

Penwith Alternative Provision Academy

Penbrea Road, Penzance, TR18 2AT

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leaders and managers, including members of the management committee, have ensured very high levels of improvement through regular monitoring and high-quality training for teachers. This has resulted in outstanding teaching and achievement across the school.
- Excellent support by academy leaders has helped to ensure that students' progress has improved. Many have made rapid progress in English and mathematics since their starting points at the school.
- Members of the management committee challenge leaders regularly to ensure they have a very accurate view of students' progress.
- Committee members make excellent use of additional funding to ensure that eligible students achieve as well as their classmates in English and mathematics.
- The parents who spoke to the inspector are overwhelmingly pleased with the school and with the improvements in their children's achievements and personal development.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is almost always outstanding. Marking of students' work is of a high quality, helping students to improve. This is particularly evident in English.
- Subjects and topics have been improved recently, ensuring that these match students' abilities extremely well. A very effective range of local visits and activities engages students' interests and ensures that they make outstanding progress in their personal development.
- Students contribute very well to the community through their charity fund-raising activities and through work experience. Activities to promote their personal development contribute well to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain are limited by the lack of planned opportunities for them to link with areas outside of Cornwall.
- Students' behaviour in and around the school is almost always exemplary. They enjoy school, get on well with staff and join in with all that the school offers. Their attendance rises rapidly once they start at the school.
- Students are safe and secure at school.
- Staff are all extremely supportive of leaders and very positive about students' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed students' learning in eight lessons, most jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to the younger pupils reading their books.
- The inspector had lunch with different groups of students and talked to them about their school and their work.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the family support manager, other staff and some parents.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and students' books.
- The inspector talked to several parents about their views
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, to represent the views of other parents. The inspector took account of nine responses to the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school became an alternative provision converter academy on 1 June 2013. It is part of the Acorn Multi-Academy Trust which includes six other short-stay schools across Cornwall. These are: Glynn House Short Stay School, Nine Maidens Academy, North Cornwall Academy, Restormel Academy, Cornwall Hospital Service and Caradon Academy. When the predecessor school was inspected in 2011 it was judged to be good.
- Most students come from in and around Penzance but a few are from further afield.
- Students have either been excluded from their mainstream schools or are in danger of permanent exclusion because of their behaviour, social and emotional difficulties.
- A minority of students have a statement of special educational needs for their learning difficulties. A very few have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition.
- Many students have been out of school for long periods before they start at the school.
- Students are almost exclusively White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after. The number of students in each year group is very small.
- Early entry to some qualifications is available to students in Year 10.
- Vocational opportunities are provided for students in Key Stage 4 at Penwith College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen opportunities for students to learn about life outside of Cornwall to further extend their awareness of life in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has an excellent vision for the school. He is well supported by other senior staff and by the management committee and academy leaders. Together they all ensure that students' achievement and behaviour improve rapidly once they start at the school. This is due to very rigorous monitoring, outstanding teaching and exceptional individual support for all students.
- Leaders and governors have a very clear view of the school's performance. Their expectations of staff are extremely high because they want to make sure that students' progress in English, mathematics and science is consistently outstanding.
- Staff responses to the inspection questionnaire show that they are very proud to work at this school and provide very strong support for leaders.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and students' achievements so that they know how well students are doing. The school's assessments of students' progress show that they make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. This is achieved in a relatively short period of time from students' often very low starting points.
- The very effective roles of middle leaders include thorough checking of outcomes in their subjects. They ensure that all teachers are supported and that assessments are regular and robust. As a result, provision in English, mathematics and science is very strong.
- The new curriculum engages students' interests very well. The wide range of support ensures that the progress, behaviour and attendance of students improve at a fast rate.
- Leaders set targets for teachers which are closely linked to students' achievements. This helps leaders to make sure that all students are well challenged by the work set for them. Increases in teachers' salaries are matched to how well these targets are met.
- Leaders manage students' behaviour extremely well. The school day is planned around students' needs and they are kept busy for much of their time at the school. This leads to a calm approach to learning, ensuring that students are successful.
- The very effective range of activities means students develop positive relationships that lead to their high-quality personal development. Students know that there is always someone they can talk to if they have a problem. The family support manager, for example, plays a valuable role in helping students to overcome their anxieties and problems so that they are ready to learn.
- Students really like the school. They told the inspector that 'everyone gets on well because it is small so everyone gets a chance'. Their rising attendance shows that they want to come to school regularly.
- Leaders promote students' understanding of life in Britain through regular visits into the community and through fund-raising events for local charities. These promote students' high-quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the vast majority of students have never had opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain by visiting or linking with areas outside of Cornwall.
- Opportunities to learn about British values through students' involvement in the community have improved recently because the school has set up a student council. Students really value this and though it is in the early days of its work, the council is beginning to plan fund-raising activities with enthusiasm. British values are very well promoted through the way in which students cook for the whole school community on a daily basis. Staff and students then socialise as they eat together.
- Leaders assess students' work regularly to check which students are doing particularly well and which students need support. They make very effective use of additional funding for those students eligible for it to provide additional support, resources and visits. This ensures that all groups of students, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have additional special educational needs, achieve as well as other students in the class in English and mathematics.
- High-quality expectations ensure that students make at least good progress from their low starting points, and often outstanding progress in English and mathematics.
- Leaders are working rigorously with their academy partners to develop their preferred method of assessing pupils' progress as there will no longer be levels in the future National Curriculum.
- Leaders check the achievement, behaviour and attendance of students during off-site visits and at college to ensure these are always of a very high quality. Most students make their own way to school and to off-site visits, usually by bus or train. This promotes their personal development very well.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector are highly impressed by the improvements in their children's behaviour and achievement since they started at the school. They are overwhelmingly supportive of staff

