

Pencalenick Residential Special School

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

Inspection dates 06/02/2016 to 07/02/2016

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people **Good** **2**

The quality of care and support Outstanding 1

How well children and young people are protected Good 2

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers Good 2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is **Good** because

- Boarders make outstanding progress from their starting points as a result of boarding at the school. Staff know, understand and meet the boarders care needs very well. Staff are aspirational for boarders and ensure that the support boarders receive enables them to achieve their full potential.
- Residential routines run very smoothly. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Boarders are fully involved in setting targets that are achievable and regularly reviewed. Parents and carers speak very highly about the boarding provision. One parent said 'my son requested to board at the school and he adores it.' Another parent said 'I have seen improvement in my child's personal care skills; he has excellent support from staff.'
- Boarders really enjoy boarding at the school. A strength of the provision is how managers and staff create a 'family' atmosphere where all boarders feel valued and listened to. One boarder said 'Boarding is amazing and they take really good care of you.'
- Managers and staff effectively implement safeguarding policies and procedures. All boarders spoken with said they feel safe boarding at the school and could name a member of staff they could speak to with any concerns. Staff are vigilant and pro-active in ensuring boarders are safe. For example, on the rare occasions boarders are missing, staff look for them and follow the missing procedure to ensure their swift and safe return to the school.

- The boarding accommodation benefits a from recent refurbishment and now presents a homely and well decorated appearance. Boarders personalise their bedrooms and their ideas for further improvements are implemented wherever possible.
- Some bathrooms do not have blinds fitted at the windows. Although these windows are not overlooked and have obscured glass, the lack of curtains or blinds does not ensure the boarders' privacy and dignity.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for children through the provision of blinds and curtains at all bathroom windows.
- Further enhance the quality of the boarding environment by considering ways to enhance the stairways and reduce the institutional appearance of the stairs.
- Ensure all boarders know and understand the behaviour management policy, in particular regarding the use of sanctions.

Information about this inspection

The Principal was contacted at 0900 to announce the inspection. The inspection commenced at 1200 later that day. Inspection activity included visiting all areas of the boarding accommodation, discussions with individual and small groups of boarders, boarding staff and the head of care. In addition, discussions took place with a Governor, the Principal and care staff. Other inspection activity included observation of mealtimes, boarders social and leisure activities and boarding routines. Meals were sampled and activities were observed. Key documents and policies were reviewed. Parent view was accessed and results from this survey discussed with the head of care. Face to face and telephone discussions took place with parents and carers.

Inspection team

Tina Maddison

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Pencalenick School is an academy for 111 young people aged from 11 to 16 years who have complex communication and learning disabilities, including autism. 31 young people board at the school, for up to four nights from Monday to Thursday. 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.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Boarding at the school has a very positive impact. Boarders learn new skills and are able to transfer these skills when they go home and in the school setting. Skills learned include life skills such as making drinks, personal care, managing behaviour and using money. Some of the boarders are socially isolated at home. Through boarding at the school they make friends who have shared interests and they enjoy activities together such as watching films, attending a youth club, bowling and bingo in the community and playing games.

A real strength of the provision is the care and support given to boarders by a head of care and staff team who are committed, caring and nurturing. They have high aspirations for boarders and do everything they can to help them succeed and feel relaxed, happy and have fun when boarding.

Boarder's safety is promoted through rigorous safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures that are understood and implemented by a vigilant and caring staff team. Staff are well informed through training to be aware of any possible child sexual exploitation or radicalisation issues. Boarders are educated in how to keep themselves safe through, for example, e-safety information, and education about what and who is a real friend. Blinds are not fitted at some bathroom windows to ensure boarder's privacy and dignity. This is planned and measurements had been made in order to purchase the blinds.

Boarders and parents really value the provision and the care provided. One parent said 'my child didn't have friends, now he has friends. He had issues with food and now he eats a varied diet. He has learned how to calm himself and has transferred these skills home. He can't wait to go back on a Monday.'

Boarders and their parents comment on how much progress is made through boarding at the school and how this enhances academic achievement. This progress is achieved and monitored through target setting that is regularly reviewed and achievements celebrated. Boarders understand the rules and boundaries and this results in routines that run smoothly and a calm atmosphere. However, not all boarders understand the sanctions policy and when and how they may receive a sanction.

A plan to improve the boarding accommodation is almost complete. Boarders enjoy an environment that is homely and their bedrooms are personalised. Further improvements are planned for the entrance stairs so that their institutional appearance reduced.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Staff succeed in making learning fun during boarding time at the school. Boarders make exceptionally good progress from their starting points. Managers can demonstrate the very positive impact boarding has on learning. Parents comment on how skills learned in boarding are transferred to home. Parents and young people give many examples of how boarding at the school has supported them to learn new skills such as making their bed, making hot drinks, undertaking their own personal care and using public transport. One parent said 'this is the best place in the world, I am so grateful, it is fantastic.'

Managers and staff have high aspirations for boarders and ensure they succeed through implementing high quality individualised support and target setting that fully involves boarders. Boarders have individualised targets that are set to be achieved weekly or termly. Certificates are given on achievement of a target and are celebrated on a 'boasting board.' One boarder said 'I got an award for being more organised.' Another boarder said 'I have learned to take care of myself and get along with others. We do targets and my target is to learn to talk about my problems with staff.'

Staff maintain strong links with education staff to ensure effective communication and consistency. The deputy head of care attends daily meetings with education staff, where any issues are discussed. Boarding staff effectively support boarders with homework and reading.

