

Inspection of Penwith Alternative Provision Academy

Penbrea Road, Penzance TR18 3NX

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| Inspection dates: | 8 and 9 January 2025 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Inadequate |

The principal of this school is Chris Denley. This school is part of Wave Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rob Gasson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Justin Day.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils blossom at this ambitious, effective provision. Typically, they join following long periods of instability in their education. However, pupils benefit from skilled staff who quickly build strong, trusting relationships. Staff work hard to promote a sense of belonging. This helps engender a calm and friendly atmosphere. Staff ensure subject content is taught in ways that pupils enjoy and can understand. Consequently, pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), quickly experience success. Most rediscover an interest in learning and greater optimism for the future.

Staff share high expectations for pupils. Pupils benefit from studying a carefully planned curriculum, adapted to meet their specific needs and aspirations. They achieve well. Careers advice is woven into pupils' planned pathways. This helps pupils learn to value their place in their school and local communities.

Pupils' behaviour improves significantly over time. Staff are skilled and know how to support individual pupils with their needs. Lessons are focused and purposeful. Pupils take pride in their work. Bullying is extremely rare and sorted quickly if it ever does happen. Pupils are happy and enjoy their learning.

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

Leaders, including those from the trust, have taken effective action to improve all aspects of the provision. Sensible decisions to reorganise staff's responsibilities mean there is now strong capacity for continuous improvement. Governors make robust checks and provide useful challenge to maintain a focus on improving the school. The curriculum is now broad, balanced and ambitious. The school has developed a useful balance between the breadth of academic subjects and range of vocational opportunities. This helps to ensure the school can meet the range of pupils' needs, including those with SEND, precisely. There are several subjects where actions to make improvements have been particularly effective. For example, the primary, mathematics and science curriculums are carefully sequenced and lead to strong outcomes. Typically, pupils move on to appropriate education, employment or training opportunities. An increasing number reintegrate back into mainstream education successfully.

Across all subjects, staff teach sequences of lessons that build on what pupils know and can do. Teachers check pupils' knowledge with accuracy. This helps to ensure staff identify what pupils need to know so they can adapt lessons to meet individual pupil need with accuracy. As a result, pupils achieve well. However, pupils' learning is often isolated within individual subjects. This means pupils do not link knowledge that applies across subjects and so, occasionally, the development of how pupils apply their knowledge is limited. Nevertheless, teachers ensure they capture pupils' interest in lessons effectively. Consequently, pupils' learning is built incrementally, and they quickly experience success.

Reading is a priority. Pupils' attitudes to reading are often transformed. Staff know how to support pupils who have negative views of reading. As soon as pupils start at the school,

staff check their reading abilities and ensure effective support is put in place for those who need it. Pupils read with increasing independence and success because books are closely matched to the sounds they know. Consequently, pupils recognise that they are getting better at reading even though, for many, it is something they never believed they would do or enjoy.

Pupils' personal development is woven through all elements of school life. Strong links are made between the personal, social and health education curriculum and pupils' individual needs to ensure that pupils are helped to improve their social understanding, gain independence and make sensible choices for themselves. Pupils benefit from an array of experiences within and beyond the curriculum. These include extensive trips and visits, careers advice and opportunities to explore and build on their own interests within the school's normal day-to-day curriculum offer.

The school invests in staff development well and so staff feel valued. Staff are well trained to manage complex behaviour. Staff follow established policies diligently. They secure positive relationships effectively. Discriminatory or unkind behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils' attendance typically improves and for some it becomes significantly better. However, attendance remains a challenge for pupils. While the school does all it can to get pupils back into school, the policies for ensuring that gaps in learning are addressed are applied inconsistently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum in some subjects is not as secure and consistent as in others. This affects pupils' ability to apply key knowledge secured in one subject when learning in others. The trust needs to ensure the implementation of the curriculum is consistent and enables pupils to apply what they learn across subjects with confidence.
- Although overall attendance is improving, pupils are regularly absent. When pupils return to school, the systems to ensure they catch up with important learning are not applied consistently. This means pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed. The trust should improve the consistency in which the school ensures that pupils catch up on missed learning when they are away from school.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139760 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 10347859 |
| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Academy alternative provision converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 52 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Justin Day |
| CEO of the trust | Rob Gasson |
| Principal | Chris Denley |
| Website | www.waveedu.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is registered for pupils between the ages of three and 16. The school caters for pupils who have either been permanently excluded from their previous school or who are at risk of exclusion. Several pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans. Typically, those with EHC plans have an autistic spectrum condition or social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There were no pupils in the early years at the time of the inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act. During a

graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the principal, the vice-principal, the assistant principal and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors spoke to three representatives from the trust, including the CEO. They also met the chair of trustees and a representative from the local governing board, known as the 'Cornwall West Monitoring Hub'.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the school's own parental survey. They also considered the responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including documents relating to governance, leaders' evaluations, plans for school improvement, reports from external consultants and information about the school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Burgess

Ofsted Inspector

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