

# Pencalenick School

St Clement, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1TE

## Inspection dates

23–24 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Trustees have high expectations for the school and the trust. They have strengthened the school's leadership and management to fulfil their vision.
- The new management team has secured good-quality education and care and is now making appropriate changes to improve these further.
- Leaders know their school very well. They recognise that middle leadership needs strengthening to ensure consistent practice throughout the school and implement improvements.
- Strong subject knowledge underpins good teaching. This means that pupils make good progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who attend the area resource bases (ARBs) make good progress because of the support they receive from staff.
- Pupils are cared for well, both in the school and in the residential setting. They are proud of their school. They feel valued and safe. They behave well. Safeguarding is effective.
- Staff are becoming increasingly confident in using specialist knowledge in their teaching and approach to pupils. Staff are meeting pupils' emotional needs better, and pupils are learning more as a result.
- The residential provision is valued, well managed, and contributes significantly to pupils' good outcomes and experiences. Some areas of record-keeping and approaches to behaviour require attention.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Pupils with the most complex needs develop important life skills that prepare them well for their future.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further strengthen the role of middle leaders to ensure that:
  - they regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and personal development in the areas they are responsible for
  - they make sure that assessment of pupils is accurate and is used consistently to inform teaching
  - teaching is always of high quality, in line with school policy, and all pupils learn the best they can.

### **Good-practice recommendations in relation to the residential provision:**

- Ensure that serious-incident records are always legible and sufficiently detailed.
- Review the differences of approach to physical intervention between the school and residential provision and seek to make improvements to benefit all pupils attending the school.
- Ensure that well-being profiles are sufficiently detailed to provide positive support to manage individual behaviour effectively throughout the school and residential provision.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision</b>	<b>Good</b>

- Trust and school leaders have taken strong action to ensure that the good quality of education and care in the residential provision has been maintained since the last inspection. They share an accurate view of the current performance of all aspects of the school and a strong vision for the future. Their recent actions have brought about improvements, particularly to school leadership, behaviour management and the quality of teaching.
- The newly appointed headteacher is knowledgeable and reflective. She has made necessary changes carefully. She is building strong foundations for sustainable improvement. Staff say that they feel re-energised, and morale is high. Pupils, many of whom are vulnerable to change, continue to receive good-quality teaching and care.
- Leaders have managed the transfer of responsibility of the ARBs well. They have an accurate view of the current quality of the provisions. They have already taken action that has brought about improvements.
- The headteacher has strengthened middle leadership in the school through professional development and the clarification of roles. Middle leaders have embraced changes. However, it is early days, and their impact in leading improvements, ensuring high-quality teaching and learning for all learners, is not yet clear.
- The head of care is suitably experienced and dedicated to her role. She works effectively with other managers and leaders to ensure that the residential provision contributes significantly to pupils' experiences, learning and progress. Residential staff feel well supported.
- The curriculum in the majority of classes has a strong subject focus. It has been appropriately adapted in classes for pupils with more complex needs so that they focus more on the skills needed for adult life. Senior leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum. They have good plans in place for it to recognise the different learning styles of pupils, enabling them to make even better progress.
- Leaders are aware, through regular assessments, of any pupil at risk of underachievement. Appropriate interventions are put in place and monitored so that pupils get back on track. Senior leaders, with the support of the trust, are introducing new systems for capturing assessment information. Previously, systems did not adequately capture pupils' progress in enough detail. These new systems have strengthened processes and give opportunities for checking the quality of assessments across different schools.
- The curriculum at the ARBs enables pupils to learn both in mainstream classes and in small groups. It is tailored to meet the needs of individuals so that they can access learning and qualifications suitable to their needs and interests.

- Leaders, and school and residential staff, provide a rich variety of experiences that enhance pupils' lives and prepare them well for life as British citizens. Pupils raise money for charities and enjoy a variety of clubs. They represent others through the school council. They promote current issues by being 'green ambassadors'. Boarding provides pupils with many opportunities to be with friends, play team games and develop hobbies.

