

# Falmouth Primary Academy

Tregothan Road, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 2DR

## Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils typically make good progress during their time at the school.
- In particular, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average for other pupils. At key stage 2 their results are often equal to or better than other pupils nationally.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils are very well catered for by the school. Leaders focus precisely on their needs and address any barriers to learning effectively.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is below average, although they do make good progress from low starting points.
- Outcomes in writing at key stage 2 show that the most able pupils are not yet producing work with the level of sophistication necessary to attain at greater depth.
- Teaching is typically good and is characterised by good subject knowledge, precise attention to pupils' individual needs and effective questioning.
- Teaching is well led and teachers, including those who are newly qualified, feel well supported in their professional development.
- The early years foundation stage is very well led and children make outstanding progress, often from starting points that are well below average for their age.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding and they display very positive attitudes to their learning, demonstrating maturity and resilience across a range of subjects.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding and any disruption to learning is extremely rare and efficiently dealt with by teachers if it does occur.
- Pupils with complex special educational needs in the area resource base make very good progress and this prepares them well either to re-join mainstream education or to move on to other specialist settings. The resource base is very well led.
- The local advisory body is committed to the school and its members speak positively of the important role it plays in the local community. Nonetheless, their understanding of the school's strategic priorities lacks precision.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that the local advisory board develops a stronger understanding of the strategic priorities of the school in order to enable it to provide the level of challenge and support that good leaders need.
- Improve the rates of progress for pupils in key stage 1 to ensure that their attainment aligns with the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that pupils, especially the most able, have more opportunity to develop their ability to write with greater sophistication and complexity across the curriculum and year groups.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher leads the school with determination and ambition. She is rightly proud of its many successes and the improvements in the quality of education that have taken place in recent years. She is very ably supported by the head of school, who brings drive and expertise to her role, especially in relation to the early years. They work very well together as a team, providing very effective leadership for the other staff. The chief executive officer, until recently the headteacher of the academy's sponsor school, adds further to this effective teamwork. Overall, the sense of common purpose in pursuing the best possible outcomes for pupils that is displayed by all the school's senior leaders is palpable.
- Middle leadership is a strength of the school. This is clear in areas such as literacy, special educational needs, the pupil premium, the provision for the most able and the area resource base for pupils with complex needs. Middle leaders display the same drive and ambition as senior leaders and reinforce the sense that everyone in the school is focused resolutely on securing good outcomes for pupils.
- Leadership of teaching is good. The school has an effective programme of continuing professional development and also works well with other schools in the trust to ensure that teachers can learn from the best practice of colleagues. Regular monitoring of teaching and the impact it has on outcomes for pupils is a key factor in the good progress that pupils make across the school. Newly qualified teachers are well supported in their new roles and they recognise and appreciate this.
- The school makes very good use of the additional funding it receives in the forms of the pupil premium and the PE and sport premium. For example, disadvantaged pupils make good progress in the school in part because of the effective use of the pupil premium to provide extra targeted resources and additional staff.
- The school's curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of pupils. It is particularly coherent in the way separate subject areas are linked together by common themes without losing the particular features of each subject. For example, pupils in Year 6 continued to develop their literacy and numeracy while studying the ancient Egyptians but also learned key historical concepts such as chronology and the methods that are used to understand the past. As a result of this well-designed curriculum, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively and this is at the root of the good progress they make. The curriculum is very well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to participate in sport, clubs and trips.
- The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, the school works closely with a local art gallery and artists to develop pupils' artistic skills and understanding. As a consequence, the school's walls are replete with high-quality artwork from pupils that demonstrates a good cultural understanding of key artists and art movements. Moreover, the school successfully places a particular focus on the development of pupils' social and emotional development across the curriculum and this is at the heart of their outstanding personal development.
- The school promotes fundamental British values well. For example, elections to the

school council are explicitly linked to developing pupils' understanding of the democratic process. Similarly, pupils have been learning in assemblies about the recent presidential election in the United States. In addition, pupils' interactions with each other are characterised by mutual respect and tolerance and these values are modelled well by staff in the school. As a result of all this work, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The school's self-evaluation lacks precise analysis of the impact of leaders' actions and is not always linked effectively to the priorities of the school's strategic development plan.

