

Inspection of Doubletrees School

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

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and enthusiastic members of their school. Staff have high aspirations for them and support pupils to be increasingly confident and active learners. This is strengthened through the secure and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn.

Pupils are prepared successfully for their day and their transition from transport by staff who know them well. Staff are alert to what each pupil needs to be ready for learning. This is highly effective. As a result, pupils show a sense of safety and security with a range of staff. Staff switch between different methods of support and communication approaches to enable this to be successful. This continues throughout the whole school day. Staff work diligently to manage the care that pupils need alongside their learning.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to enrich their learning. There is a clear focus on ensuring pupils are fully involved in the community. Pupils participate in local community events and beyond. It helps them to develop their awareness of the world around them. Pupils develop a level of independence and resilience that prepares them well for life beyond school.

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

Leaders have made significant changes since the school was last inspected. Staff are ambitious for pupils to be as well prepared as possible for when they leave school. This is wholeheartedly shared by governors and the wider trust. Senior leaders have ensured this is successful through a well-designed and sequenced curriculum. This fully supports, and works effectively alongside, the necessary focus on pupils' care and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders accurately monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum across the three different pathways which cover the range of needs of all pupils. This includes advice and guidance from external partners to enhance the provision further. While leaders and staff describe the highly positive impact the pathways are having on what pupils achieve, the curriculum is not yet fully aligned with how successfully pupils are progressing. For a small minority of pupils, the post-14 curriculum does not have sufficient ambition. These pupils are not prepared as well as they could be for when they move on to their next stage.

Staff are dedicated and highly knowledgeable about how pupils learn and communicate. They act as champions for pupils to ensure that pupils have a voice. Leaders have made informed decisions to ensure that the teaching of early reading and communication is prioritised. It has a daily focus and helps pupils manage the challenges of transitions and interacting with less familiar peers and staff. The success of this is evident in strong relationships and pupils' support for and tolerance of each other. However, some pupils do not learn as successfully in the more formal

phonics-based approach. Teachers' subject knowledge in this area is not as secure. Pupils are reliant on strategies that require adult support. This can limit them from being as independent as possible in becoming confident and fluent readers.

Children in early years are prepared successfully to start one of the curriculum pathways when they move into Year 1 or Year 2. Leaders ensure the curriculum design starts in the youngest classes. The focus is securely on communication and core learning which has each child's education, health and care plan (EHC plan) at its centre.

Learning for pupils in the post-14 classes is focused on more vocational outcomes. Pupils learn about the challenges they may face as they transition into adulthood. This includes learning about the world of work, in a relevant way for each individual, and having work experience opportunities based within school. Achieving an award in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is indicative of the aspirations staff have of what pupils can achieve. Pupils prepare for post-14 learning by taking on responsibilities such as school council representatives where they have a say in the wide range of school-based events, opportunities and community support.

Leaders have reviewed the way in which they support pupils to manage their behaviour with greater success. Leaders make informed decisions based on accurate monitoring and evaluation. The result is highly successful pastoral support for pupils. Staff are highly responsive and flexible in meeting the range of pupil needs. However, this does not lessen the expectations for each pupil to be positive in their attitudes to learning and respectful to those around them, even at times of dysregulation. Pupils are encouraged to be self-aware. They learn how to identify and express their emotions, and how they are feeling, no matter their preferred method of communication. Staff make sure pupils have the tools they need to do so.

Teachers say leaders support them well. For example, through training and coaching, they feel empowered to have a say and meet the demands of the school improvement vision and aims. Senior leaders have been tenacious in driving the success of this work. They are taking action to support the well-being of staff in the challenges that come with a significant change in culture and ethos while ensuring pupils' academic, social and emotional development remains the primary focus.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are aware of the importance of safeguarding pupils. Leaders ensure that this is a priority and that staff have the necessary knowledge to fulfil this. Training ensures staff keep up to date with current challenges. Staff remain vigilant to concerns about pupils. They identify and report concerns at the earliest opportunity. Leaders are persistent in their work with external agencies to secure the help that pupils and their families need.

Pupils feel safe. They can identify trusted adults who they are confident will help

them if needed. Pupils recall their learning about risks and how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' subject knowledge is not fully secure in the teaching of phonics. Some pupils opt to use a range of other strategies before phonics to decode what they read. Leaders need to continue to embed the phonics programme for more formal learners and ensure there is sharp focus on staff's subject knowledge and expectations of pupils.
- For some pupils, the post-14 curriculum is not designed to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes. Leaders do not fully assure themselves that curriculum goals are as ambitious as possible. As a result, there are a small minority of pupils who are not fully prepared for the next stage in their education. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious so that all pupils have what they need to be successful when they leave the school.

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	143173
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10241065
Type of school	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	99
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lisa Michell
Headteacher	Heidi Hoskin
Website	www.doubletrees.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with severe learning difficulties, autism and multiple and complex needs.
- The school does not currently have any children under four years old on roll.
- All pupils have EHC plans.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Leaders have prioritised preparing pupils for adulthood so that they have the necessary skills and knowledge as they move on to the next stage of their education.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. In addition, an inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair, the school's improvement adviser, the chief executive officer and the chair of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Pupil discussions were held with staff present to support the communication strategies needed.
- An inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation and a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, behaviour and SEND.
- The responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses were considered along with the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gill Hickling

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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