

# Inspection of Fowey River Academy

Windmill, Fowey, Cornwall PL23 1HE

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Fowey River is a friendly and inclusive school. However, too many pupils do not enjoy their experience, or their learning. A significant number of parents share this view. Leaders have made improvements across the school since the previous inspection. These have not yet led to every pupil receiving a consistently high quality of education.

Leaders have taken action to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Despite this, some pupils persist in showing negative attitudes towards other pupils and staff. This can disrupt the learning environment for others. Most pupils feel safe in school. However, some say they are hesitant to report incidents of poor behaviour or bullying to staff.

Many pupils participate in the school's weekly 'Enrich' programme. Pupils can become junior paramedics, enjoy gardening, play basketball or learn a musical instrument. This broadens pupils' opportunities and provides them with valuable experiences. Pupils benefit from learning about the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle through the curriculum for physical education. Pupils are happy to talk about, and seek support for, their mental health.

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

Leaders encourage pupils to be ambitious for their future. The curriculum is broad and enables all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to experience a variety of subjects. In some curriculum areas, leaders have planned and sequenced the important content they want pupils to know. In other subjects, what pupils need to learn is not as carefully planned. Therefore, pupils do not develop essential knowledge.

Teaching does not always help pupils to remember and understand. Assessment is not used well to check if pupils have secure learning in their long-term memories. Some teachers deliver lessons in subjects outside of their specialist area. They do not always have the expertise to do this effectively.

Leaders ensure that pupils with the most complex learning requirements have their needs met. However, this same level of support is not in place for other pupils with SEND. Pupils who find reading difficult benefit from additional teaching, which allows them to catch up. Staff encourage pupils to read for pleasure.

Although leaders have taken action to reduce incidents of poor behaviour in lessons, there are still too many examples of pupils disrupting learning. Staff and pupils say the new behaviour policy is confusing. It is not always followed fairly and consistently. Where there is a high staff presence, behaviour around the school site

is calm. If pupils are not supervised well, incidents of anti-social behaviour sometimes occur.

Leaders have put in place useful systems to track pupils' attendance. They act quickly if pupils are not coming to school regularly. The overall attendance of pupils has improved significantly.

Pupils follow a broad and well-planned personal development programme. They learn about important topics such as alcohol abuse, county lines and the importance of consent in healthy relationships. Lessons emphasise the strength of being part of an inclusive and tolerant society. Pupils agree that staff treat everyone equally at Fowey River.

Pupils are well supported to take their next steps in education or employment. They receive helpful guidance on creating a CV and how to be successful at interview. The school hosts a careers fair for colleges and employers to provide advice to pupils.

The majority of staff enjoy working at the school. However, some staff say that leaders do not always take their workload into account. Some early career teachers have not received an acceptable level of support. Leaders are taking action to improve this.

Governors and trustees show commitment to the school. They work closely with school leaders and know the priorities for improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know and use safeguarding systems to record safeguarding concerns. This allows leaders to act quickly for pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders take action to keep these pupils safe. This includes working positively with external agencies.

Staff and governors have completed appropriate safeguarding training. The process for the recruitment of staff is managed effectively. Necessary checks take place in a timely manner.

Pupils learn about online safety. They know how to recognise unhealthy relationships. Most pupils agree they have a trusted adult in school to whom they can talk.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, leaders have not clearly identified the knowledge they want pupils to learn. This leads to pupils not always securing a complete understanding of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum and assessment of pupils' learning are well planned and structured in every subject.
- Leaders have not ensured that the learning needs for some pupils with SEND are understood by staff. As a result, pupils with SEND struggle to learn parts of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are communicated to staff to allow their support in lessons to be effective.
- Despite the introduction of a new approach to managing pupils' behaviour, some staff remain concerned about disruptive behaviour. They do not always feel that leaders support them well to manage behaviour. This causes frustration for staff and pupils. Leaders and staff should work together to ensure that the behaviour system is applied consistently and fairly to improve pupils' behaviour.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 140836   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Cornwall   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10257095   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary Comprehensive                                  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led                                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 576  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Jackie Eason MBE   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Ben Eddy   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.fracademy.org">www.fracademy.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 29 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005  |

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, trustees, the chief executive officer, and a group of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Tong

Ofsted Inspector

Victoria Griffin

His Majesty's Inspector

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