

# Penrice Academy

Charlstown Rd, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 3NR

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b> <b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding 1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding 1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding 1
Leadership and management		Outstanding 1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The school provides an exceptionally high quality of education which results in students making outstanding progress.
- By the end of Year 11 attainment is above average and rising year-on-year.
- Students' achievement is high in all years. Current work shows that students reach above average standards.
- Students are proud of their school. They feel safe and say bullying is uncommon.
- Students display exemplary attitudes to learning and behave extremely well in lessons and around the school.
- Students thrive because the school is a very caring, inclusive community with excellent support systems in place.
- The curriculum is very well planned and provides students with an interesting range of subjects and topics which ensures that they enjoy school.
- The principal brings inspiration and a powerful sense of direction to all leaders and staff.
- Robust performance management systems reward and encourage staff at all levels to ensure students succeed.
- The very experienced governing body is exceptionally effective. Governors provide a high level of both support and challenge.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to narrow the gap between the rates of progress of different groups of students.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding.
- By embracing modern technologies, students in Years 7 to 10 are given the opportunity to extend and challenge their learning in the classroom.
- The vast majority of teaching is good and outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 54 lessons, of which 27 were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of visits to assemblies and tutorial sessions and carried out short visits to classrooms across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, pastoral leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They also met with various groups of students.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' progress, achievement, behaviour and exclusions. They looked at the work of a wide range of students.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation relating to the management of the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, lesson observations, and arrangements for the safeguarding of students and for governance.
- Inspectors took into account the 65 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 62 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Cornish	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Alan Jones	Additional Inspector
Terry Payne	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Penrice Academy converted to become an academy in April 2011. When its predecessor school, called Penrice Community College, was previously inspected by Ofsted in March 2011, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Penrice Academy is a larger-than-average-sized, mixed, 11 to 16 comprehensive school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below average. In this academy, this additional money allocated by the government is for looked after children and those eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below the national average, as is the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is leading the School Direct programme for the Peninsula Teaching School Partnership and is a National Teaching School.
- The school has an International Schools Award, Artsmark Gold status and a Healthy Schools Award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress for secondary schools.
- The school enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students do not attend any off-site alternative provision.

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

- Following on from the recent restructuring of the leadership team, further empower middle leaders with clear lines of accountability for standards of teaching and the progress and achievement of students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- The vast majority of students make rapid and sustained progress from broadly average starting points. Students' attitudes to learning are excellent. The calm, purposeful atmosphere that prevails in the school provides a highly appropriate climate for learning.
- In 2013, over two thirds of all students attained five or more A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. Overall achievement is excellent and has been sustained rigorously. The school's own recent information suggests that GCSE results in 2014 will be even better.
- In 2013, 80% of students gained A\* to C GCSE grades in English and 74% of students gained A\* to C GCSE grades in mathematics, which was well above the national average.
- Through a relentless focus on the highest quality teaching and precisely targeted support, the dips in GCSE modern foreign languages and humanities results in 2013 have been decisively checked. Students are now making much more rapid progress towards challenging targets, and are on track to achieve much higher than average results in 2014.
- The school enters some students for GCSE examinations early. This is done when the school carefully assesses that it is in the students' best interests and does not depress their achievement.
- While there has been some variability in the achievement of different groups in the past, the school has rigorously tackled this through the accurate monitoring of students' progress, which has now resulted in nearly all groups making more rapid progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Teachers and other adults support and guide these students and the extra help they receive makes a big difference to their achievement.
- Through rigorous intervention and support programmes, students for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium now make equally as good progress as other students in English and mathematics.
- Students read widely and often and write extensively across all subjects and apply a wide range of skills very effectively to ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. No student leaves the school without clear pathways that have been carefully planned for their future lives.
- All students in Years 7 to 10 are provided with electronic tablets to improve their learning in and out of the school. Students use their tablets to record using the cameras, record podcasts and have greater flexibility in their learning. Students enjoy using them and say that they have made learning exciting and more challenging and result in them making rapid progress.
- The school is very effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all groups of students who make excellent progress and achieve well as a result of teachers' high expectations for them.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium or the Year 7 catch-up premium receive additional support to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. As a result, they make similar progress to that made by other students.
- The school's reading programme in Years 7 and 8 is very effective and is helping to develop students' literacy skills well and to support their learning across a range of subjects. Literacy mentors help students to improve their reading.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- In many lessons teaching is outstanding and teachers have very high expectations. Teachers routinely use information on students' progress well to plan lessons that challenge students and build on their prior learning.
- Consistently high-quality teaching promotes excellent progress across the school. The variety and pace of activities are often breathtaking, keeping all students fully motivated and engaged.

