

Pendeen School

Church Road, Pendeen, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 7SE

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders demonstrate an absolute belief that all pupils deserve the very best. This determination and relentless drive for improvement are fully shared by staff and governors.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good across the school. Teachers know their pupils well. They are skilled in identifying the needs of individual pupils and planning work that further develops their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points. This is enabling pupils with historic underachievement to catch up.
- Leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. However, improvement planning does not focus precisely enough on the difference actions are making in raising the attainment of key groups of pupils. This limits the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Staff have an accurate understanding of their needs and plan exciting activities that engage children and make them want to learn.
- Governors have an aspirational vision for the school. They provide high levels of challenge and support and are well informed about the progress pupils are making.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff are acutely aware of the difficulties faced by some pupils and their families and are proactive in addressing these needs.
- The headteacher's firm and resolute response to poor behaviour has ensured that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Older pupils are considerate of the needs of younger pupils and involve them in their games.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide carefully tailored support. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress that is in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The curriculum is varied and offers pupils exciting opportunities to learn, especially in English, mathematics and science. However, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to apply their writing skills across a range of other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, by ensuring that the curriculum provides greater opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Continue to improve the school's performance by ensuring that:
 - improvement planning is evaluated on its impact on pupils' outcomes
 - leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning focuses succinctly on the progress being made by different groups of pupils
 - teachers across the school have a more consistent understanding of national curriculum objectives and how to apply these to assessing pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior teacher lead with a relentless drive and an absolute belief that all children deserve the very best. They accept nothing less than this from staff and other members of the school community, and this has been instrumental in improving teaching and learning and, consequently, pupils' outcomes.
- In the appointment of the current headteacher, the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust has put a halt to a period of instability and significantly increased the school's capacity for further improvement. This has been enhanced by the recruitment of highly skilled teachers, who are improving outcomes for pupils of all ages and abilities. The trust provides the school with strong support and has played a key role in reducing the vulnerabilities it could face as a smaller school.
- Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school and recognise its strengths and areas for further improvement. School development planning has been focused on the appropriate priorities and a concentration on these has enabled leaders to establish and embed the foundations which have led to significant improvement. However, not all areas of development planning are focused on the impact that objectives are having on driving up standards.
- Middle leaders exemplify a deep moral purpose to improve outcomes for pupils and continue to be significant drivers in the school's improvement. They are passionate about pupils' academic progress as well as ensuring that the school does everything in its power to improve pupils' life chances and experiences of the wider world.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and staff are held to account for the progress pupils make. This approach continues to drive up standards but lacks precision and a sharp enough focus on the outcomes of particular groups. This limits the number of pupils achieving the higher standards.
- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. They recognise the work being done by leaders and governors and describe a school that has 'improved beyond recognition'. They feel that their children are happy and are making good progress.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. This is because they monitor the spending of additional funding and check that it is targeted appropriately. The leader of special educational needs is relatively new in post but is knowledgeable about pupils identified as having additional needs. She regularly consults with pupils and their parents to gain an accurate view of progress. External support, accessed through the academy trust, has played a key part in developing the expertise of staff in specific areas, for example in the diagnosis and support of pupils who have dyslexia.
- The additional government funding to promote sport and physical education is spent effectively. It is used well to provide professional development and training for staff. Pupils' participation in sporting activities and competitions has increased. As a result, Pendeen has a well-founded reputation for competitive sport and 'punches above its weight' for a school with a relatively small number of pupils.

- The leaders' determination to ensure that all pupils have a secure understanding of basic literacy and numeracy skills has been fundamental in raising attainment. However, this focus has meant that other areas of the curriculum are not yet as strong. The curriculum does not offer pupils enough opportunity to apply their skills across other subjects. This prevents greater numbers of pupils achieving the higher standards, especially in writing.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and a strong moral code underpins the school's values. These are regularly explored during collective worship, with pupils being praised for demonstrating characteristics in line with each term's value, for example, resilience. Senior leaders have created a culture in which pupils show tolerance and respect in their day-to-day work and, as a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' learning and life experiences are enriched by numerous trips, visitors, after-school clubs and special events. For example, during the inspection, children in the Reception class were visited by a local farmer and a lamb, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 visited the Eden Project.

