

Inspection of Porthleven School

Torleven Road, Porthleven, Helston, Cornwall TR13 9BX

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Porthleven School feel happy and safe. They have warm relationships with their teachers. Pupils know that staff will support them and want them to do their best. Pastoral care at the school is strong. Pupils learn how to recognise and manage their feelings. They form positive friendships and bullying is rare. Parents are positive about the way adults support their children in school.

Pupils are starting to benefit from an ambitious curriculum, but this is in its early stages. Adults increasingly have high expectations of what pupils should learn and do in different subjects. However, this is not consistent across year groups. Not all pupils benefit from the developing curriculum.

Pupils enjoy learning. They read widely and often. Pupils learn about tolerance and respect. These values are central to the school's culture and ethos. They are given opportunities to be active citizens in their local community. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and have trusted adults to talk to if they have a problem.

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

The school has recently joined a new multi-academy trust. Recent development work is starting to improve the quality of education at the school. In some subjects, leaders have identified precisely what they want pupils to know and in which order. However, this is not the case for all subject leaders. There have been improvements in the way learning is structured. This is starting to help pupils remember important information. There is now a sharpened focus on teaching new vocabulary. This work is in its early stages.

Teachers do not always check whether pupils have understood content before moving on. Teachers do not have an accurate picture of whether pupils have retained important knowledge. Leaders have more robust processes in place for older pupils in English and mathematics. Assessment is less secure in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). As a result, leaders cannot assure themselves that these children are well prepared for Year 1.

There is a sharp focus on reading. Pupils, including those in the EYFS, benefit from a strong phonics programme. Those who need to catch up receive regular and targeted support. Leaders have created a strong reading culture. Pupils read a wide variety of texts. Pupil librarians ensure that classrooms are well stocked with books for pupils to read independently.

In the EYFS, the curriculum is less precise. This means that the activities children do are often not matched to learning intentions. They lack purpose. Pupils do not always understand what they are doing or why. Adults in early years show children how to communicate clearly. However, the learning environment does not help

children to learn effectively. The curriculum that subject leaders have put in place for key stages 1 and 2 is not yet widely understood in the EYFS. This means that younger pupils are not moving through a carefully sequenced curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. The right support is put in place swiftly. Leaders are pro-active in securing additional help when needed. Pupils with SEND are well supported by adults. Staff provide a balance between support and encouraging increased independence. Pupils with SEND, including those in the EYFS, are proud of their achievements.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and are patient with one another. They understand the routines staff have put in place. Low-level disruption is rare. When it does happen, teachers usually deal with this effectively. Pupils behave well at playtimes and are well supervised.

The school has prioritised the emotional development of its pupils. In the EYFS, all children learn about social skills and friendships. They interact positively with each other and understand how to listen and take turns. The school's work to develop pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is evident in the way pupils talk about respect. Pupils who need extra support with their mental health receive this. Pupils enjoy a range of trips and visits that enhance their learning and develop their interests.

The school community has responded positively to the new trust. Leaders are well supported in their drive to improve the school. Staff receive training that helps them to deliver the curriculum. Local governance is not well established, but there is sufficient expertise to support leaders and hold them to account. Trust leaders have a detailed knowledge of the school and its areas for development. There are robust plans in place to ensure the school continues to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding. Reporting and record-keeping are robust. Leaders take action to ensure pupils are safe. They act in pupils' best interests. Teachers understand potential risks and signs of harm. They are vigilant. Children learn about how to stay physically and mentally safe and know there are many trusted adults in school who can help them.

Leaders support the most vulnerable children effectively, including working with external agencies when needed.

Leaders complete the necessary checks on adults who apply to work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The drive to improve the quality of education is ongoing. Leaders are beginning to implement their new curriculums. However, they have not checked this process. As a result, there is a lack of rigour and clarity in some areas of the curriculum. Leaders should continue to refine the curriculum, and check its effectiveness, to ensure pupils are supported to retain knowledge and understand their new learning.
- Assessment is not yet aligned to the new curriculum. Teaching, including in the early years, does not always accurately identify pupils' understanding or misconceptions. As a result, some misconceptions persist. Leaders do not yet have a precise understanding of what pupils know and can do. Leaders must ensure that assessment is used effectively to identify gaps in learning and inform next steps.
- Learning in the EYFS sometimes lacks purpose. Activities are not closely linked to curriculum goals. As a result, children struggle to articulate their learning and do not follow a well-sequenced curriculum. Leaders must ensure that there is a shared understanding of the whole-school curriculum and that this informs day-to-day practice in the EYFS.

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

Unique reference number	143996
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10256623
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hosking
Headteacher	Duncan Ratcliffe
Website	www.porthleven.cornwall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Crofty Multi-Academy Trust in January 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a nursery class and a Reception class.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first 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.
- On the first day, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 read to an adult.
- An inspector also met with the curriculum leader for art and looked at history and English books.
- Inspectors spent time in the playground and met with pupil groups both formally and informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and online pupil and staff surveys.
- The lead inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans that support pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding and referrals to the local authority. They also spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors also met with the leaders who oversee behaviour and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing committee as well as the chief executive officer and two trustees from Crofty Multi-Academy Trust.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Lizzie Lethbridge

Ofsted Inspector

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