- Outstanding teaching combines with students' enthusiasm for learning to promote outstanding progress. The high quality and consistency of teaching ensure that there are only very minor variations in progress between subjects.
- Warm, constructive relationships pervade classrooms; disruption of any kind is virtually unknown. Courtesy is the norm and students enjoy numerous opportunities for different types of work. Students show strong desire to learn and teachers have high expectations.
- The imaginative use of modern technologies in a Year 10 creative media lesson on creating advertisements enabled students to try out a number of concepts first. They were then able to script, produce a storyboard, film and edit their work, greatly enhancing the quality of their finished products and making learning exciting.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to work well with each other, to share and develop ideas. For example, in a Year 10 boys' group English lesson, the teacher presented constant challenges to enable the students to deepen their understanding of the text through language devices. By using their tablets, sharing ideas and working together, they were motivated and eager to reference examination criteria and as a result, they produced high-quality responses.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge promotes assured teaching and students' confidence. It helps teachers maintain a tight focus both on lesson aims and the requirements of examinations.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together to provide support that is well matched to the accurate assessment they make of students' abilities. This ensures that all students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and the most able, make excellent progress.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Attitudes to learning are exemplary. Students are very smart and well dressed and are excellent ambassadors for their school.
- Students demonstrate a great pride in their school. They are very polite, well mannered and courteous towards each other and to adults and visitors. They are inquisitive and fun to talk to.
- Students say they feel safe. They understand risk and have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that there is very little bullying in school and express great confidence that should any happen, it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The school promotes many opportunities for students to take on positions of responsibilities such as: becoming a member of the school's senior student team by applying to take on the roles of Head Boy, Head Girl and their deputies; and being members of the school council, prefects, literacy mentors and tablet mini mentors.
- Attendance is high and continues to rise, reflecting students' enjoyment in learning. The attendance of vulnerable students is also high; far fewer are persistently absent than found nationally.
- Students are proactive in raising funds for local charities, including Little Harbour Children's Hospice, The Cystic Fibrosis Trust, LEPR Health in Action and the St Austell Food Bank. This enables students to develop as responsible individuals and make a significant contribution to the wider community.
- Students take full advantage of the outstanding range of opportunities that exist for students to develop their sporting, artistic and dramatic skills. These, combined with trips to Paris, Poland, and Germany, visits and links with other cultures, develop their awareness of society and develop clear personal skills, and have an impact on school life. Students speak very highly of the chances they are given to explore ideas and take part in activities beyond their lessons.
- The responses to Parent View indicate that the vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are very safe and exceptionally well looked after at school, and that they would recommend the school to other parents or carers.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The Principal is determined and relentless in his focus on improvement. This is driven by his passionate belief that all students, irrespective of their circumstances, are entitled to the best possible education.
- Self-evaluation is robust. Leaders use well-developed systems and processes to check and evaluate the school's performance. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas requiring further improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. The performance management targets are linked to improvements in teaching and standards of achievement and, as a result, both are outstanding.
- Comprehensive checks on students' progress through analysing assessment information enable all staff to monitor how each student is progressing. Assessment information is also used to challenge staff to ensure their efforts promote the best possible progress.
- Leaders' rigorous analysis of students' progress and their accurate evaluation of the school's work already provide all teachers and governors with a clear understanding of the school's performance. The school's track record, reflected in students' outstanding achievement and effective teaching, also demonstrates capacity for continued improvement.
- The School Direct Initial Teacher Training programme has enabled the school to build on high-quality, targeted training opportunities for teachers. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.
- Pupil premium funding has been successfully used to provide additional teachers of literacy, so that students entering Year 7 are supported with reading and writing skills. The money is also used to fund initiatives such as Forest School, where students are taught in an outdoor setting to work as a team, develop literacy and numeracy and to enjoy learning.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is a major strength of the school. Assemblies focus on values and encourage students to reflect.
- The school uses an independent school improvement partner to help with school assessment of how well it is doing.
- All safeguarding requirements are exemplary and fully met. All documentation is meticulously completed. Child protection procedures are exemplary. All staff are appropriately trained and are aware of child protection and risk assessment procedures.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governance is outstanding.
- The governing body has planned meticulously to ensure that the school provides a motivating and inspirational school community.
- Governors hold the principal to account for the accuracy of predictions, the quality of teaching and attendance.
- Governors have a very good understanding of data on how well the school is performing when compared to all schools nationally. They have completed RAISEonline data analysis training.
- A series of well-planned meetings for both full and sub-groups of governors help them to maintain a robust but balanced overview of the effectiveness of the school.
- Governors ensure that the Year 7 catch-up and the pupil premium funding is well managed and they have a very good awareness of how to evaluate its impact on students' achievement.
- Governors have a firm grasp of the school's finances and of systems for pay progression linked to performance management. They monitor the performance management of the Principal and monitor targets for senior leaders.
- The governors ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138041
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	441114

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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>	1,374
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elise Alma
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Parker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8–9 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01726 72163
<b>Fax number</b>	01726 64901
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