



Penryn College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112044
LEA Cornwall
Inspection number 278834
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector David Humphries HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Poltisko Road
School category	Community		Penryn
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Cornwall TR10 8PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01326 372 379
Number on roll	926	Fax number	01326 373 194
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Henry Preston
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Ms Marie Hunter

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Penryn College is a specialist sports college with 926 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average, though the school's catchment area includes some areas of significant deprivation. Most students come from the small town of Penryn and surrounding villages; very few are from minority ethnic groups or have a first language other than English. The college provides a wide range of community education. Recently a major building programme to replace outdated accommodation has begun, but this work is not yet completed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Senior leaders judge that Penryn College is a good school. Inspectors judge that it is outstanding. Students make very good progress so that the standards they attain are often well above what could be expected from their attainment on entry to the college. There are extensive opportunities for students to participate in the life of the school and the wider community; their views are actively sought and acted upon and this is contributing to improvements in key areas such as behaviour and teaching. A broad curriculum and a rich programme of extra-curricular activities, with a strong emphasis on outdoor and physical education and making good use of the college's specialist status, enable students to develop teamwork and leadership skills. Excellent links with a range of external bodies enhance the quality of care and support.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in the college's growing success. She is very well supported by a capable senior team, who share her passionate commitment to raising standards. Their monitoring and evaluation of the work of the college are exemplary; when weaknesses are identified they are tackled with drive and energy. Dealing with the problems arising from substandard accommodation has not diverted senior managers' sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching. The college provides very good value for money. The pace and impact of the changes made in recent years provide compelling evidence of the college's very good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve teaching so that the stimulating and imaginative practice, which is evident in some areas, is extended more consistently across the college
- work with the local authority to secure the earliest possible replacement of sub-standard accommodation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Good teaching, high expectations and a clear focus on raising achievement enable students to make very good progress throughout their time in school, particularly in Key Stage 3. Students' performance in English, mathematics and science is consistently impressive. There are some variations in how different year groups perform in test and examinations at the end of each of the key stages because the attainment of students on entry to the college varies from year to year. However, attainment on entry is consistently below the national average and there is always a relatively high proportion of students with special educational needs. Nevertheless, there is a clear upward trend in students' attainment. It is now at least in line with national averages at the end of each key stage and for some year groups it is well above this. Given their starting points, this represents outstanding achievement.

Procedures to monitor and analyse achievement and standards are exemplary. Senior managers are alert to any indications of underperformance and respond vigorously

and effectively. The college has been extremely successful in raising boys' achievement from a very low base so that it is now close to that of girls. The college judges that overall achievement and standards are good, but there is clear evidence that they are outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students enjoy their education and speak warmly of the ways in which the college seeks their views and acts on what they say. For example, teachers have worked hard to make lessons more interesting and students have been involved in drawing up a new code of conduct. This approach has worked very well; students show a keen awareness of moral issues, their behaviour is good and they feel safe and respected. Attendance has improved and is now good and exclusions are less frequent. The college provides students with very high quality outdoor education and extra-curricular activities programmes and a wide range of opportunities to contribute to groups such as the college council. These are very successful in enabling students to take responsibility and work collaboratively with others; they also encourage students to adopt healthier lifestyles. Mixed-age tutor groups provide excellent opportunities for older students to work as mentors with younger students. Very good links with local businesses and other organisations enable students to make valuable contributions to the development of the wider community. These initiatives help students to become strong and confident learners, who are well placed to continue their education or gain employment when they leave the college.

The school evaluates the overall personal development and well-being of pupils as good, but the inspection evidence demonstrates that these are outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good. The college has very effective arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and the judgements that senior managers make about the quality of individual lessons are accurate. Teachers know their students well and plan carefully to get the best out of them. Some teaching is outstanding, particularly when it is lively, well-matched to students' abilities and sufficiently imaginative and challenging to stimulate their interest and enthusiasm. In lessons where teaching and learning activities are more mundane, students usually continue to work hard, but with less enthusiasm and they are not always fully stretched. In one lesson visited during the inspection poor quality accommodation had a negative impact on teaching and learning.

