



# Penair School A Science College

Inspection Report - Amended

**Unique Reference Number** 112060  
**Local Authority** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 289161  
**Inspection date** 12 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** David Humphries HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	St Clement
<b>School category</b>	Community		Truro
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-16		TR1 1TN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 274737
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1206	<b>Fax number</b>	01872 242465
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	N Vincent
		<b>Headteacher</b>	B Vann
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 April 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11-16	12 September 2006	289161

## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to administration error

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Penair is a specialist science school which takes pupils from the city of Truro and the surrounding rural area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few of them have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, although there are significant pockets of deprivation within the school's catchment area. The school has some new buildings, but accommodation is cramped and there is a substantial number of mobile classrooms.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Penair is an outstanding school. There is a very positive and purposeful atmosphere which encourages pupils to work hard and be successful. Pupils greatly enjoy their education. One pupil commented, 'I don't like Mondays, but I'm really glad when I get to school.' Pupils are eager to contribute to the life of the school and participate enthusiastically in a rich variety of after-school activities. Their views are valued by staff and governors and often influence the decisions they make, for example, in changes to the school uniform policy. Most pupils behave very well and there is a strong sense of mutual support and respect.

The school has developed a very well-conceived approach to academic guidance so that pupils develop a keen understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and know what they need to do to improve their work. The school's Learning Centre provides high quality support for pupils with a range of learning needs. The school works very hard to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged and stimulated: for example, there are opportunities to follow advanced level courses in critical thinking and mathematics. An impressively broad curriculum is enhanced by excellent collaborative work with other local schools and colleges. The school uses its specialist status very effectively to offer a wide range of examination courses in science.

The school has given a high priority to improving teaching and learning and this is having an impact in many lessons. Teachers are increasingly adept at making sure that pupils know what it is they need to learn and assessing whether they have been successful. Teaching is good overall and there are many examples of outstanding classroom practice, although there is scope to extend this more consistently across the school.

Positive attitudes, good teaching, high expectations and excellent support and guidance combine to provide a powerful impetus for learning. Pupils make outstanding progress throughout the school so that the results they achieve in tests and examinations at ages 14 and 16 are consistently very high. High expectations and a sharp focus on teaching and learning lie at the heart of the headteacher's vision for the future of the school. Her excellent leadership gives a clear sense of direction, shaping the work of staff in key management roles. This is a crucial factor in the success of the school and in its outstanding capacity to improve further. Governors and senior staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. While their views about teaching and learning are perceptive and accurate, they recognise the need to adopt a more rigorous approach to observing lessons. The school is very well regarded by the great majority of parents. One parent, commenting on her daughter, wrote, 'Her progress has been amazing – the school has been brilliant and caters well for her needs.'

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Implement a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that the outstanding practice which is evident in many lessons is extended more consistently across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is slightly above average. From Year 7 to Year 9 they make extremely rapid progress, building very effectively on the work they have done in primary school, so that the standards they reach at age 14 are very high. Pupils continue to make impressive progress in Year 10 and Year 11 so that their results in examinations at age 16 are consistently well above the national average. Their overall progress through the school is outstanding.

