

# Penryn College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136852
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	395349
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jonathan Palk HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1035
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Henry Preston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marie Hunter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Kernick Road Penryn Cornwall TR10 8PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01326 372379
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<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	25–26 April 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector

Judith Goodchild

Additional Inspector

Sarah Jones

Additional Inspector

Paul Sadler

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors carried out observations of 35 part lessons taught by 33 teachers. Seven of the lessons were jointly observed with members of the college's leadership team. One inspector undertook a learning walk which comprised of a number of short visits to lessons to look at provision for the area resource base students. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, four members of the governing body and different groups of students, including those who are partly educated off site. Inspectors observed the college's work, and looked at the college's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the college's work, policy documents and students' work. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and analysed 305 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers as well as questionnaires completed by a sample of students from each year group and 91 completed by staff.

## Information about the school

Penryn College is an average-sized secondary school. The college moved into a new building in 2008. The college was Cornwall's 'Building Schools for the Future' pathfinder and raised an additional £1.4 million to provide community sports facilities. It converted to an academy in July 2011. The college draws its students from Penryn and the surrounding villages. The large majority of students are of White British heritage and most speak English as their first language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above that found nationally. An area resource base providing for 15 students with moderate learning difficulties is integral to the college. Alternative curriculum choices for a few students are provided at local partner colleges.

The college has held sports specialist status since 1998 and was designated a leading edge college in 2004 and an applied learning college in 2006. The college is in receipt of numerous accreditations through nationally recognised awards, including the Arts Mark Gold. The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good college whose success is underpinned by a culture of continuous improvement. Aspects of its work are outstanding. Governors and leaders are highly ambitious for the success of every student. Excellent relationships between staff and students are built on mutual trust and underpin the supportive learning environment. Students, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the college and its work. Overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding because the proportion of consistently good and outstanding teaching is not high enough; in addition, senior leaders are aware of the scope for further improvement in students' achievement in literacy.
- Achievement is good. There has been a relentless and successful focus on raising attainment with a strong trend of improvement in the percentage of students gaining five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. Students now make at least good progress, and many make outstanding progress from their starting points. Generally, a significant minority of students join the college with underdeveloped literacy skills. A cross-curricular approach to tackling this issue is making an impact, but this and the additional strategies for teaching basic literacy skills are not yet fully embedded.
- Teaching is mainly good with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. High-quality professional development underpins the growing strengths of individuals. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies, particularly in raising expectations of all learners in lessons.
- Students behave well. They are unanimous in saying they feel completely safe and are extremely well looked after.
- The passion for providing opportunities that will make a difference to students' lives is at the heart of the outstanding leadership that permeates all levels. Staff are clear about their accountability, and self-evaluation is thorough, honest and accurate. Teaching and staff performance are managed well and are leading to ongoing improvements in the quality of provision.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' literacy skills by embedding teaching of reading and writing strategies and the cross-curricular approaches to improving students' resilience and confidence in applying these skills.
- Continue to strengthen the overall quality of teaching to achieve greater consistency of good or outstanding practice by:
  - ensuring that all learning activities are closely tailored to meet individual needs and stretch and challenge all students
  - using questioning and dialogue during lessons to deepen understanding, extend thinking and raise expectations
  - applying consistently the proven strategies for engaging all students in lessons.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

There are no underperforming groups; attainment is rising strongly and is likely to exceed the challenging targets set by the college in relation to the proportion of students gaining five GCSE A\* to C passes including English and mathematics. Parents, carers and all students recognise this improving trend.

Attainment on entry is below average. A quarter of students join the college each year with low attainment. In previous years this group has made progress similar to that found nationally, with some making good progress to attain a C grade in English or mathematics or both. The college's reliable assessment information and work seen in lessons show that these students are making good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in all year groups.

Students known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress, as do students registered to the area resource base together with disabled students and those with special educational needs. Those who are on alternative pathways, or recently joined from other schools, told inspectors how much they were succeeding with their learning, commenting that without the support they get from staff at Penryn they would have given up on education. An increasing proportion of middle ability students are on course to achieve A\* and A grades in English and mathematics due to some outstanding teaching in these departments.

Examination results have improved well over time. The weaker performance last year in mathematics and science has been tackled robustly, and some of the learning taking place in the mathematics department was amongst the best seen in the college. However, college leaders have also recognised that students' weaker literacy

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skills are a barrier to the students achieving consistently well in all subjects and have embarked on a programme to address this as soon as students enter the college.

All students know their targets and their progress is reviewed regularly and rigorously to provide further challenge or highly effective support as necessary. Departmental differences are closing rapidly because of effective cross-departmental monitoring of students' progress data. Cooperation, keenness, enthusiasm and the ability to learn independently were key features of the most effective learning observed during lessons. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson students made excellent progress; firstly, because their emotional and intellectual responses were developed expertly through discussion of possible solutions and secondly because students took the lead in showing how learning could be extended.

### **Quality of teaching**

Lesson observations, discussions with students and work in their books confirmed that teaching over time is good overall and the proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing. Parents and carers were unanimous that their children are taught well. Teachers are very aware that many students have difficulty staying on task and they use their good subject knowledge to adapt lesson content appropriately with short tasks and longer periods of supported independent work. An exceptional range of opportunities within lessons and through extra-curricular activities ensures students develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and commit to their learning. In addition, an inclusive leadership programme for students encourages them to collaborate effectively and to challenge themselves.

