

Inspection of a good school: Doubletrees School

St Blazey Gate, St Blazey, Par, Cornwall PL24 2DS

Inspection dates:

2–3 October 2019

Outcome

Doubletrees School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are well cared for in school and feel safe. They have close, caring relationships with staff and each other. Behaviour in lessons and around school is generally very good. Staff know the pupils well. Staff know what makes pupils happy and what upsets pupils. The school layout provides spaces for pupils to use if they find being in class too challenging. Therefore, staff can support any pupils who become anxious and keep them safe. Consequently, other pupils' learning is not disturbed.

Pupils and parents are not concerned about bullying. They know that staff deal with any signs of bullying behaviour quickly.

The acting headteacher wants pupils to have the chance to develop skills that will help them in later life. There is a strong emphasis on building self-confidence and learning to communicate. As pupils grow older, they get many opportunities to visit colleges and workplaces to experience what life is like beyond school.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. However, an area of concern for inspectors was that the curriculum does not give consistent opportunities to build on previous learning. In addition, in the teaching of reading, there is not a common approach across the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum focuses on literacy, numeracy and personal development. Pupils also learn to understand the world around them and find out about the local community. Lessons are well planned and delivered using a wide range of appropriate resources. Consequently, pupils can take part in lessons and develop their knowledge and skills.

Teachers and support staff know the pupils well. Staff use this knowledge to link learning

to each pupil's ability. For example, in a literacy lesson, one pupil was being helped to improve their reading. A different pupil was being helped to understand the parts of a story. And a further pupil was being helped to develop the concentration skills needed to listen to a story.

Teachers adapt their lessons to meet the wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) represented by pupils. The organisation of classes ensures that those pupils with the most complex SEND receive the intense care and support they need. In addition, it enables teachers to provide challenge for the most able pupils.

The curriculum has a strong focus on preparing pupils for life after they leave school. At each key stage, there is an emphasis on the world of work. For example, the youngest pupils begin to understand the meaning of work. Then, as they grow older, there are chances to take part in work experience and college visits.

Reading is an important part of learning for the most able pupils. There is an emphasis on engaging with stories, being able to understand books and enjoying reading. When there is teaching of reading, pupils develop the skills they need to read. However, there is a lack of coordination in this part of the curriculum across the school as the person who leads on this aspect of the curriculum has only recently been identified.

Individual lessons are effective in developing pupils' knowledge and skills, but the new leadership team need to ensure that the curriculum is planned so that it is clear what pupils should learn across the school. This lack of clarity reduces the effectiveness of the curriculum. Also, teachers do not consistently make effective use of the whole-school assessment system. This limits leaders' knowledge of how effectively teachers are developing each pupil's knowledge.

Staff told inspectors that there is a close working relationship between the new leadership team and staff. Teachers recognise that leaders try to minimise the impact of workload on their lives.

Leaders encourage staff to develop their skills through training courses. The current leadership team have established a positive working atmosphere in the school. Staff and parents recognise this.

Leaders of the multi-academy trust have worked closely with the acting headteacher to improve safeguarding and improve staffing levels. Staff and parents told inspectors that this has made a positive difference to the school.

In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), there are arrangements in place for the careful introduction of children to the school. Staff create detailed summaries of the needs of each pupil. Individualised learning is carefully planned to support the development of each child.

The tailored curriculum in EYFS is well sequenced for each child. The team of EYFS staff work closely to match learning to the needs of each child.

In the post-16 provision, staff work together to adapt learning to match the needs of each student. This approach includes providing opportunities to visit colleges and take part in work experience. The curriculum includes business opportunities. These give students a wider understanding of the skills they are learning. For example, students are currently planning a disco for the whole school. This work involves literacy, numeracy, use of computers and cooking skills.

The post-16 curriculum matches the needs of the students well. There is a clear plan to prepare students for the next stage of their education or training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are well trained to spot signs of abuse. Systems are in place for sharing concerns, and staff have a clear understanding of these systems. When staff share concerns, leaders respond promptly and are vigilant in looking for any patterns or trends. Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as social care, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

The school site is safe. The arrival and departure of pupils are well organised and carefully supervised.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not have a well-organised curriculum. At present, there is a lack of progress across each subject through key stages 1 to 4. While teaching in individual classes is well planned, the lack of a coherent school curriculum adversely affects pupils as they move through the school. When a pupil has learned something in one class, they must be able to build on this knowledge in the next class. Pupils will then know more and remember more. Leaders need to provide a planned and sequenced curriculum which provides pupils with defined learning outcomes linked across the key stages.
- Teachers in each class know their pupils well. Teachers have a clear understanding of the targets for each pupil. Well planned lessons meet individual learners' needs. Teachers use assessment to alter teaching and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, there is not a consistent application of the whole-school assessment system across the school to assess accurately what pupils have learned. This reduces leaders' ability to check where there are gaps in learning. Leaders should improve the accuracy of assessment to support pupils' learning and reduce misconceptions.
- The leadership of subject areas across the school is unclear. Currently, senior leaders are responsible for overseeing all subject areas. The EYFS and post-16 phases have clearly identified leaders. This has created an ethos of strong teamwork and close cooperation between staff in those areas of the school. As a result, there is a common,

coordinated approach to teaching in those two phases. Leaders need to create a similar level of coordination in the delivery of subjects throughout the school. This will support the establishment of a coherent curriculum and effective assessment practice.

- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and early reading is not consistent across the school. Currently, the teaching of reading is delivered through an individual teacher's preferred style. Leaders need to ensure that there is an agreed whole-school reading scheme. This will provide a coherent approach to the teaching of reading. As a result, pupils will develop their ability to read more effectively. A whole-school scheme will enable leaders to assess the effectiveness of the teaching of reading. This will enable leaders to identify teachers and pupils who need extra support.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Doubletree School, to be good on 17 September 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143173
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10111571
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lisa Michell
Headteacher	Heidi Hoskin (Acting Headteacher)
Website	http://www.doubletrees.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Special Partnership Trust in October 2016.
- The acting headteacher was appointed in April 2019.
- The school uses one alternative provider.
- The school caters for pupils with severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and multiple and complex needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons and scrutinised samples of pupils' work alongside senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of the local governing body and trust.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils from key stages 2, 3 and 4 as well as members

of the sixth form. Inspectors also talked informally with other pupils.

- A range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, were evaluated as well as the school's website.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses and 13 comments on the online Parent View survey and the 32 responses to the staff online survey.
- Reading, English, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education were considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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