Governance of the school

- Governors demonstrate an aspirational vision for the school and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They receive detailed information about the progress pupils are making, which senior leaders present in an honest and straightforward way. Governors regularly test out the accuracy of this information and monitor progress towards school priorities, for example in the development of mastery in mathematics.
- Governors are proactive in ensuring that there is a suitable spread of knowledge and skills and this enables them to challenge leaders and hold them to account with confidence. Governors continue to develop their expertise in partnership with other schools within the academy trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is vigilant in carrying out safeguarding checks to assess adults' suitability to work with children. All staff are trained appropriately, with the majority having received training at a level above that which is required.
- Staff have a detailed understanding of local vulnerabilities and know what to do if they have a concern about pupils' safety or welfare.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a secure understanding of the dangers associated with social media and the internet. Pupils are actively involved in the promotion of online safety. For example, the school council recently published an online safety poster for pupils and parents to use at home.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have put strategies in place which have significantly improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. A legacy of weak teaching has resulted in some historic underachievement for pupils throughout the school. However, as a result of leaders' actions to eradicate this weak teaching and establish effective approaches to assessment, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They teach new concepts in logical, carefully planned sequences and their clear explanations expertly guide pupils as they develop and consolidate new knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants work as a strong team. They are skilled in asking probing questions which challenge pupils of all abilities to think deeply about their learning. All adults have high expectations for pupils' academic achievement as well as their behaviour. As a result, pupils, including those who find maintaining concentration more difficult, remain focused on their learning.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. In Reception and Years 1 and 2, the teaching of phonics is matched closely to pupils' ability. This enables pupils to build upon their prior knowledge and, consequently, a number of pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. Pupils understand the correct terminology because teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge.
- Teachers recognise that not all pupils read widely at home and so have put in place systems which compensate for this, such as a book share that provides all pupils with access to high-quality texts and promotes a love of reading.
- Pupils are keen mathematicians. This is evident in their books and was typified during a mathematics lesson where pupils needed to identify 'mystery calculations'. Pupils used the information presented to create their own theories and displayed a systematic approach in their reasoning, and confidently explained their methods. Work in their books shows that pupils are given regular opportunities to practise basic skills and then apply these across a wide range of mathematical concepts.
- A keen focus on developing pupils' basic literacy skills has clearly helped pupils of all abilities to improve their writing. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught effectively and pupils apply these skills well in their writing. A focus on high-quality vocabulary is also proving effective in adding impact to pupils' writing. For example, a Year 1 pupil was able to explain to the inspector why she had chosen the word 'feisty' to describe her animal. Opportunities to write at length across a range of different subjects, for example in science, geography and history, are more limited. This restricts the progress that pupils, particularly the most able, can make in their writing.
- Teachers provide pupils with numerous opportunities to carry out scientific enquiries and investigations. During the inspection, key stage 1 pupils were evaluating the effectiveness of their flying machines and were able to explain the reasons behind their designs and how they could be improved further. They also understood the importance of fair testing.

- Teachers use ongoing assessment to accurately pinpoint gaps in pupils' understanding. When misconceptions are identified, adults act swiftly to ensure that these are corrected before providing pupils with further opportunities to practise their skills. Pupils who are confident in the concepts being taught are provided with activities which further secure their understanding. Pupils who have lower attainment are catching up and greater proportions of higher attaining pupils are working above expectations for their age.
- Leaders carefully track pupils' progress over time. This shows that pupils make good progress from baseline assessments, which is supported by work in books. The measuring of attainment, however, is not yet fully embedded across the school and this information sometimes shows fluctuation between assessment periods. Teachers have an inconsistent understanding of national curriculum objectives and this leads to lack of accuracy in assessment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel very safe and cared for and those spoken to were unanimous in their views that they are proud of their school and enjoy attending.
- School leaders play a significant role in supporting the most vulnerable children and their families. Pupils are well supported as a result of the individual care and attention they receive. There is a determined focus to support every aspect of pupils' emotional well-being and this is having a significant impact on learning behaviour and, consequently, academic outcomes. Parents value this aspect of the school's work. One parent, reflecting the view of many, told the inspector that, as a result of the school's actions, their child had 'come out of himself... thanks to the school, he is now thriving'.
- Pupils are encouraged to take decisions and play an active part in school life. For instance, the school council was instrumental in securing funding for the recently installed 'traversing wall'.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including online bullying, and understand the need to treat everyone with respect and tolerance. Pupils report that incidents of bullying almost never happen, but if issues do arise, they trust that staff will sort them out very quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils work hard and behave well. In the past, incidents of poor behaviour have got in the way of pupils' learning. However, comments from parents and pupils, as well as observations during the inspection, show that the headteacher's unrelenting determination is proving successful in eliminating poor behaviour. Where indiscipline does still occur, evidence gathered shows that this is dealt with effectively and these pupils are well supported in improving their behaviour.