The most effective teaching observed provided a range of challenges, integral to learning objectives. The pace was brisk and the transition from one method of learning to another was smooth and purposeful. Well-managed group and paired work provided just the right amount of thinking time and gave students opportunities to coach or help each other. Probing questioning ensured the teacher evaluated students' progress, but also deepened their understanding. Where teaching was no better than satisfactory the work was not always well matched to the students' ability and extension tasks did not provide the necessary challenge. Questioning techniques, in some lessons, failed to engage all the students or failed to signal high enough expectations of the more able students. Strategies used in the most effective lessons to engage fully all students are not yet being applied consistently across the school.

The quality of marking in students' books often makes a strong contribution to their achievement. There is a strong connection between pointers for improvement and students' long term targets. The use of attached notes that allow teachers to make additional comments helps preserve the integrity of the students' work. The support in lessons for students to develop their literacy skills is inconsistent and not always effective. There is emphasis on new vocabulary but this is often delivered with insufficient exemplification. In most lessons students are encouraged to write responses, but they are not always given the necessary structures to help them develop these skills.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The manner in which staff care for students and keep them safe are outstanding elements of the college's work. Students understand very clearly how to keep themselves safe and all groups feel safe in college at all times. Bullying of any kind is rare and dealt with rigorously. This is reflected in the questionnaire returns of students and their parents and carers. Students have a clear awareness of the different forms of bullying, including physical harassment, cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying and are keen to prevent and tackle such behaviour.

The strong commitment students feel towards the college is demonstrated in their good attendance and punctuality. In the large majority of lessons students' behaviour and attitudes were good and contribute to their good or outstanding progress. For a small minority of parents and students responding to the questionnaire, disruption in lessons is also a concern. In a small number of lessons where expectations are not high enough or the pace and progress are too slow some students are not engaged and resort to immature behaviour that disrupts others. Nevertheless, much has been done to secure good behaviour including strengthening teachers' classroom management skills. As a consequence, exclusions and disruptions have declined markedly. Fixed-term exclusions are well below the national average. The college's specialisms, particularly sport, make an exceptional contribution to the inclusive nature of the college and raising achievement, and provide many opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the wider community. As a result, students develop strong inter-personal skills. For example, they work as peer mentors, sports leaders, run clubs, act as technicians and run the influential college council.

Communication between key staff and other agencies is very effective and ensures that those who are vulnerable as a result of their circumstances are safe and achieve well. The area resource base delivers outstanding provision ensuring these students are fully included in lessons and make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress toward their goals.

## **Leadership and management**

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has been pivotal in developing a clear and unwavering vision for the fulfilment of every student's potential. The clarity of vision is matched by the quality of support given to staff to secure improvement and raise standards. Teamwork and collegiality are evident within the harmonious and cohesive community, where all members show respect and tolerance for each other. Considerable emphasis is placed on ensuring that all students feel equally valued while maintaining a respect for their individuality and cultural identity. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated, and equality of opportunity is at the heart of the college's work. This shows itself not only in the continuing improvement in the

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achievement of different groups, but also in the ability of the college to engage all students in an excellent curriculum that provides the opportunity for them to deepen and widen their experiences and makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

A rigorous approach to self-evaluation is instrumental in the college's successful drive to further its ambitions for students and its staff. This relentless pursuit of excellence is grounded in detailed and bespoke monitoring and evaluation. The work of the teaching mentors, staff from the area resource base and student lead learners has been instrumental in the development of teaching. The establishment of cross-subject learning communities has tangibly raised the impact of professional development and created an environment where training and discussion about learning are highly valued. Consequently, the quality of the teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection and achievement is rising quickly. Recent improvements, combined with a clear vision for the future, show that the college has the capacity for sustained improvement.

The breadth of expertise within the governing body and its commitment to an outward facing college are evident in its unwavering support for partnerships with local schools, the community and universities. All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The highly constructive relationships with parents and carers are based on openness and a desire to work together in the students' best interests.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 April 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Penryn College, Penryn TR10 8PZ**

Thank you for the help that you gave to the inspection team when we visited your college recently. Particular thanks to those of you who gave up time to join discussions with the inspectors and to those of you who completed the questionnaire. You are rightly proud of the college. It is a good college and several aspects of its work are outstanding.

You achieve well and make at least good, and often excellent, progress from your starting points. Consequently, results at GCSE continue to rise strongly. You benefit from good teaching in most of your lessons, with an increasing amount that is outstanding. The excellent relationships you have with adults at the college and with each other make it a very supportive place of learning where everyone strives to succeed and you feel very safe. Your good behaviour and obvious enjoyment of learning show in your much improved attendance. You value the rich and varied opportunities provided for you. This shows in your enthusiasm to play a part in developing your leadership skills for everybody's benefit and the desire to represent your college at a national and international level. You generally work hard and make an important contribution to the running of the college, through, for example, the active council and the leading learners.

The leaders of the college are very ambitious for you and their excellent leadership means the college is well placed to improve further. We have given priority to raising your achievement in literacy skills further and increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching. Important elements within these two objectives are developing your resilience and confidence to engage in all lessons. We are confident that you will continue to work with staff to achieve these things and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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