### **Governance of the school**

- The day-to-day governance of the school is the responsibility of the local advisory board, which is overseen by the board of trustees in accordance with the multi-academy trust's scheme of delegation.
- The local advisory board works with the school's senior leaders to set the strategic direction of the school. While their commitment to the school and the important role it plays in the local community is clear, the understanding of the members of the local advisory board of the school's strategic priorities lacks precision. This makes it difficult for them to provide the high-quality challenge and support that good leadership needs. In addition, the local advisory board members need to have a more detailed understanding of matters such as the impact of pupil premium funding on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The multi-academy trust's board of trustees has a clearer understanding of this aspect of the school's work.
- The board of trustees provides additional support in developing the capacity of the local advisory body to provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to the senior leaders of the school. The board is currently implementing a plan to streamline the governance of the school by combining the local advisory boards of the two schools in the trust, led by the executive headteacher.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils talk about how safe they feel and describe how they know whom to turn to if they are in need or require help. At the instigation of pupils, the school has 'worry buddies', pupils who will listen to any concerns that their peers might have and communicate them to the relevant adult. Pupils very much appreciate this and talk about how it helps them to feel safe. Parents who responded to the survey of their opinion, Parent View, overwhelmingly say that their child feels safe at the school.
- The systems which the school uses to deal with referrals to the designated safeguarding lead are rigorous and robust. Staff know whom to turn to if they have concerns about the welfare of a child. Similarly, the school works very effectively with other agencies to protect any children who might be at risk. School leaders are not afraid to challenge the local authority if they feel that the response they get to any referrals of concern is not appropriate.
- Where appropriate, school leaders undertake risk assessments of individual pupils in order to keep them safe. These risk assessments include detailed information on how to respond to pupils' behaviour that might put them at risk and provide a useful

resource for teachers and other adults.

- The training of the designated safeguarding lead and her deputy is up to date and at an appropriate level. All staff have received part one of the Secretary of State's latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2016, although it is not clear that they have all absorbed its contents in detail. Key staff have undergone the necessary training in the 'Prevent' duty, the government's anti-extremism strategy, and this has been disseminated to all staff.
- The single central register of checks that the school makes on the backgrounds of staff and their suitability to work with children complies with the requirements.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching in the school is typically good. Teachers plan pupils' learning carefully, based on a sound understanding of their individual needs.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and are ambitious for their futures. They expect high standards of behaviour and pupils rise to them, demonstrating a keenness to learn. Teachers reinforce expectations about behaviour calmly and effectively, ensuring that classrooms are positive learning environments. Transitions between activities are usually smooth and as a result time in lessons is largely used efficiently.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and use appropriate technical vocabulary, with precision for the most part. This helps pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts in each subject and thus to make good progress. Extensive scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates the impact that teaching is having in securing good outcomes for pupils over time.
- Where teaching is strongest it is characterised by very effective questioning that assesses, probes and develops pupils' understanding well. It uses pupils' misconceptions or errors constructively to help them make progress. Less effective teaching does not display these characteristics consistently.
- Teaching develops pupils' key skills in reading, writing and mathematics well across all areas of the curriculum, including topic work. Nonetheless, the ability to write with high levels of sophistication is not yet present and in the 2016 national curriculum assessments at key stage 2, no pupils were working at greater depth. The school is aware of this and is rightly prioritising this as an area to work on as they seek to improve pupils' literacy further.
- The deployment of teaching assistants and the impact this has on pupils' progress are strengths of the school. Teaching assistants work especially well with groups of pupils of similar abilities to help them make faster progress. This is particularly noticeable in the teaching of mathematics but is evident across the curriculum. Teaching assistants have good levels of knowledge to support their role and many are pursuing higher qualifications. They work well to support classroom teachers in their planning of lessons.
- Phonics is taught well in the school and pupils of all abilities demonstrate they can use the approach they have been taught in order to tackle unfamiliar or difficult words. Teachers promote a culture of reading and the recent decision to move to having

whole classes read the same book has stimulated pupils' interest in reading. They enjoy reading the same book as their friends as they can talk to them about it and share their enthusiasm.

