

Inspection of Wadebridge School

Gonvena Hill, Wadebridge, Cornwall PL27 6BU

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils' academic success and social and emotional well-being are valued. Leaders have worked hard to respond to the issues raised at the previous inspection. As a result, pupils in Year 11 now reach standards that compare well with those of other schools.

Pupils say that behaviour is improving because leaders have established a clearer set of expectations. Pupils typically display positive attitudes to their learning. At times, teachers could expect more of pupils in terms of the quality of their work and the level of challenge that the curriculum poses.

Relationships between pupils are largely good humoured and sociable. However, pupils told us that they do not like the fact that a minority of pupils are thoughtless about the effect their behaviour and their choice of language has on others.

Most pupils also say that they have not experienced or witnessed bullying at the school. They know how to seek the support available to them and say that staff usually resolve problems. However, some pupils told us that this is not always the case.

Pupils readily take on positions of responsibility. Many pupils spoke about the extra opportunities they have, either as part of their curriculum or the vibrant wider life of the school.

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

Leaders have focused on how the curriculum supports pupils to learn things in an order that will build up their knowledge and skills. Where leaders have planned this successfully, such as in science, pupils regularly go back to information that they need to know. Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils to remember what they have learned.

There are some effective collaborations between departments. For example, 'Smaths' helps pupils to use subject vocabulary consistently in both science and maths. Year 7 pupils spoke of their forthcoming trip to the Eden Project to study the rainforest for geography and create visual material for art.

Nonetheless, there is variability in how well curriculum leaders check that pupils have the essential subject knowledge that they need, particularly in key stage 3. Leaders sometimes focus on whether teachers are following school policies rather than how well teachers use assessment to help pupils to strengthen their understanding. At times, pupils do not understand the advice that their teachers give to help them improve.

Pupils now study high-quality literature from a younger age. Pupils who have fallen behind with reading receive effective support. Pupils themselves say that they are

stronger readers as result.

Across Years 7 to 11, pupils study a broad range of subjects. This prepares them well for their next steps in education or training. Leaders have clear plans in place to improve the teaching of modern foreign languages so that more pupils choose to take this as an option in key stage 4.

Staff provide effective support for the social and emotional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders recognise that, in the past, information about pupils has not been expertly used by teachers so that pupils' academic needs are fully met. They have made changes so that information is more accessible for teachers to use.

Pupils enjoy exploring different religions and cultures. They say that staff promote the importance of diversity and equality. Members of the police visit the school to advise pupils of their legal and moral responsibilities.

The outdoor education programme develops pupils' positive character traits. Pupils value fund-raising activities, both for the local community as well as further afield.

However, teachers do not always skilfully deepen pupils' understanding of important issues relating to their wider personal development. Pupils enjoy talking about ethical issues, but need support to tell the difference between argument and debate. In key stage 4, pupils say that they would like a better understanding of financial management.

Overall, pupils now attend school more regularly. However, there are still too many disadvantaged pupils who miss school too often. Teachers do not always help such pupils to catch up with the work they have missed.

Leaders have made the decision to close the sixth form with sadness but integrity. Year 13 students feel a valued part of the school. Students achieve well academically and take part in work experience, leadership opportunities and enrichment activities. They reflect on what has been a positive experience throughout their time at the school. They have received strong advice about what they can go on to do next.

Governors now have a better overview of the school's work. They ask the right questions, but need to probe more about how well strategies are working.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and the large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree.

Leaders work well with other schools and external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Leaders are aware of the issues in their local community.

They work with the police to share local intelligence. Staff are trained to spot the potential signs of harm.

Leaders actively promote the mental well-being of both pupils and staff. For example, some staff and pupils are trained as mental health first aiders.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum leaders do not always check well enough that pupils follow the curriculum in sufficient depth and that teachers use assessment skilfully to support pupils to remember what they have learned, especially at key stage 3. Therefore, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Leaders know where this weaker practice exists and now need to remedy it.
- The curriculum to develop pupils' understanding of wider personal, social and moral issues is too variable. Teachers do not always present sensitive topics in an effective way. There are also gaps in the knowledge that pupils need to prepare them well for later life. Leaders need to have a better oversight of the coverage and quality of this provision.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Consequently, they do not perform as well as their peers. Leaders need to improve the attendance of this group and ensure that pupils catch up with the work they have missed.

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're 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	138024
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10111554
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,085
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Thurtle
Headteacher	Tina Yardley
Website	www.wadebridge.cornwall.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018

Information about this school

- The school is no longer recruiting students to the sixth form, which will close in 2021. There are currently 23 students studying a combination of subjects.
- A small number of pupils attend the Wave Academy, an alternative education provider.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with representatives from the governing body and spoke on the telephone with a member of the board of trustees. We also met with senior leaders, pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and a group of staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: art, geography, mathematics and science. We discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.

A range of other subjects from across the curriculum were also considered.

- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, checked the school's single central record and scrutinised policies relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed a sample of case files.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. We spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- We considered 138 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 67 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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