### **Governance of the school**

- The knowledgeable trustees are passionate in their determination that the school and multi-academy trust will play a key role in the provision of high-quality special needs education across Cornwall. With the chief executive officer, they have strengthened the leadership of their schools and ARBs, including Pencalenick. They have appointed an experienced executive headteacher and a new headteacher of the school. They have clarified the role of the local governing body and strengthened external scrutiny. This means that they have put in place a team that is delivering their vision. The trustees are very well informed.
- Trustees and governors have a good understanding of the boarding provision's strengths and areas for development. They have ensured that there are financial resources available to improve accommodation. They have addressed the shortfalls in governance identified at the last inspection. All the national minimum standards are met.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of caring for and respecting the individual underpins safeguarding practice. All staff are appropriately trained. All adults have undergone the necessary checks to determine their suitability to work with children. Staff files are well organised.
- Pupils know who to go to if they have concerns and say that adults will sort out any issues. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey said that their children are kept safe and are well looked after.
- There is a strong and proactive response by residential and school staff when there are concerns about a pupil. Staff respond to incidents in school and the residential provision well. Records are not always of a good standard. For example, some are not legible or sufficiently detailed. This weakens the oversight of leaders to understand fully the nature of any incidents and the actions staff have taken in response.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils support effective learning in classrooms. Staff are very encouraging to pupils and help them to overcome their particular difficulties. Pupils respond quickly to adult guidance.
- Appropriate routines and expectations are in place across the school. Pupils know what to expect. Pupils who find social situations difficult, who might be more anxious or who exhibit challenging behaviour are confident as they move from lesson to lesson. They

engage in learning successfully.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics and science. They have a very clear grasp of the content pupils need to succeed. Most teachers plan lessons with clear intended outcomes. As the lessons proceed, teachers refer to previous learning, assess whether a pupil has understood and clarify any mistakes.
- In the majority of lessons, work is carefully tailored to the needs of the individual or group. This means that pupils engage in worthwhile practice, deepen their learning or get new knowledge. On some occasions, teaching is not adapted sufficiently to individual needs. This means that the most able are not stretched. The challenge and intended outcome for those learners with more complex needs is not precise enough.
- Teachers prepare appropriate resources to support learning. They have appropriate apparatus or pictures available. This was particularly clear in science when pupils were learning about camouflage, and in mathematics when studying proportion. Pupils are supported to clarify their thoughts, problem solve and explore for themselves.
- Teaching is becoming more informed by specialist approaches. Teachers integrate occupational therapist and speech and language therapist advice into sessions. Sensory sessions play an important part in preparing pupils for learning. The language of adults is becoming more tailored to individual needs. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' listening skills.
- Teaching in key stage 2 takes place in a carefully planned environment in which pupils thrive. There are high expectations, and pupils are appropriately challenged. Staff recognise pupils' individual needs. Pupils have opportunities to revisit some of the early learning experiences they may have missed. This means that while pupils are acquiring new knowledge, they are also developing key skills such as resilience, cooperation, paying attention and problem solving.
- Strong rapport between pupils and staff characterises teaching in the ARBs. Staff tailor interesting and stimulating work to pupils' needs. They use a range of different support materials and prompts. Pupils are enthusiastic, engaged and making good progress.
- The school has recently updated its feedback policy. Some teachers are now using this effectively to develop next steps for pupils' learning. Evidence in some books, particularly in English, shows that pupils are responding to teachers' feedback and developing their learning further. Not all teachers are following the policy, and feedback is not as effective across all subjects.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Due to the strong caring culture, where staff know individuals well, pupils become confident, both in school and in the residential provision. Despite their significant needs, pupils enjoy school and engage well in learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Staff and parents agree. Pupils say that any issue will be sorted. Senior leaders take concerns about bullying very seriously and monitor it

closely.

- Pupils develop friendships in the school. They particularly value the opportunities that the residential provision provides to spend time with their friends. The school has recently strengthened its links with local schools to develop further social and sporting links for their pupils.
- Pupils value the success of others. They are very tolerant of difference and aware of the implications of disability. They learn about different cultures through the curriculum. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Pupils, particularly those with more complex needs, develop a wide range of life skills through the curriculum. They have opportunities to practise these skills in the community and develop their social interaction.
- Pupils who attend the ARBs are enthusiastic and positive about their education. They say they feel challenged. Pupils are learning effectively with adult support. They are clearly benefiting from being free of the pressure and some of the problems many have encountered previously. Pupils say they feel well cared for.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Clear expectations and supportive staff ensure that conduct in the school is good. Pupils, sometimes with significant social and behavioural needs, learn to work and play well together.
- Recent training has clarified the school's approach to behaviour. Classroom staff have been supported to understand the causes of some pupils' difficulties. Already there has been a reduction in time when pupils have to leave the class and an increase in the time these pupils engage in learning.
- Pastoral support and individual interventions support those with the most challenging behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is improving, as is their learning. Well-being plans are in place to clarify for staff the approaches they should take when working with individuals. Some of these plans are not precise enough to guide staff sufficiently well.
- Residential staff promote positive behaviour consistently. Pupils are clear about how they are expected to behave. Staff use effective techniques to help pupils manage their behaviour. As a result, boarding pupils are well behaved and considerate of each other.
- In school, there have been a few occasions where physical intervention has been necessary. The subsequent recording is not always detailed enough for leaders to examine incidents in detail.
- There have been no incidents in the residential setting requiring physical intervention. Only a few staff in the residential setting are trained in physical intervention and some staff are trained in school. Leaders recognise that allocating training in this way may result in a conflict of approach to pupils in school and in the residential provision.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils leave with a range of qualifications at GCSE or at entry level under the National