and leaders.

- The school makes sure that there is equality of opportunity for all students through the new curriculum. This helps them to develop an understanding of different cultures and faiths. As a result, there is no discrimination at the school and students' attitudes are positive.
- The academy leaders provide excellent support to leaders through regular visits. They facilitate external reports on students' progress. These show that outcomes for students are improving rapidly, including a rise in GCSE results in 2014. Academy leaders acknowledge the high quality of leadership at the school.
- Leaders from the local feeder schools are very supportive. One commented, 'Some sterling work is done with some of our students at this school.'
- Careers guidance is of a very high quality. As a result, students have options about their futures and excellent support to help them make the right choices. All students who leave the school at the end of Year 11 find college places or employment.
- Students benefit from a wide range of sporting activities in the community, which contribute very well to their personal development and fitness skills.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements. Staff receive regular training so that they know how to identify any pupil at risk of harm. High-quality procedures ensure that pupils are safe. Risk assessments are extremely thorough and are regularly completed for external activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is very effective. The management committee have received training which has improved their skills, leading to governance that is of a high quality. As a result, members have the right skills to hold leaders to account for students' achievements. Members regularly check the quality of teaching and behaviour so that they are fully aware of their impact. They know how well the school is doing because they check performance data with other similar schools in the academy to ensure they are accurate. Members regularly check the performance of staff and know where the best teaching and achievement can be found. Financial management is effective. Members make good use of additional funding to ensure that students who are eligible benefit from it. This ensures that these students achieve as well as their classmates. The management committee understand the procedures for setting targets for teachers and they use these to make sure the best teachers are rewarded.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is excellent. Despite students' emotional social and behavioural difficulties, most behave extremely well, showing that their personal skills have improved significantly since starting at the school. Parents and staff agree that behaviour improves rapidly.
- Students' behaviour at their alternative provision is also excellent.
- Very effective provision at the school enables students to receive the highest possible support. Once students have a place at the school, plans are put together to support the student and their family. This ensures a partnership in which everyone is working to help the student improve their behaviour and attitude. This nurturing approach ensures that students succeed and start to get on well with their classmates.
- The school liaises very well with feeder schools, the local authority and with independent services to try to help safe relationships develop. Restorative justice is a key activity for some students and this helps to reduce incidents of anger. This approach has been almost 100% successful in improving students' behaviour in the past year.
- After a short period at the school, students' attitudes improve and become more positive. They soon start to behave very well because they want to learn and complete their studies. They understand that their behaviour matters. At lunchtimes for example, students sit together with their classmates and staff and take part in conversations with enthusiasm.
- There have been no permanent exclusions and short-term exclusions have reduced recently. This is due to the high-quality support provided and the regular monitoring by leaders.
- Students who arrive at the school in Years 10 or 11 are keen to complete their studies. Most of these students work hard and enjoy their time at the school.
- School staff and the parents who spoke to the inspector are highly positive about behaviour and safety.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a very high quality because of the very many activities that the school provides. For example, pupils say that leaders give them confidence

because they tell them to be the best they can. This helps them to improve their self-esteem.