The most recent examination results show that the school has been extremely successful in narrowing the gap between the attainment of boys and girls. These results also highlight the remarkable performance of a group of able students who were entered for GCSE mathematics one year earlier than normal: all achieved the highest grades and they are now studying advanced level mathematics in Year 11. High quality support provided by the school's Learning Centre enables pupils with a wide range of learning needs and disabilities to make equally impressive progress and meet challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They greatly enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes towards learning. They speak enthusiastically about the challenges they face and recognise the links between their work in school and future education, training and employment. They appreciate the healthy eating options available in the school canteen and many participate enthusiastically in the wide range of sport and physical activities provided by the school. The behaviour of most pupils is exemplary and they act safely and responsibly, both in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes. The troublesome behaviour of a very small minority of pupils is managed very effectively. Pupils respond eagerly to opportunities to take responsibility. For example, they have played an active role in deciding upon changes in school uniform and in school policies on bullying and behaviour management. Strong links with schools in New Zealand, South Africa and Canada successfully develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and societies. They display a clear sense of morality and the capacity for spiritual reflection.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching is good, because most teachers are adept at managing their classes and skilled at matching their teaching to pupils' learning needs. However, there are variations in the quality of teaching and the school is working very hard to tackle this. The impact of its work is evident in teachers' increasingly effective use of assessment information and in key areas such as questioning. There is some outstanding teaching which is often characterised by imaginative, well-paced activities with a strong emphasis on independent learning. However, this exemplary practice is not yet embedded across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding because of the ways in which it is matched with pupils' needs and is enhanced by collaboration with other institutions and organisations. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is imaginative and well conceived and provides high levels of stimulation and challenge. Additional foreign languages and a good range of vocational courses are provided through links with local further education colleges. Very well-planned enterprise and work-related learning activities help to prepare pupils for future employment. The formal curriculum is complemented by a rich variety of after-school clubs and activities, international links and trips and residential visits. These are appreciated by pupils and are an important factor in their personal development and well-being.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. A comprehensive programme of academic guidance based upon termly individual interviews gives pupils a very clear understanding of their progress and enables them to work with their teachers to set targets for improvement. Underachievement is identified at an early stage and intervention is prompt. The school takes very good care of its pupils. There are comprehensive procedures for child protection and pupils are confident about approaching an adult if they are unhappy or anxious. The school's Learning Centre provides first-rate support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, often drawing on expertise from a range of external agencies. For the most vulnerable pupils this support is often crucial. One pupil wrote to a teacher, 'I don't think I can ever thank you enough for what you did for me last year ... when I spoke to you it made me feel better about myself.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The clear-sighted, energetic and accomplished leadership provided by the headteacher is crucial. She has established an experienced and capable senior team who ensure the smooth running of the school and oversee the work of faculties and departments. This is complemented by a group of highly skilled teachers who are charged with driving through improvements in teaching and learning without the burden of wider management responsibilities. This arrangement is highly effective in ensuring that improving classroom practice is an overarching development priority.

The school has a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. The analysis of performance data is exemplary and senior managers are quick to tackle areas where improvement is required. There is an increasingly strong emphasis on evaluating the impact of changes and new initiatives on pupils' achievement. Senior managers regularly observe lessons and their judgements about the quality of teaching are accurate and perceptive. They recognise that there is scope to adopt a more rigorous and systematic approach so that they are better placed to ensure that the very best practice is embedded across the school. Governors provide a high level of support and challenge for the work of the school and are beginning to play a more active role in checking progress in key areas.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am sure that you will remember that your school was inspected on 12 September 2006. Some of you met the inspectors and many of you will have seen us around the school. We enjoyed talking to you and listened carefully to what you had to tell us because what you think about your school is very important. Many of the people who look after you at home completed a questionnaire to let us know how they felt about the school and we were very interested in their views. I hope you will talk to them about the inspection report and this letter because they explain what your school does well and how it can become better.

Penair is an outstanding school. There is a positive and purposeful atmosphere. Most of you behave very well and enjoy contributing to the life of the school. Your views are valued by staff and governors and often influence the decisions they make. You make outstanding progress throughout the school in nearly all respects, and test and examination results are well above average. This is because of the good teaching, high expectations, and excellent curriculum, support and guidance provided by the school. It is also because of your own positive attitudes to learning.

One the main reasons for the success of your school is that you have an excellent headteacher, who is well supported by a strong and capable team of staff. They want the very best for you and are working hard to make the school even better than it is now. We have asked them to think about how the very best teaching methods in the school can be developed across all classes and subjects. You can play your part by responding positively and working constructively with teachers when they try out new approaches.

I wish you all the best for the future.