

Caradon Alternative Provision Academy

West Street, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 6BS

Inspection dates

18–19 January 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal, with good support from staff, governors and leaders of the multi-academy trust, has completed the necessary work to improve the school since the last inspection.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of what the school does well, and where further improvements are required. Appropriate action is taken to address weaknesses.
- Pupils get on well with school staff. The trusting relationships they build help pupils become confident learners.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons and during break times. Staff are good role models, which helps pupils learn to control their emotions and talk about their feelings.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Assessments identify individual needs. These are met through carefully planned interventions.
- Teachers plan lessons well. Pupils engage positively in learning through activities that interest them. Pupils particularly enjoy outdoor learning, mathematics and art and design.
- The curriculum is well balanced. It provides a good mix of academic subjects, with activities and experiences which help pupils develop their social and life skills.
- Pupils achieve qualifications that help them prepare for work or college. They make good progress across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics.
- Governors have a good range of skills and knowledge. They use these well to support teachers and leaders. During their regular visits they check that required improvements are taking place.
- Leaders have been developing a new assessment system to ensure that pupils are set work that challenges them, and measures progress. This is fully in place for mathematics, but only partially in place for other subjects.
- The multi-academy trust has improved training and support for teachers through the introduction of subject lead practitioners. However, school subject leaders do not monitor teaching and learning across the school, or in all subjects. As a result teaching is not as strong as it could be.
- Leaders are developing more ways to help pupils behave in ways that are safe and do not disrupt the learning of other pupils. However, these have only been partially successful in reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- The quality of pupils' workbooks is variable. These do not always reflect pupils' positive attitudes to learning observed in lessons.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - extending assessment procedures to ensure that teachers and leaders have a broad range of information about pupils' progress in all areas of the curriculum
 - strengthening subject leadership to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are taught to the same standard
 - further developing alternative approaches to reinforcing behaviour expectations in order to reduce the frequency of fixed-term exclusions.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that pupils' workbooks are of a good standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, with good involvement and support from staff, governors and multi-academy trust leaders, has improved all areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. All groups of pupils now make good progress during their time at the school.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and what areas need more work. The school development plan is used well to plan and monitor improvement activities.
- Leaders use a variety of sources of information to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessments. These include regular observations of teaching, looking at pupils' work and comparing pupils' achievements with work from other pupil referral units in the multi-academy trust, and other schools.
- Subject lead practitioners run regular training and development events to improve teaching and learning across trust schools. These give subject leaders the opportunity to work with other leaders to review and strengthen the curriculum and build assessment procedures. Subject leaders do not keep a close enough check on how their subject is taught across the school, and not all subjects have someone leading them. Therefore teachers are not always getting enough support to improve their teaching.
- Staff morale is good. Teachers recognise how the school has improved over the last two years, and feel proud of their work. The end-of-day briefing ensures that there is good communication between leaders and all of the team about what has happened during the day, and that plans are in place for any follow-up that is needed. This helps staff feel well supported.
- An effective approach to assessment has been developed. This is beginning to be used to enable teachers to carefully match work to pupils' abilities, and provide reliable information about pupils' progress. It is fully in place for mathematics, but this is not so for other subjects.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. There is a strong focus on literacy, mathematics and science. Older pupils work towards accredited qualifications and developing vocational skills. Outdoor learning and the personal development curriculum both contribute well to building pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence and giving them useful life skills. The curriculum helps pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of ways, and supports their understanding that respect for others is at the heart of fundamental British values.
- Pupils are well prepared for work or college. The work-related learning coordinator arranges for pupils to attend college or work-experience placements, in pupils' chosen area of interest. Recent work placements include work on a construction site and gardening at a country park. An external careers guidance officer visits regularly. He is able to inform pupils of local work and college options, and how to apply for these.
- Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection are extremely positive about the way the school is helping their child. They reported a significant improvement in

attitudes towards going to school, behaviour and learning. A family support manager has recently been appointed, who is providing good support to families.