Qualifications Framework. Those with more complex needs complete courses from the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

- Pupils make good progress over time. Evidence from the school's tracking system and work seen in pupils' books show that pupils develop good skills, particularly in mathematics, English and science.
- In some cases, pupils are not challenged enough to use their core skills in other subjects, and teachers' expectations are not high enough. This results in work being unfinished and pupils not developing their skills sufficiently.
- Individual pupils with the most complex needs make significant progress from their starting points, including meeting their education, health and care plan targets. They learn to listen and pay attention, and they tolerate more adult intervention. They acquire a broad range of skills, such as handling money, making choices and communicating their needs.
- Pupils develop wider skills in practical sessions, such as cookery or forest school. Pupils develop very proficient cutting and food-handling skills, as well as learning the names of ingredients and being able to measure appropriate amounts. In the forest school, they develop key vocabulary, problem-solving skills, resilience and teamwork.

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision**

**Good**

- The residential provision is highly valued by pupils and contributes significantly to pupils' experiences, learning and progress.
- The residential provision provides opportunities for pupils to develop socially, helping them, particularly, to improve their confidence and communication skills. Pupils are supported appropriately to develop their independence. They have individual targets and their good progress is comprehensively documented.
- Pupils enjoy trusted and secure relationships with staff. Staff know the pupils in the residential provision well, and respond to their needs effectively. Pupils did not identify any concerns about bullying or discrimination. They feel safe and can identify adults they would speak to if they were worried or upset.
- Pupils are well behaved and polite. They engage well in social, recreational and educational activities that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to enjoy, such as fishing and walking expeditions. Pupils and staff enjoy these activities together and their relationships are stronger as a result of these shared experiences.
- Pupils enjoy activities in the school's beautiful grounds. Pupils drive go-karts, fly model aeroplanes and play cricket. There is a good sense of fun.
- The residential provision is managed effectively. There are steady improvements being made to the physical environment to make it as homely and child-friendly as possible. Pupils are consulted and contribute to decisions made in the boarding provision. They know how to make a complaint, and feel listened to.

**School details**

Unique reference number

137478



Social care unique reference number	SC041223
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088260

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	151
Number of boarders on roll	33
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lisa Michell
Headteacher	Ruth Zimmerman
Telephone number	01872 520 385
Website	<a href="http://www.pencalenick.org">www.pencalenick.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@pencalenick.org">head@pencalenick.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

### Information about this school

- Pencalenick School is a residential special school for students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities.
- A large proportion of the students are boys. All pupils have education, health and care plans. Approximately a quarter of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded its age range and now admits pupils in Years 5 and 6. It has recently taken over the management of two area resource bases in mainstream secondary schools. The school has a new headteacher who joined the school in September 2018.
- Pencalenick is one of four special schools that make up the Special Partnership Trust, a multi-academy trust. A board of trustees, chief executive officer and an executive



headteacher oversee the work of the school. There is also a local governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection undertaken by social care and education inspectors. A full inspection of the residential provision by a social care inspector took place as part of the inspection of the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons and observed teaching and learning alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited both area resource bases.
- The social care inspector spent time in the residential provision. She held meetings with leaders and staff responsible for welfare.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with trustees, members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and analysis of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central record and recruitment procedures.
- Pupils' work in different subjects was scrutinised.
- Pupils' behaviour and their supervision were observed in lessons, during breaktimes and in the residential setting.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils about their work, and met with groups of pupils and listened to their views about their school and the residential provision.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 13 free-text responses and the survey responses of 39 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Burgess	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bragg	Ofsted Inspector
Norma Welsby	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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