

Inspection of Penrice Academy

Charlestown Road, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 3NR

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The head of school is Tanya Coleman. This school is part of Cornwall Education Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dan Morrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Geoff Brown. There is also an executive headteacher, Lucy Gambier, who is responsible for this school and supporting secondary provision in the trust.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils excel at Penrice Academy. Staff strive relentlessly to meet the school's extraordinarily high expectation to raise aspiration and enable pupils to realise their potential, regardless of background or need. The school's curriculum is especially well-planned to fulfil this ambition. Staff teach this curriculum carefully, skilfully and highly effectively. As a result, pupils learn extremely well, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

There are similarly high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils rise to this challenge brilliantly. Staff ensure that positive relationships underpin this calm, happy and harmonious school. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and fairly. Bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils show very high levels of commitment to their learning and personal development. Lessons are disruption free. Pupils embody the school's values of pride, respect and success.

Pupils thrive because of the richness of the school's offer, including how the curriculum is enhanced by trips and visits and the 'Penrice Plus' offer. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are included fully in school life.

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

Leaders' core moral purpose, to tackle social inequality, underpins the success of this highly effective school. The school knows its provision and its community exceptionally well. It uses this knowledge to improve continuously, systematically and with high ambition. Governance arrangements are finely balanced and very effective. The local governing board, trustees and executive leaders use the many strengths of provision to promote improvement within the school and for the wider system in the area selflessly. The school develops staff, using innovative approaches, to be exceedingly effective. Staff share in leaders' relentless focus to continually improve their impact on pupils' experiences and learning. Consequently, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with precision and delivers excellent outcomes for pupils consistently.

The school's offer is exceptional. Pupils' experiences are broadened deliberately, with great consideration of how to reduce barriers caused by disadvantage or individual need. To do this, the school has established an ambitious curriculum that goes beyond the expectations of the national curriculum. Every subject, across the school's broad offer, is sequenced logically. Those with SEND, or at risk of falling behind, are identified early. Lessons are adapted to meet their needs with a high degree of precision.

Skilled staff teach the curriculum very effectively. They have strong and deep subject knowledge. Staff use regular and ongoing assessment to adapt lessons, provide feedback and amend the curriculum so that it continually adjusts to the changing needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils make rapid gains from sometimes low starting points. Gaps in knowledge are filled successfully. Pupils remember the curriculum extremely well. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Reading is prioritised. Embedded approaches to teaching reading allow pupils to experience a wide array of interesting, ambitious and culturally diverse texts. For pupils who need it, a tailored early reading programme helps them to learn sounds and how to blend them systematically. This all means that pupils of all abilities learn to read rapidly. They become skilled and passionate readers.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school's behaviour policy is widely understood and applied with a high degree of consistency. Pupils know expectations are incredibly high and that this can be challenging. However, they conduct themselves in and around the school beautifully and attend regularly. Incidents of poor behaviour are exceptionally rare and declining. Pupils are a credit to themselves, their school and their families.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured with equal determination. For example, pupils develop socially through an array of extra-curricular clubs, assemblies and embedded routines that all contribute to the strong community of this school. Pupils learn in detail about cultures and beliefs from around the world. They develop a mature understanding, appreciation and respect for difference. Carefully planned and ongoing careers advice starts early. It links to pupils' personal interests and ambitions seamlessly. Pupils are very well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136573
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10344598
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	1420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Brown
CEO of the trust	Dan Morrow
Headteacher	Lucy Gambier (Executive Headteacher) Tanya Coleman (Head of School)
Website	www.penriceacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2024

Information about this school

- Penrice Academy is part of the Cornwall Education Learning Trust.
- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in senior and middle leadership, including a new executive headteacher and head of school.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and visited a sample of lessons in some other subjects. They listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors spoke to four representatives from the local governing board, including the chair. One of these representatives is also a trustee. They also spoke to representatives from the trust, including the CEO, deputy CEO and inclusion lead.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of the answers to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including documents relating to governance, leaders' evaluations, the long-term strategy of the school and information about the school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Tong	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Parsons	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Thomson	Ofsted Inspector
Nadine Lapskas	Ofsted Inspector

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