- The principal receives good support from the chief executive officer and school improvement partner from the trust. The school improvement partner visits the school twice a month, providing useful feedback and advice.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is made up of senior leaders from local schools that place pupils at Caradon Academy. They have a good range of skills and knowledge, which helps them fulfil their responsibilities. Members of the body regularly visit the school to check on the progress of pupils from their own schools, as well as monitoring the work of the school.
- Governors both challenge and support leaders. They keep a close eye on priority areas of the school development plan to ensure that sufficient progress is being made.
- Governors oversee arrangements for managing the performance of teachers and ensuring that only those eligible move up the pay scale. They also ensure that additional funding is used well. The school receives a very small amount of Year 7 catch-up funding, which is used to resource the teaching of phonics. The sport premium goes towards the cost of the outdoor learning curriculum. Funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is helping them accelerate their progress.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school operates under clear policies which are available to parents on the trust's website. All staff have the correct level of training depending on their roles. Leaders ensure that all checks are carried out when appointing new staff.
- All pupils have a risk assessment, which helps staff know what to do to minimise risks both at school and during trips out.
- Leaders have introduced a strong system for recording safeguarding concerns. All staff have access to this. Leaders can easily track what has happened and check that any required action has taken place. Records show that all concerns are thoroughly responded to in order to keep pupils safe. This includes risks of radicalisation or child sexual exploitation.
- The school has very good links with the local authority and other organisations. These are used well to support effective multi-agency work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils arrive and leave the school throughout the year. Soon after arrival the school completes a baseline assessment. This helps teachers plan work to match their ability. Assessments are then updated every half term to check on progress.
- A structured approach is used to support the learning of phonics. Once pupils have worked on this for a period of time they make good progress in their reading and spelling. Pupils are confident to read aloud in lessons, even when they are not familiar with some of the words.
- Several pupils identified mathematics as their favourite subject. Teaching focuses on key objectives leading to different qualifications depending on pupils' abilities. In key stage 4 teachers showed good subject knowledge, confidently supporting the most able pupils to understand how to work out the gradient for a line on a graph.
- Teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. Pupils respond well to this, enjoying extending their knowledge and making progress.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to have individual tuition. These times are used well to help pupils acquire new skills or to practise things they are finding hard to learn.
- In most key stage 3 and 4 workbooks there is a summary of what pupils have learned in previous lessons and what their current targets are. For older pupils there is also an outline of the course they are studying, leading to a qualification. Pupils find this helpful to remind them what they are working on. This approach is not used in all subjects.
- Pupils benefit from learning through practical activities. In a key stage 2 science lesson pupils enjoyed testing out how light moves by using a torch and mirrors to see where the beam went. They also found out how light moved around a corner by making their own periscopes.
- In an art and design lesson pupils worked on an assignment entitled 'myself'. They were encouraged to make choices about both the content and medium of their work. Pupils produced work that was both meaningful to them and of good quality. Pupils explored friendship and produced beautiful collages.
- Good use is made of the local environment to support learning. During weekly outdoor trips pupils develop their skills, knowledge and self-confidence, as well as building relationship with peers and staff. Activities include kayaking, coast steering, climbing and bush craft.
- In some lessons pupils do not put as much effort into their written work as they do in their practical learning. As a result their books are not always of a good standard.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff build relationships with pupils as quickly as they can. As a result pupils become confident that they will receive the right support. They then begin to take risks to attempt learning tasks that previously they would have found overwhelming.
- Staff from each pupil's old school complete an assessment which highlights pupils' emotional and social needs. This is used to create an action plan to address these needs. This work is either carried out individually or in a group. Typical areas of focus include learning to recognise their own emotions and building a vocabulary to express these, and getting better at reading social situations and knowing how to respond appropriately.
- Although fairly new to post the family support manager is already providing good support to families. This is having a positive impact on some pupils' education. This can be by helping families communicate more effectively with the school, or showing parents how to support their child's learning.
- There are very good arrangements in place to support pupils' transition into and out of the school. Before they start at their new school pupils receive letters from staff and pupils welcoming them, and telling them what to expect. When they start at Caradon Academy an induction period is planned for them. These approaches effectively support pupils' personal development and welfare during a potentially very stressful period.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff have high expectations, quickly pointing out to pupils if their behaviour is not acceptable.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons and during breaktimes. Most pupils respond quickly to requests and are keen to try hard. However, they do not always put enough care into their written work.
- Staff and pupils enjoy breaktimes together. Staff are good role models, playing card games or pool with pupils, or taking the opportunity to find out how pupils are feeling. Pupils relate well to each other as well as to adults.
- Inspectors observed the negative impact on the behaviour and learning of the group when new pupils arrive. Staff worked well as a team, remaining calm and thoughtful, despite the challenging behaviour. Pupils were reassured that they would be kept safe, and were helped to engage in work that they could manage.
- The attendance of the vast majority of pupils significantly improves once they are settled into the school. For a small number attendance gets worse. There are good procedures in place to improve attendance.

