

Inspection of Mullion Community Primary School

Willis Vean, Mullion, Helston, Cornwall TR12 7DF

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Mullion Community Primary School say they feel safe. If bullying occurs in school, pupils are confident that adults will help them. Staff have different expectations of pupils' behaviour. Some pupils do not always try their best in their work. Pupils enjoy educational visits, 'wow days' and visitors to the school. They value the experience of school camp. All pupils have opportunities to access a wide range of extra-curricular sports. They play well together and take on responsibilities, for example, as librarians. Many parents describe Mullion as a 'real community school'.

Children settle well in the early years class. They access a range of purposeful learning activities every day. The curriculum links with children's interests and meets the needs of children. Children in the early years learn well. They are excited by their learning.

Subject leaders have successfully organised the sequence of learning in English. In other subjects across the school, learning is not as well planned. As a result, pupils do not learn as much as they should. Curriculum leaders recognise that there have been many new initiatives. These need to be secured to ensure that pupils have opportunities to know more and remember more.

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

Leaders aim to instil characteristics pupils should have as good citizens such as determination, perseverance and reliability. However, there is more to do to develop personal, social and health education to ensure that pupils' personal development is supported well. Leaders work closely with families to ensure that pupils have their needs met. For example, families in need can access support from the school's counsellor. Staff are also training as mental health first aiders and autism champions. Leaders are doing everything they can to promote pupils' attendance. This is starting to have a positive impact.

Recently, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has tackled priorities for pupils well. Individual support plans are clear and identify how pupils' needs are being met.

The early years leader ensures that the curriculum engages children. Leaders have adopted an approach to connect different areas of learning. For example, when reading Jack and the Beanstalk, children grew beans and measured the height of the beanstalk. Children are able to draw on their knowledge and understanding of other areas of the curriculum.

An online assessment system identifies gaps in children's learning. This alerts teachers to children's needs. Those needing extra help get additional support.

Teachers encourage children to use new words and provide opportunities to use them. This helps children understand wider learning across the curriculum.

Mathematics is developing. In early years, Year 1 and Year 2, pupils build up their mathematical knowledge using different methods. Due to a lack of coherence in the mathematics curriculum, upper key stage 2 pupils have considerable gaps in their mathematical knowledge. Some basic number and calculation skills are not secure. Therefore, pupils do not have the necessary knowledge or skills to solve more complex mathematical problems.

School leaders have identified that the development of reading is a priority. The new phonics scheme has given a structure to the teaching of phonics. Reading books match pupils' phonic ability. This helps pupils to practise the sounds they learn. From Reception to Year 4, teachers assess pupils' phonic skills. This information is used well to ensure that pupils learn in appropriate groups. Pupils who need it have extra support to practise their reading and this helps them to catch up.

There is a clear curriculum for English, but this is not yet embedded well enough. For example, handwriting skills are not carried through into other subjects.

Where subjects are not coherently planned, pupils cannot make connections. For example, pupils do not realise that Egyptian and Anglo-Saxon burials have similarities. Work in pupils' books sometimes lacks coherence and a logical sequence of learning. As a result, pupils cannot explain what they have learned. Staff need a greater knowledge of subjects across the curriculum to understand where pupils have gaps in their learning and how to address them.

Behaviour is generally calm in classrooms. But when pupils' tasks are not challenging enough, they can distract others. Leaders recognise the need for a consistent approach and have worked hard to develop this. However, this still needs to improve further.

Trust and local board members have high expectations for the school. They make good use of a range of information to monitor developments and hold leaders to account. The executive headteacher has introduced systems and processes for improving the quality of education. The school needs time to secure these systems and raise standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Recruitment checks and procedures are completed correctly for all adults before they work with pupils. Leaders make appropriate referrals to external safeguarding agencies to seek help for vulnerable pupils and their families. Safeguarding records are suitably detailed. Staff do not shy away from having 'tricky' conversations with parents and external agencies to keep pupils safe. The trust checks that arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.

Pupils are clear how to keep themselves safe online and understand different forms of abuse. They know that adults in the school will help them if they have a worry.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced a new curriculum which needs time to be embedded across the school. Leaders need to build on recent work and continue to develop some subjects such as PSHE to ensure that pupils achieve well and benefit from effective personal development.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. The knowledge and skills of these leaders varies. The organisation of some subjects is not coherent. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum leaders have appropriate training and support to improve the quality of education in the subjects they lead.
- Pupils' knowledge has been limited in the past. Poor organisation of the curriculum has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers do not have good enough subject knowledge to support pupils to make the right gains in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Pupils' behaviour is not good enough. Some pupils disrupt others when tasks are not challenging enough. Staff do not tackle this behaviour well enough. Staff need to use a consistent approach to manage pupils' behaviour and ensure that pupils' learning is suitably challenging.

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 the school and 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	143992
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10135462
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Trust	Donna Bryant
Headteacher	Duncan Ratcliffe
Website	www.mullion.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Mullion Community Primary School converted to an academy on 1 June 2017 and joined the Southerly Point Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has undergone significant changes in teaching staff, with four out of six members being new. The executive headteacher is also new to the school.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with the executive headteacher, subject leaders and the SENCo. We met with representatives of the local board, the board of trustees and had a separate meeting with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, history and mathematics. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils.

- We reviewed leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. We looked at attendance information, behaviour logs and safeguarding records. We held discussions with senior leaders about safeguarding.
- We spoke informally with pupils and observed their behaviour at various times during the day, including break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met several parents at the start of the day, to gain their views of the school. We reviewed 41 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and additional free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire or pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen McShane

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