

Inspection of a good school: Penair School

St Clement, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1TN

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Penair School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Penair School has high expectations of its pupils. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Pupils who attend regularly achieve well. There is an inclusive culture at the school. All pupils are encouraged to follow their interests and most pupils enjoy their learning. Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons.

Pupils enjoy a well-rounded education. They are proud of the wide range of clubs and activities available to them. The school has a thriving cadet force and many pupils enjoy extra-curricular sports clubs. Pupils are tolerant of each other and their differences. Pupils are encouraged to make their opinions known and teachers work with them to bring about changes when needed.

Pupils are well cared for at Penair School. Pastoral care is strong and leaders encourage pupils to report bullying so they can deal with it. Pupils are encouraged to meet teachers' high expectations and many are rewarded for doing so.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have improved the curriculum in many subjects quite recently. Most pupils build on new knowledge through carefully chosen learning activities. However, this is not always consistent. Pupils in key stage 3 sometimes learn more effectively than older pupils. They are more able to link what they are learning to what they have learned in the past. This helps them understand how ideas connect within and between topics. Pupils in key stage 4 are now being better supported to catch up on what they missed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strong curriculum that is now in place in key stage 3 is not yet evident in published outcomes.

Some older pupils are not studying a range of subjects with a strong academic core. Very few pupils study a language in Years 10 and 11. However, leaders have changed the curriculum so that more pupils will continue to study an academically rigorous curriculum in key stage 4.

In most cases, teachers check that pupils understand what they have learned before they move on. Most teachers use assessment to help identify gaps in learning. This is not yet happening effectively in all areas.

Teachers encourage pupils to read widely. Many pupils read for pleasure. Struggling readers are supported to catch up with specialist staff. Pupils who receive this extra help are then more able to access the rest of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff receive training to meet the needs of these pupils in lessons. Leaders are knowledgeable about SEND and identify pupils' needs accurately.

Low-level disruption is not tolerated. A few pupils struggle to meet these high expectations. Leaders take action so that the learning of others is not interrupted.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional activities, including trips and visits from theatre companies and other organisations. The school has a proud history of having a strong extra-curricular offer. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including online. Pupils enjoy learning about financial well-being. Most pupils remember important messages about healthy relationships.

Pupils in all year groups learn about future careers and there are many opportunities to meet local and national employers. Pupils in Year 10 complete work experience. Pupils visit colleges and universities. As a result, most pupils' aspirations for their future are high.

Leaders have faced significant challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, some improvements to the school have not been implemented quickly. However, leaders, including governors, are now working quickly to ensure the school continues to improve. As a result, the effectiveness of the curriculum and the behaviour of pupils have improved.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Teachers and leaders are vigilant and work in the best interests of pupils. Pupils feel safe and have a range of trusted adults who they can talk to if they are worried. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to support the most vulnerable children. Pupils who receive education off site are well cared for.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' drive to further improve the quality of education is ongoing. Some subjects are only just implementing their new curriculum plans. There are a few inconsistencies

in the way that pupils learn new content and in the way that teachers use assessment to identify gaps in learning. Leaders should continue to refine the curriculum and how it is taught, to ensure all pupils are supported to retain and understand their new learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136567
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10256734
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Seale
Headteacher	James Davidson
Website	www.penair.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 April 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses six registered alternative provision settings and eight unregistered alternative provision settings for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior staff, including those who oversee behaviour and the curriculum.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans that support pupils with SEND.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed documentation related to safeguarding and referrals to the local authority. They also spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- On the first day, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and art. As part of this, they held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work they had completed.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and online pupil and staff surveys.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and its school improvement partner.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector

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