- Teachers give pupils accurate feedback on the quality of their work and how to improve it, in line with the school's assessment and marking policy.
- Homework is set regularly and particularly good examples are celebrated on a dedicated display that is changed on a regular basis. This allows all pupils to aspire to have their work recognised in this way.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Across the school, from the early years to Year 6, pupils display very mature attitudes to learning that are often in advance of what one would expect of pupils of similar ages.
- In the early years, children start to take responsibility for their own learning and this strong start is built upon successfully as they progress through the school. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils demonstrate the independence of thought and the personal responsibility required to make a successful transition to secondary education. For example, pupils in Year 6 speak proudly of the learning journals they are compiling in preparation for the next phase of their education.
- Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning. They have the self-motivation, curiosity and work ethic that characterise highly effective learners. They work well, either on their own or with their peers. They readily help each other in lessons, and this creates a strong sense of a single learning community working towards a common goal. Pupils listen to each other respectfully and know how to deal with situations where they have different opinions: as one pupil put it, 'We do not disagree, we debate.'
- Many pupils enter the school with levels of social and emotional development that are well below those of children of the same age nationally. The school rightly puts a great deal of effort into working with these pupils. Staff have a detailed knowledge of this aspect of pupils' needs and the outstanding progress in personal development that pupils make is the bedrock of their strong progress across the school.
- Pupils have excellent understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles. Year 6 pupils, for example, speak enthusiastically about running a mile a day. Pupils are also involved in growing food in their own vegetable garden and they look after chickens. The principles of how to eat healthily are reinforced by a number of displays around the school, including one that makes clear how much sugar is contained in some soft drinks.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, including when they are online, and they often take the initiative in this area. For example, Year 4 pupils devised by themselves the system of 'worry buddies'. This means that there is always a fellow pupil available to speak to if a child has any concerns and these concerns are communicated efficiently to staff when appropriate.

- When they are old enough, pupils take on leadership roles around the school, which adds to the richness of their personal development. For example, at lunchtimes older pupils act as 'ambassadors', helping younger pupils with their lunches.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider and this provision makes a positive contribution to the personal development of pupils. The school monitors this provision closely and has a good understanding of the impact it makes.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Attendance rates are above the national average and improving further. In particular, the attendance of key groups such as disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national figure for all pupils.
- Persistent absence is very low indeed, especially among pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's outstanding record on improving attendance is testimony to the hard work that school leaders and staff undertake with families and pupils. In particular, by building a culture of high aspiration, the school communicates to all families the value and importance of attending school regularly. Pupils want to come to school because of the good-quality education that they receive. An early-morning breakfast club offers pupils and their families helpful support to ensure a positive start to the day.
- Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well around the school. They move in an orderly fashion between activities. They are extremely polite to each other and to staff and visitors. As a consequence there is a calm, orderly and purposeful air about the school at all times.
- Pupils demonstrate self-discipline both in and outside lessons. For example, they patiently await their turn to contribute to discussions in class and listen carefully to the contributions of other pupils. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively and swiftly if it does occur.
- Inspectors saw no disruptions to learning as a consequence of pupils' behaviour and on the very rare occasion that a pupil did slip off task they were quickly and calmly refocused by teachers or other staff.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils typically make good progress as they move through the school across a wide range of subjects, although many have lower than average starting points. The work in pupils' books, their learning in lessons and the school's own tracking of pupils' progress over time show a clear picture of good progress overall and for key groups, such as disadvantaged pupils.
- The 2016 national curriculum assessments at key stage 2 show that pupils made progress in reading, in writing and in mathematics at least in line with all pupils nationally by the time they left the school after Year 6. This prepared them very well for the next stage of their education. The progress of lower-ability pupils in reading was particularly strong, being significantly above the national average.
- At key stage 1 pupils' attainment in the 2016 national curriculum assessments was

lower than the national average. Nonetheless, given that many had low starting points, this still represents good progress overall and for disadvantaged pupils as a group.

- Attainment in phonics is strong and a higher proportion of pupils than the national average pass the Year 1 phonics screening check. As a result, pupils are often fluent readers, especially the most able. Lower-ability readers demonstrate resilience in the way they use phonics to tackle difficult or unfamiliar words successfully.
- Progress in the early years foundation stage is outstanding. Whether they join the school in the Nursery or Reception Years, a significant proportion of children do so working at levels significantly below other children of their age. Given these low starting points, children make outstanding progress during their time in the early years, even though a slightly lower proportion of children achieve a good level of development than the national average. The difference between the proportion of disadvantaged children in the early years who achieved a good level of development and the figure for other children nationally is diminishing rapidly.
- The most able pupils in the school achieve well, especially at key stage 2. All of the most able pupils who took the national curriculum assessments in 2016 reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics a higher proportion attained a high standard. In writing, however, there were no pupils with high prior attainment overall who wrote with the level of quality required to achieve greater depth within the expected standard.
- The work of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, whatever their level of ability, shows that they make good progress from their starting points. This is in line with that of other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2. Moreover, their scores in the 2016 national curriculum assessments for reading and mathematics were actually higher than the national average for other pupils.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Their work is closely monitored by the school and additional enrichment activities are carefully planned to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result, their attainment is often high: all of the high prior attaining disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics in the key stage 2 national curriculum assessments. The proportion of pupils who also attained a high score in reading was close to the national average and exceeded the national average in mathematics. As was the case with all the most able pupils in the school, however, none of the disadvantaged pupils with high prior attainment overall demonstrated the ability to write at a greater depth within the expected standard for writing.
- Historic assessment information has highlighted some differences between the performance of boys and girls in different subjects across the key stages. The work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking of pupils' progress show that there are no such concerns for the relative performance of boys and girls among current pupils.
- Pupils with complex special educational needs in the area resource base are often working at levels very significantly below those which would be expected typically of pupils their age. Nonetheless, accurate assessment procedures using P levels show that these pupils are making good and in some cases rapid progress. They are, therefore, being well prepared for the next steps in their education. Pupils in the main school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, are