The college is working hard to ensure that teachers make better use of assessment information. Students are encouraged to assess their own work and set targets for improvement with guidance from their teachers. Target setting often plays a key part

in helping students to make good progress, but it is not yet fully established across the college. Targets are not always well matched to the learning needs of a very small number of students with complex special educational needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A very broad curriculum provides students with extensive opportunities to achieve well, both within and outside of the school day. The curriculum is enriched by very good links with other schools, colleges and businesses in the region. Vocational courses together with a wide range of general certificate in secondary education [GCSE] subjects ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all students. Some able students are entered early for modern foreign languages examinations and time allocations have been increased to raise standards in physical education. The college makes good use of its specialist status; outdoor education is a notable feature of the curriculum and provides outstanding opportunities for students to develop teamwork and leadership skills. These skills are deployed to good effect when students have a mentoring role; for example, in the paired reading programme. An extensive choice of extra-curricular clubs and activities, both sporting and cultural, are well attended and very popular with students and parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The college has successfully established a very positive ethos founded on care and respect. This encourages students to discuss personal problems and concerns. Staff are very alert to any signs of distress or unhappiness. There are well established routines for child protection and very good arrangements for dealing with incidents of bullying. New students receive a warm welcome to the college; well-planned and enjoyable induction activities help them to feel safe and valued. Older students receive high quality guidance and advice to help them choose optional subjects and make career choices. The college provides very good personal and social support for students with a wide range of special educational needs. Excellent relationships with other agencies enable the college to draw on a wide range of expertise to meet the complex individual needs of some students. The college evaluates the quality of its care, guidance and support as good, but inspectors judge that it is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The inspirational and visionary leadership of the headteacher and the high calibre of the senior management team are the driving forces underlying the deep commitment of staff to raising standards. Strong leadership is very successfully encouraged at all levels. There is a very great sharing of trust and confidence, and a culture of high quality self-review. As a result, strengths and areas for improvement are clearly identified. The very good development plan is sharply focused on supporting teaching

and learning, with clear links to the training needs of staff and spending priorities. Rigorous monitoring procedures are leading to first-rate strategies to improve performance in areas of the college where standards have been lower. Middle managers are willing and committed to leading these strategies. The quality of middle management is at least good and there are significant examples of exemplary practice.

The outstanding common sense of purpose and shared responsibility are hallmarks of the college's success. The college has skilled staff with a good blend of experience and recent appointments. Resources are good. There are some attractive buildings, but the overall quality of the buildings is, rightly, a cause of much concern to staff and governors. Governors exercise their responsibilities with very considerable expertise giving both support and challenge to the college's work. The college judges leadership and management to be good, but the inspection evidence clearly demonstrates that it is better than this and is outstanding.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Penryn College Poltisko Road Penryn Cornwall TR10 8PZ

October 2005

Dear Students,

As you know your college was inspected on 5th and 6th October 2005. Some of you met with inspectors and many of you will have seen us around the college. We are very grateful to you for giving us your views about the college because this helped us to make our judgements. Many of your parents/carers responded to a confidential questionnaire or talked to us and we also took their views and concerns into account when making judgements. We encourage you to read the report because it will let you know in more detail what your college does well and how you can help it to be even better than it is now.

Penryn College is an outstanding school. Students make very good progress and achieve well in tests and examinations. You have very good opportunities to say what might be improved and help the college to decide on the changes that should be made. You develop impressive personal and leadership skills by taking part in sport, outdoor and extra-curricular activities and by contributing to the life of the school and wider community. You are well cared for by the college.

The main reason for the success of your college is that you have an outstanding headteacher who is well supported by committed staff who want the very best for you. Like you, they are frustrated that some of the school buildings and facilities need improving or replacing and they are doing their best to make sure that this happens. You can help by looking after and making the most of what you do have, whether it is old or new.

In lessons you make most progress when teachers give you imaginative and challenging work that makes you think hard. You can help them do this by responding positively when they try to involve you in the lesson or ask you to work in different ways.

Yours sincerely,

David Humphries HMI (Lead Inspector)