

Inspection of a good school: Penryn College

Kernick Road, Penryn, Cornwall TR10 8PZ

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 June 2022

Outcome

Penryn College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Penryn College is a happy and welcoming school. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning and are polite and respectful towards others. Pupils say bullying is rare. Most are confident that leaders act quickly to resolve any incidents that do occur. Penryn is an inclusive school. Pupils spoken to describe how everyone is treated equally and that discrimination is not tolerated.

Pupils follow an exciting curriculum with a broad range of different opportunities. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and there is an ethos of 'having a go', without fear of failure. Pupils embrace this challenge, both in and outside of the classroom. Throughout their school journey, pupils are encouraged to think carefully about their next steps and be aspirational for their future.

Many pupils attend extra-curricular activities and there are lots of different ones to choose from. These include sailing, gardening, jazz band and board games club. Leaders regularly review this offer to ensure there is something for everyone.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Subject learning pathways outline the journey from Year 7 to 11. This helps pupils to make connections with the knowledge that has come before and what they will learn next. In some subjects, this planning is not detailed enough so it is not as clear what pupils need to know and remember.

Leaders are working to increase the proportion of pupils who choose subjects that make up the English baccalaureate. In particular, leaders are ambitious to grow the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language at GCSE. Early signs show that the popularity for this subject is increasing.

There is an effective phonics programme in place to support pupils at the early stages of reading. Leaders review the progress of pupils regularly. There is dedicated time in the school day for reading for pleasure. Most pupils value this time, but a minority are choosing to do other activities instead.

The Area Resource Base (ARB) for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is at the heart of the school. Staff know the individual needs of the pupils well. Many parents that have a child accessing the ARB say they are thriving. Some pupils also attend other lessons and are accessing the curriculum confidently. Across the school, teachers understand the needs of pupils with SEND and are supporting them to make good progress.

Behaviour around the school site is calm and orderly. Most pupils are respectful and keen to work hard. Pupils say that occasionally lessons are disrupted by a small minority of pupils who find it difficult to focus on their learning.

Through the 'Lifestyles' programme, pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, online safety and British values. Pupils say these are important lessons and consider them to be age appropriate. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They are also encouraged to consider values such as morality and how this might be viewed in different ways, for example through sport.

Pupils benefit from a rich and varied careers programme. Work experience has continued, despite the disruption of COVID-19, and there are several trips to colleges and universities. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Staff say they are proud to work at this school. Leaders, including governors, understand their responsibility to support a manageable workload for staff. As a result, staff say they feel valued and that their well-being is a priority for leaders. Parents are positive and support the school. However, some parents who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, want there to be clearer and more effective channels of communication with the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff, including governors, receive regular safeguarding training. This includes frequent briefings to update staff on the support in place for individual pupils. Staff are vigilant about reporting any concerns. Leaders then respond quickly and seek support from external agencies when required.

There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Most pupils have a trusted adult whom they can approach if they have a concern.

There is an appropriate curriculum and school-wide policies and practice in place to educate pupils about sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified clearly exactly what they want pupils to learn. Where this is the case, learning is built around a series of activities designed to interest pupils rather than pinpoint the knowledge it is important for them to remember. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge they want pupils to learn is planned precisely in all subjects.
- Some parents do not feel that the school responds to concerns or queries in a timely and effective manner. This can lead to a breakdown in the partnership between school and home. Leaders should ensure they develop strong channels of communication with parents to allow them to work together effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136852
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10227056
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1154
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julia Roberts
Headteacher	Paul Walker
Website	www.penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 February 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an ARB for pupils with SEND.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a group of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, religious education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at

samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 284 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Parent View, including 176 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 129 responses to the staff survey and 708 responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

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