

Pencalenick Residential Special School

St Clement, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1TE

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Pencalenick School is an academy providing for 120 children, aged from nine to 16 years, who have complex communication and learning disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder. Twenty-nine children from the age of 11 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.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 March 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 29 January 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children benefit from the boarding experience. Data collected demonstrates that the boarding experience adds to their emotional, social and academic progress. Feedback from boarders and their parents/guardians is dependably very positive.
- Activities provide boarders with unique opportunities to develop new skills and improve their self-esteem. A member of the care staff team is currently completing the Forest Schools Leader qualification. They will be adding a wealth of new and exciting outdoor-related activities to those already on offer.
- The care planning and review process contributes to understanding and providing for the needs of boarders. Independence planning is detailed and ensures that opportunities and experiences are afforded for boarders to develop practical independence skills.
- The behaviour of boarders is exemplary. Behaviour management is focused on encouragement, praise and clear expectations. A major advantage of having a consistent staff team is its knowledge of boarders' behaviour. Staff are able to pick up on any difficulties and intervene to avoid incidents. The use of physical intervention to manage behaviour is rare, and none has been recorded since the previous inspection. In addition, boarders do not feel it necessary to run away or go missing from the residential provision.
- The benefits that boarding provides to encourage children to socialise and spend time with peers outside of school time cannot be understated. For many, this is their only opportunity. They develop friendships and communication skills, and learn to share. Boarders are tolerant of difference and appear to have great fun together.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Improve the monitoring and oversight of medication administration, records and storage.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard(s) for residential special schools:

- 3.8 All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (medication)

Recommendations

- Ensure that the head of care receives formal recorded supervision which is fully compliant with the supervision policy.
- Improve the access to shower facilities for boarders with mobility issues.
- Raise the profile of the boarding provision, particularly on the school website, during parents/carers evenings and in the reporting to parents/carers of the boarding provision's impact on the progress made by children.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Each boarder has a bespoke care plan which is reviewed and updated as necessary by the allocated key worker. Plans contain the information needed to provide for the safety and welfare of boarders. Plans also contain information to ensure that each stay is as positive as possible. Routines are described, as well as boarders' likes and dislikes, particularly around food, interests and hobbies.

Boarders, other professionals and essentially parents/carers are involved in contributing to and agreeing plans.

Boarding has a positive and measurable impact on the social, emotional and academic progress of children. For many children, this is the only opportunity they have to socialise with peers and make friends outside of school time. They are taking part in a variety of confidence-building activities and learning to live and share with others. The benefits of boarding become increasingly evident to staff when the school's children go away to residential settings. Those with previous experience of boarding are less anxious, settle at night and need considerably less guidance and support with self-help and care skills.

The positive relationships between care staff and boarders are a real strength of this provision. Boarders are cared for by a consistent team of adults (the last new recruit was more than three years ago) who know the children well, understand their needs and are dedicated to making them feel safe and comfortable in this environment. Most importantly, they want boarders to enjoy their stay and be happy in the boarding provision.

Formal opportunities for consultation with children are provided both as individuals in key-work sessions and in boarders meetings. In addition, children make their views, feelings and wishes known. Children and the adults caring for them spend much time together, and mealtimes and activities are social affairs with plenty of chatter and conversation.

Preparations for children to move into or on from the boarding provision are well orchestrated. A flexible approach to introductions allows children to feel safe and makes sure that they are ready to stay overnight. For some, this will be the first time that they have ever spent a night away from parents/carers. Children may visit and stay for tea and activities as often as needed before they stay overnight.

Children's time at the boarding provision is celebrated when they leave. A folder of memories, mostly in photographs, is built up over time, and they can take this away with them. The school has productive links with further education providers and work-experience agencies. They make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place for those leaving the school and boarding provision. Parents, staff and other stakeholders are proud of children's achievements and want

them to excel.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Boarders are safe and feel safe in this school. Assessment supports the identification of unacceptable risk, and action is taken to avoid or negate this. Boarders are afforded opportunities to engage in a good and varied range of activities which allow them to take age-appropriate risks and develop new skills.