Transitions in to, and out of boarding are very well managed. The head of care has extensive knowledge of each boarder and their individual situation and challenges. She carefully puts together an introduction to boarding to ensure a smooth entry in to the boarding house. Prospective boarders are able to stay for tea, they then have a one night stay to decide if they wish to board. When it is time for a boarder to leave the school, their stays are gradually reduced, especially if they have been a full time boarder. Full and honest discussions are held with boarders so they understand what is happening and are fully prepared for the transition. Staff effectively use photographs to help boarders understand situations and also as a record of their time boarding at the school.

Boarders enjoy very positive relationships with the staff team, who are experienced and consistent. It was observed during the inspection the very impressive way that staff de-escalated difficult situations and demonstrated endless patience with boarders when encouraging them to learn a new skill. There is much laughter and appropriate humour in the boarding house. Staff gently encourage boarders to complete tasks and help them to understand, why, for example, it is important to wash their own hair and keep clean. Boarders state there is no bullying and all boarders get along very well. One parent commented 'my child doesn't have a social group or friends at home but now has made lots of friends through boarding.'

Boarders are fully consulted about the refurbishment of the boarding accommodation. They now enjoy staying in a homely, well decorated environment that is representative of their interests and ages. Bedrooms are individualised with posters and photographs. The head of care plans to make further improvements by carpeting the main staircase to reduce its institutional appearance. Boarders have access to large grounds and outdoor play equipment. There is plenty of space so if a boarder wishes to be quiet or dislikes noise they are able to find a quiet room. Boarders are able to learn how to prepare snacks, drinks and make bread for breakfast in the two kitchen areas.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities in and out of the home. Boarders are able to attend a youth club in the community, participate in shopping trips, bowling, bingo and beach walks. Participation in these activities supports learning in areas such as social skills, budgeting and physical exercise.

Boarders' health care and needs are very well managed and met as detailed in boarders' health care plans. Staff are sensitive to any changes in a boarders' mood, so that even if they have limited verbal communication, staff know if they may be unwell. Medication is very well managed and safely administered. Staff promote healthy eating and encourage boarders to participate in physical exercise, for example by arranging fun games of football, walks in the grounds or walks on the beach.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Safeguarding arrangements in place in the boarding provision promote the safety and well-being of boarders. All boarders spoken with said they feel very safe boarding at the school. Parents are confident that their child will be kept safe. One parent said 'my child feels very safe.' Another said 'I am very confident that staff will keep my child safe.'

Routines run smoothly. Rules and boundaries are consistently and fairly implemented by staff. A 'Behaviour watch' system is used in the school. Learning from these findings is transferred across the school and boarding to inform behaviour management plans and identify any trends or patterns of behaviour. The use of restraint is very rare and there have been no incidents of restraint since the last inspection. Staff effectively use de-escalation and distraction strategies to manage any difficult behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans detail the most effective strategies for staff to use to help boarders to manage their behaviour and understand triggers. For example, for one young person it has been agreed with him and his parents that if he needs time to calm, he goes to his room on his own and uses sensory equipment that helps to calm him.

Boarders are protected through effective child protection policies and procedures. The head of care is the school designated child protection officer and has established positive links with the Local Authority Designated Officer. All boarding staff benefit from training in child protection and safeguarding. They demonstrate a good level of understanding of their roles and responsibility in safeguarding or child protection situations. Staff do respect boarder's privacy and dignity, by ensuring there are locks on bathrooms and toilets. However, some bathrooms do not have blinds or curtains fitted at the windows. Although these windows are not overlooked this omission compromises boarders privacy and dignity.

Staff take effective actions if a boarder is absent. Two recent incidents demonstrate that procedures are effective and due to the vigilance and appropriate action taken by staff, boarders are swiftly and safely returned to the school, following a brief absence. A security fence has recently been installed around the school grounds, and has been effective in keeping boarders safe. The school is situated on a large rural site and unauthorised persons were sometimes found on the school site.

Staff recruitment procedures are robust and ensure only suitable persons are employed. All staff involved in recruitment have attended the 'Safer recruitment in education' training course.

Health and safety is a priority in the boarding accommodation. Staff take fire prevention very seriously and regular fire evacuation drills take place. Boarders can describe how they would safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire. Risk assessments are in place that detail comprehensive control measures. These include risk assessments to manage the risks inside and outside of the building, activities outside of the school and lone working.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

Leadership and management of the boarding provision is strong. Governors, the Principal and head of care have a clear vision about what they would like to achieve and how they intend to

develop and improve the boarding provision of the school in the future. Staff said they feel well supported and supervised by the head of care and deputy head of care. An independent visitor regularly visits the boarding provision, speaks with boarders and staff and produces a comprehensive report.

Staff improve their knowledge and skills by undertaking mandatory training in topics such as physical restraint, first aid, safeguarding and attachment theory. Staff stated they receive the training they need to inform their practice and it provides them with the skills they need to effectively support the boarders. There is always enough staff on duty to ensure boarders care needs are met.

Newly appointed staff benefit from a comprehensive induction programme. There is very little turn-over of staff. Most of the staff team have worked at the school for a number of years, therefore providing continuity and consistency for boarders. One member of staff said 'I work with a really good team; we get on well, support each other and help each other. It is really nice to come to work.'

There are good working relationships between parents, carers and the boarding provision. In the parent view survey a small minority of parents commented that they were unable to easily contact staff but parents spoken with at the inspection did not agree and stated that they were easily able to contact staff at any time and that communication from staff at the boarding provision was good.

The head of care produces a development plan for the boarding provision and is aware of the strengths of the provision and where improvement would be beneficial. Leaders and managers are committed to continual improvement and have met the recommendations from the previous inspection. The head of care closely monitors practice, records, policies and procedures to ensure their effectiveness and identify any areas for improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	<School URN>
Social care unique reference number	SC041223
DfE registration number	

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	109
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to16
Headteacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	20/10/2014
Telephone number	01872 520385
Email address	Head@pencalenick.org

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