- The school has clear systems to support pupils' reintegration following exclusions and has been developing other ways to reinforce behaviour expectations rather than excluding pupils. However, these have had limited success.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils enter the school attaining several years behind what is expected of them. This is often due to poor attitudes to learning, poor attendance, low self-esteem and self-confidence, and behaviour difficulties.
- School assessment information and records of teaching and learning indicate that pupils make good progress over time. A book scrutiny during the inspection confirmed this, and identified that strongest progress was in mathematics at key stage 2, and in art and design at key stages 3 and 4.
- Overall pupils made good gains in literacy and numeracy because they have been well taught. Learning in these subjects is reinforced across the curriculum. If they are not making expected progress individual tuition is provided. This helps them catch up.
- The school's approach to teaching phonics contributes well to their progress in literacy. Pupils learn to confidently and accurately work out how to read unfamiliar words.
- All pupils who left the school last year gained some qualifications and went on to a college placement. Twenty-seven per cent of these pupils achieved five GCSEs at grades 9 to 1.
- School records show that pupils make good progress in their personal development, and in understanding the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In a science lesson pupils were able to identify healthy food options and the impact of an unhealthy diet.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make the same good progress as others in the school. The most able pupils also make good progress because their learning is well matched to their abilities. Teachers ensure that these pupils are set work that challenges them and that help is not given too quickly when they are finding it hard.

School details

Unique reference number	139740
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10042667

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Helen Casson
Principal	Haydn Pearse
Telephone number	01579 340 405
Website	www.acornacademycornwall.org.uk
Email address	hpearse@acornacademycornwall.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school is part of Acorn Academy Trust, which runs seven alternative provision academies in Cornwall.
- The school is on a single site, offering places for up to 36 pupils who have been permanently excluded, or who are at risk of exclusion, from their mainstream schools.
- Most pupils spend up to four terms at the school. However, key stage 4 pupils usually remain for the whole of the key stage.
- At the time of the inspection there were no key stage 1 pupils on roll.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number have SEN and/or disabilities. A larger than typical proportion are looked after by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out lesson observations across all year groups and in a wide range of subjects. All observations except one were carried out jointly with the principal. An observation was also completed during breaktime.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work with the principal. A range of school documents were reviewed including safeguarding records, attendance records, behaviour plans and risk assessments, trust policies, governing body minutes, the self-evaluation summary and the school development plan.
- Meetings were held with governors, the chief executive officer, the principal, the family support manager, subject leaders, the work-related learning coordinator, and the Thrive practitioner. An inspector also met with a group of pupils, and two parents. A telephone conversation was held with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took into account the views of nine members of staff who completed the questionnaire. They also took into account the free-text response from one parent.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Lees

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