- Pupils show high levels of care and respect for one another and adults. Lunchtimes are a social occasion, with pupils from across the school valuing the opportunity to spend time together. This family ethos is also evident on the playground where Reception children are welcome participants in older pupils' football matches.
- Pupils are positive ambassadors and describe the pride they feel when representing Pendeen School in the community, for example when participating in sporting fixtures. They understand the importance of conducting themselves well outside school, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 were extremely pleased to have a member of the public compliment their behaviour during their trip to the Eden Project.
- Attendance rates are rising and are now almost in line with national averages. Leaders' determined efforts to improve the attendance of key groups, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are beginning to pay off and attendance rates for these pupils are increasing.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics and build well upon their previous learning. Consequently, attainment is rising rapidly throughout the school. However, the most recently published national results confirm a legacy of historic underachievement and do not represent the significant improvements the school has made or the progress which current pupils are making in all year groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers and as well as other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development has risen so that it is now broadly in line with the national average. As the majority of children join the school with knowledge and skills slightly below those typically expected for their age, this represents good progress. The school's assessment data, supported by evidence gathered during the inspection, indicates that this upward trend is continuing.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and this is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 1 continues to increase, with the number of pupils currently on track to meet this standard closer to the national average. Pupils below the expected standard at the end of Year 2 are well supported and are catching up.
- Current pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress and their attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age. An increasing proportion are working above this level, especially in reading and mathematics. In 2016, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 showed that the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below national averages, particularly in writing. However, strong teaching and precise interventions are ensuring that the vast majority of these pupils are catching up in Year 3.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong teaching over time ensures that all children get a good start to their education. Children are assessed on entry to Reception and their learning needs are quickly identified. Although many children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age, there is clear improvement over time. Children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults use discussion and questioning to develop children's thinking and engagement in learning. As a result, children develop concentration and the ability to speak clearly and articulate their ideas. For example, when a group of boys were making a house for a tiger, one boy very eloquently explained the reasons why they needed to make the doors bigger.
- The early years curriculum captures the children's developing needs and interests well. There is a wide variety of stimulating activities, both inside and outside the classroom. As a result, all groups of children fully engage in their learning.
- Phonics is taught well. Children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words and simple sentences. Writing is encouraged through the provision of purposeful writing activities around the classroom and outdoor area. This leads to children choosing to write in their independent activities. Examples observed during the inspection were children writing questions to ask the farmer about the visiting lamb and taking the inspector's lunch order.
- Children feel safe because staff develop very positive relationships with them. This helps promote security and consistency in children's lives. Standards of behaviour are very good.
- Leaders view parents as important partners and are working extremely hard to raise levels of parental engagement. Parents receive regular online updates about their children's progress and parents spoke very positively about their children's time in Reception.
- Children develop positive attitudes and are happy and confident learners. During the inspection, they were keen to discuss their work with the inspector, showing pride in what they had achieved.
- Transition arrangements are effective and good relationships have been established with local providers, including the children's centre that operates on the same site.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. At the time of the inspection, there were no breaches to statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	140670
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10024901

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	Truro and Penwith Academy Trust
Chair	Fiona Wotton
Headteacher	Richard Larter
Telephone number	01736 788583
Website	www.pendeenschool.com
Email address	secretary@pendeen.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Pendeen School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are four classes: a Reception class and three mixed-age classes.
- The school is a member of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust and opened as an academy in April 2014. Local governance is undertaken by the governing body.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the school became an academy, including all of the class teachers. The school has had three headteachers since April 2014 with the current headteacher joining the school in September 2016.
- The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above that found nationally.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classrooms; some of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' learning was observed in all year groups and the inspector also attended an assembly presented by the pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher, other school leaders, staff, the local governing body and the chief executive officer from the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust. The inspector also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school development plan and records of pupils' attainment and progress. He also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information.
- The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- The 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account, including a number of free-text responses. The inspector also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.
- During the first day of the inspection, children in Years 3 and 4 visited the Eden Project.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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