There are fire detection systems fitted throughout all the buildings, and both staff and children know what to do if the alarm sounds. An emergency evacuation took place during the inspection. Boarders left the building quickly, without any fuss or drama.

Behaviour management is focused on understanding the often unique communication methods of the children and responding to their needs. The relationships between staff and the adults in the boarding accommodation is such that the adults can easily recognise any discontent or emerging problems, and intervene quickly to avoid escalation. It has not been necessary to intervene physically to manage children's behaviour. Sanctions are not considered appropriate or useful in changing unwanted behaviour. Children enjoy the rewards offered and are praised and thanked for desired behaviour, especially service to or consideration of others.

The primary responsibility for boarders remains with their parents/carers, and all go home at weekends and school holidays. As such, children have adults independent of the school to express any concerns. The school also has an independent visitor who spends time with the children. Governors and members of the school senior management team also visit boarders to confirm that they are well cared for and happy.

Safeguarding concerns are dealt with appropriately. Adults receive appropriate training and know how to respond in the event of any safeguarding concerns. The head of boarding is also a designated safeguarding lead and adopts a multi-agency approach, utilising specialist agencies to address any concerns and to keep children safe.

Although protocols and policies are in place, no children have gone missing from the boarding provision. The chair of governors praised the dedication of the boarding staff who helped to find a distressed child who had gone missing from the school provision during the day.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers have failed to monitor and identify serious shortfalls in the storage, records and, on one occasion, the administration of medication. The head of care took swift action during the inspection to address this issue. An

extraordinary training session was held, paperwork was reviewed and updated, and future monitoring and oversight systems were put in place.

The head of care has not been receiving formal recorded supervision. There is no recorded evidence of practice oversight, identified improvement needs or any concerns. This is contrary to all other adults involved in caring for boarders. The supervision and appraisal provided to them by the head of care and deputy are of good quality, and are focused on the adults' roles and responsibilities for boarders, personal development needs and safeguarding.

Governors and trustees have increasing interest in and oversight of the boarding provision. They have received training on their role and responsibilities, alongside safeguarding training. Their visibility in the school has improved and they are now available at regular times so that the adults who work in the boarding provision and the school are able to discuss ideas and share concerns.

The boarding provision meets the aims and objectives as described in the statement of purpose. The progress of boarders often exceeds the expectations of parents/carers. Parents report that their children will often develop or demonstrate skills that they did not know about and take 'big strides' towards independence.

Since the previous inspection, a data collection system has been introduced. This evidences the advantages and value added to the opportunities and progress of boarders compared to day pupils. Additional complementary work and cooperation between the school and boarding provision are sought for the few children who are identified as needing help to maximise their potential.

A development plan is in place to provide for continuous improvements to benefit the children. Strengths and weaknesses are fully understood, and action and investment are focused on that which will have the most benefit for children. The buildings which comprise the school and boarding provision are listed and registered. This makes refurbishment, alterations and redecorating difficult, costly and never-ending. Despite this, the boarding provision feels cosy and welcoming, especially with plenty of children about. Children have personalised their own space, choosing bedding, posters and pictures.

The boarding provision does not have a wetroom or suitable facilities for children with mobility issues to access showers easily.

The boarding provision is integral to the school and is considered an important part of it. Currently, information about the boarding provision is not immediately evident on the home page of the school website. Reporting to parents and carers around the progress made by boarders is not always up to date.

The relationships between the boarders and their acceptance of one another's differences and abilities are a credit to the school. All children attending this provision have additional needs. They are treated as unique individuals by adults who have a

positive 'can do', inclusive attitude, and a genuine respect and positive regard for the children. These values are well established and replicated by the children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC041223

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Helen Campbell

Head of Care: Lorraine Faulkner

Type of school: residential special school

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Inspector(s)

Janice Hawtin, social care inspector (lead)



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