- Students are well aware of the school's approach to the Christian religion, which is balanced with the study of other world faiths. They understand right from wrong.
- Students show that they enjoy school because their attendance is rising. Almost all students attend much better than in their previous schools.
- The school prepares students exceptionally well for their futures through their high-quality achievements, their improving attendance and their excellent behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students are safe because policies to ensure their safety are fully in place. Leaders work closely with their academy partners to ensure that policies fully meet requirements.
- Students benefit from very effective support from the school and from some outside providers. During the inspection, older students attended an activity led by the Cornwall Domestic Violence Team to develop their own 'Bill of Rights'. This was to ensure that they have lives free from abuse, bullying or sexual harassment. Students showed sensible attitudes and had much to contribute. Boys and girls listened intently and offered opinions about how to recognise safe relationships, and how to keep themselves safe.
- Students told the inspector that they feel safe at the school because staff are always available if they need help. They say they learn about e-safety and know how to stay safe on the internet.
- Students are aware of risks. Good risk assessments are in place for any trip or visit. This helps students to feel safe. They understand the impact of risk.
- Students know about different forms of bullying. Those spoken to said there is no bullying at the school because 'there is no need to bully here, no one gives you a hard time'. Students say staff are really good at sorting things out if necessary.
- The behaviour and safety of students while on trips, during vocational experiences or at college are excellent.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Students achieve outstandingly well in English and mathematics because the impact of teaching during students' time at the school is outstanding. Teachers work individually with most students, or in very small groups. This ensures that students' individual needs are met and that their tasks are very well matched to their abilities.
- High-quality training for staff and regular checking by leaders ensure that teaching is very effective and that students achieve and regularly exceed their targets.
- Expectations of students' achievements are high, ensuring that most students make at least good and often excellent progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Students are well challenged by the tasks set for them. They work at a fast rate because they want to succeed and because they want to please their teachers.
- Reading skills improve rapidly at the school. The youngest pupils in Years 4 to 6, for example, benefit from very high expectations. Reading books are of very good quality and fully engage their interests. As a result, reading skills improve quickly. Boys in Years 4 and 5, for example, were happy to read aloud in class during their lesson, showing very good use of phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) to read unknown words.
- Excellent teaching of writing was evident in Year 10 where students were investigating the language of Shakespeare. Some past weak achievement in writing was overcome because of the high-quality support and the use of some very effective resources, including photographs. As a result, students were interested. They were intrigued by the photographs which led to greater understanding of 'The Witches Speech' in Macbeth.
- Teaching in mathematics lessons is almost always practical, helping students to enjoy their learning. In one such lesson, students in Years 7 and 8 enjoyed finding out the probability of throwing a number six on a dice. They were quickly able to find answers because of very effective questioning by the teacher.
- Students are challenged very well in their lessons. Teachers make effective use of questions to encourage thinking skills. Teaching assistants are very well deployed to support those students who would benefit from additional help. They make sure that students with additional needs and those eligible for extra

funding achieve as well as other students in the class, and sometimes better.

- Teachers check students' achievements on a regular basis to see how well they are doing. Marking is of a high quality, helping students to improve and understand how to get to their next steps. This is particularly evident in writing. Feedback to students is very helpful, ensuring that they know what they could do to improve further.
- Teachers manage students' behaviour very effectively. The behaviour tracking system is used very well to identify any student who is not motivated or engaged well enough in learning. However, well-chosen activities in most lessons ensure that students are very well engaged by the tasks set for them.
- The most able students are extremely well challenged by the tasks that teachers set for them. Students in Years 10 and 11, for example, thoroughly enjoyed their practical science task where they were trying to find the reaction of acids on metals. Learning in the lesson was of a very high quality, providing many highlights as students responded extremely well to the tasks set, extending their understanding.
- Teaching for students with autistic spectrum conditions is very effective, ensuring that these students make similarly excellent progress to their classmates.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When students enter the school, their attainment is almost always below or well below expected levels for their age. This is because many have missed past schooling due to their behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. However, the vast majority quickly settle and are soon very keen to attend school.
- School data show that students make outstanding progress in English and mathematics during their time there. Records indicate that students' achievements improve rapidly once they start at the school so that they make much better than expected progress each term. As a result, a high proportion reintegrate back to a mainstream school within two or three terms.
- In 2014, students acquired GCSE qualifications in a wide range of subjects. In English for example, two thirds of students who entered achieved a Grade C in English. This represents outstanding improvement in the very short time that most students had been at the school. Students also acquired GCSEs in other subjects as well as some Functional Skills qualifications, preparing them very well for college.
- Some students in Year 10 take early entry Functional Skills examinations in English and mathematics to ensure they achieve some qualifications while at the school.
- All groups of students, including disadvantaged pupils, those who are eligible for additional funding and those with autism spectrum conditions, achieve equally well. This is due to excellent support and the exciting curriculum activities which interest and engage students very well.
- Students make particularly strong progress in reading because of daily reading sessions and the very relevant books that are provided for them. Records show that they read every day and as a result their skills improve rapidly.
- Achievement in writing is very well supported by teachers' high-quality marking, which provides clear examples of how students could do better.
- Students' books are very well presented. Literacy and numeracy books in particular show regular daily activities. High expectations help students to rise to the challenge and make some excellent progress.
- Particularly strong progress in art showed high-quality expertise in the safe use of tools to create logos for different brands. One student, for example, was interested in setting up his own scooter business and was trying out different logos using paint and airbrush. Students also enjoy music and several learn to play instruments.
- The most able students make outstanding progress in English and mathematics, often working independently on individual challenges and extending their skills.
- Students make outstanding progress on their vocational courses while at Penwith College, preparing them extremely well for their futures.
- Students enjoy some off-site sports activities as well as some after-school sports clubs. These all help them to improve their fitness.

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

Unique reference number	139760
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	449925

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

Type of school	Pupils referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christian Denley
Headteacher	Gary Owens
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01736 332341
Fax number	01736 332341
Email address	GOwens@acornacademycornwall.org.uk

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