

Pencalenick Residential Special School

Pencalenick School, St Clement, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1TE

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This school provides education for 150 children aged from 11 to 16 years and residential care for up to 9 children per night. It specialises in providing education and care to children with complex communication and interaction difficulties, autism and learning difficulties. The school is part of the Special Partnership Trust.

At the time of this inspection, 21 children were staying at the school across 4 nights. The school is situated in a large country estate with extensive grounds and is open from Monday to Friday.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 11 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their time in the residential provision and make good progress during their stays. The staff know the children well and support them to make good progress with their independence skills. Staff care for the children in a supportive and nurturing way. The children said that they enjoy their stays in the residential provision and that they have a lot of fun with the staff. They said that they enjoy the activities that they can do and that they can talk to any of the staff if they are worried about something.

The staff have clear aspirations for the children and ensure that the children's needs are met to a high standard. When children move into the residential provision, there is an individual plan in place for each child. This ensures that children can have positive stays alongside other children, and thought is put in place to ensure children will be comfortable in their bedrooms at night. These plans are bespoke and consider the individual needs of each child. This all means that children feel safe and comfortable when they begin to stay overnight in the residential provision.

Parents are positive about the care and support their children receive. One parent highlighted the importance of the provision in promoting their child's independence and daily living skills, preparing them for adulthood.

Children enjoy being able to spend time with others, and this supports them to develop strong social and independence skills. Children enjoy outings to the beach, going shopping to spend their pocket money and playing a range of games with other children and staff. Children are well supported to learn how to manage their own money, and to do their own shopping.

The residential spaces are clean, tidy and well maintained. Steps have been taken to improve the facilities since the last inspection. There is a comfortable lounge for children to relax in and spacious areas for children to play in. However, there is currently no lift to the residential areas, which limits some children from being able to have overnight stays. Meals are usually prepared by the school kitchen, which limits the opportunity for children to be involved in meal preparation.

Leaders have improved care planning since the last inspection. Children have records that describe how to support them effectively and important information about each child is captured to support consistency of staff support. For some children the information is out of date or inaccurate.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

There have been no safeguarding concerns identified since the last inspection, and this is indicative of how well children are being supported. Staff understand safeguarding well and identify opportunities to support children beyond their time at

the school. When one child was experiencing difficulties in their home life, a strong level of support was provided to them to support them with the situation. The managers and staff advocated strongly for the child and put in place robust support to ensure they felt safe. Positive collaborative working with the social worker and other agencies ensured they were kept informed in a timely way.

A consistent and stable team of staff has continued to care for the children since the last inspection. The staff are skilled and knowledgeable. They know the children well and understand how to support them effectively. Staff use these strong relationships with children to provide clear and consistent support. This means children are settled. Staff have had training in therapeutic approaches however their understanding is not embedded as part of their practice. In addition, leaders do not support staff to reflect about their support for children and consider how different approaches could be used when things happen.

Since the last inspection, there have been no concerns about children going missing, no medication errors and no situations where physical restraint has been used. Good multi-agency working is evident across the school site and with external agencies.

Leaders and managers regularly pose questions about safeguarding during team meetings, which helps staff to think about their practice and to develop their skills.

Staff use key-work sessions to understand children's wishes and views, but they are not always used to develop children's knowledge in key areas.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the children who are staying in the residential provision. They provide dedicated support and oversight so that children can continue to make good progress. Managers strongly advocate for the children, to make improvements to their care. Leaders and managers continue to develop their practice to reflect on what needs to improve. They understand what is working well but also what needs to change, to develop and improve practice.

The manager has worked in the school for many years and knows the children very well. She talks about the children in detail and with confidence. The manager has a good understanding of children's needs and how best to support them.. The manager continues to work collaboratively with family members, social workers and other professionals, and they attend meetings that relate to the children.

Staff said that they enjoy working with the children and that they feel valued and well supported by their manager. They find that their manager is very approachable, and they can talk to her openly about the children. The staff said they have regular access to good levels of support, supervision and training.

Leaders and managers continue to collaborate with family members, social workers and other professionals. The manager maintains regular contact with families around

children's stays, which ensures that children's needs continue to be met. Safer recruitment practice is in place. Leaders and managers continue to repeat safeguarding checks for all staff.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that children's records provide an accurate picture of their needs and that up-to-date information is placed on their files.
- School leaders should ensure they consider how to develop the residential service so that children who require the use of a lift can access the service.
- School leaders should review the training that is available to staff so they can develop their skills, knowledge and practice and ensure that training is embedded into staff practice.
- School leaders should consider reviewing how key-work sessions are being used with children to support them around key issues.
- School leaders should develop processes to support staff to reflect on their practice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC041223

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Joe McGovern

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector

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