Reports that have been produced are ineffective as they do not cover the necessary checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments and residential pupils' care plans. Therefore there is insufficient independent rigorous oversight of the school's practice. This fails to safeguard the residential pupils and ensure best possible outcomes for them.

The service has insufficient knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, it does not have effective plans in place to address identified areas for development. Some records are not well maintained or effectively monitored by the management to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. As a result, there are shortfalls in the internal monitoring of risk assessments, health and safety records, recruitment records, promoting positive behaviour records and the environment. This fails to ensure effective safeguards for residential pupils.

Lone working arrangements are inadequate. Risk assessments are not in place for occasions when only one member of staff is on duty. For example, there is no risk assessment in place for the night-waking member of staff. While no concerns were identified in this area, the school is unable to demonstrate that all relevant risks are identified and protective measures put in place to ensure the safety of residential pupils and staff.

There are adequate systems in place for residential pupils to contribute their views and ideas about the school's operation. As a result, residential pupils feel listened to and empowered that they can influence the facilities available to them at the school.

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the school. The strength of the residential service is that it enables children from across the county to access the education

they require.

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	27
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Mr Andy Barnett
Date of previous boarding inspection	25/03/2013
Telephone number	01872 520385
Email address	head@pencalenick.org

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