making the same good progress as other pupils in the school.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The early years at Falmouth Primary Academy are very well led and the head of school has particular expertise in this aspect of the school's work, to which she brings determination and commitment.
- Most children, whether they join in Nursery or Reception, arrive at the school working at levels well below those of children of similar ages nationally. This is particularly noticeable in the areas of communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. For example, on entry to Nursery, typically fewer than 10% of children are working within the expectations for children of their age.
- Teachers in the early years are highly skilled in assessing the attainment of children on entry to the school, including by home visits. This robust baselining means that they have a clear understanding of children's needs and can plan effective learning activities to meet them. This responsiveness to children's needs is at the heart of the highly effective teaching in the early years. Teachers involve children, in ways appropriate for their age, in deciding which activities to undertake. This is a key aspect of the successful work the school does in developing positive attitudes to learning from the outset.
- Given their often extremely low starting points, children in the early years make rapid and sustained progress. Even those who do not go on to attain a good level of development by the end of Reception have often made substantial progress during their time in the early years.
- In particular, disadvantaged children make rapid progress in the early years and the difference between their attainment and the attainment of children nationally is diminishing rapidly.
- Phonics teaching is highly effective in the early years and provides a solid foundation for further development in Year 1, where a higher than average proportion of pupils go on to pass the phonics screening check.
- School leaders have created a warm, nurturing and inviting environment in the early years, which successfully encourages children to develop highly positive attitudes to learning. The opportunity to display their work on the 'best effort wall' motivates children to succeed. The outdoor area is well used to combine areas of learning; for example, children combine numeracy with physical coordination when successfully squirting water at numbered targets.
- Even at this early stage of their education, teachers expect children to take responsibility for their learning in age-appropriate ways. This approach contributes very successfully to ensuring that children's progress is rapid and sustained over time.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years and there are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements. All the effective aspects of safeguarding seen in the school as a whole are manifest in the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	140328
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10019936

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	David Hobbs
Headteacher	Claire Smith (executive headteacher), Jane Alexander (head of school)
Telephone number	01326 314070
Website	<a href="http://www.falmouthprimary.cornwall.sch.uk/">www.falmouthprimary.cornwall.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:jane.alexander@tlat.org.uk">jane.alexander@tlat.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium and the curriculum on its website.
- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish about contact details, exclusion arrangements, performance tables, the curriculum, the pupil premium, the PE and sport premium, accessibility plan, equality objectives, complaints policy, governors' information and duties, and charging and remissions policy.
- Falmouth Primary Academy is an average-sized primary school. It is a member of a multi-academy trust, The Learning Academy Trust, which it joined in 2013. The school's executive headteacher is also the executive headteacher of another school in the trust, Foxhole Learning Academy in St Austell.
- The school has an area resource base for pupils with complex special educational needs, including autism spectrum disorder. This is funded by the local authority and

currently has eight pupils attending it.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support.
- The school uses one alternative provider, Nine Maidens Alternative Provision Academy.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and took the opportunity to scrutinise pupils' work on these occasions and at other times. A large proportion of observations in lessons were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors had discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the chief executive officer of the trust, middle leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the local advisory board and the trust's board of trustees, including the chair.
- Inspectors had discussions with pupils, including informally at break and lunchtime. In addition, pupils with a range of abilities were listened to reading aloud.
- A wide range of documentary evidence was scrutinised. This included the school's own self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, records of assessments of pupils' work and information about their progress. Documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also checked, as were the school's records of the checks it makes on the background of teachers and other staff and their suitability to work with children.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took into account 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parental questionnaire. There were 13 responses to the online staff questionnaire and no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Stephen Lee, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tonwen Empson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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