

Inspection of Fowey Primary School

Windmill, Fowey, Cornwall PL23 1HH

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Measom. This school is part of Cornwall Education Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lisa Mannall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Geoff Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that has experienced significant turbulence in the last few years. New leadership has resulted in recent improvements in many aspects of the school's work. However, changes to the curriculum are at an early stage. There is still more work to do to ensure that pupils learn well across all subjects.

Previously, too many pupils did not behave well. Suspensions were high over several years. The school has now robustly and effectively addressed these issues. It has raised its expectations of how pupils should behave through the 'Fowey Way'. Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and try hard with their work.

Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe. Pupils talk maturely about the positive changes in behaviour and how adults help them with their learning. Staff deal swiftly with any issues, including bullying. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of clubs on offer for them to pursue their interests, such as clubs for computing, craft, football and science.

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views of the school. They recognise the recent improvements. Parents speak particularly highly of the new leadership, which they say has re-established their confidence in Fowey.

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

The school has been through a tough period. High staff turnover, the COVID-19 pandemic and an ineffective curriculum have meant that the school had declined significantly. The trust recognised this and put measures in place to reverse its performance. For example, it replaced the local governing body with a rapid improvement group (RIG). This has helped to support and challenge the school in equal measure. Through keeping a close eye on the school's progress, it has an accurate understanding of the school's position. The trust recognises that much of the curriculum work has not yet had the desired impact in securing better outcomes for pupils.

Coupled with this has been the impact of the headteacher since taking up her post. She demonstrates compassionate yet uncompromising leadership. The headteacher has galvanised a largely disaffected parent body and helped to create a stable, happy staffing team. There is now a strong sense of shared vision throughout the school community. Inclusion lies at the heart of this. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities are included in the full life of the school. Staff skilfully make adaptations to pupils' provision as necessary.

The school has recently implemented a new curriculum. There are some emerging successes, such as in science. It has also revamped the reading curriculum to ensure that pupils learn to read well. This is now a strength of the school. Children in Reception start to learn the phonics code as soon as they start school. Staff swiftly

identify pupils who have fallen behind. Through effective support, they catch up and keep up. The school promotes a love of reading through a series of carefully chosen books that teachers read with pupils.

However, there are teething problems in other areas of the curriculum. While there has been consideration of the order in which pupils learn knowledge, the ambition of the school for pupils to learn well is not realised fully. This is because some teachers do not ensure that they plan learning that matches the knowledge identified in the school's plans. In addition, pupils are sometimes given tasks that do not deepen their knowledge of the subject. This includes in early years. Consequently, pupils do not always build on previous learning in the way the curriculum intends.

Owing to the historical weaknesses, pupils have knowledge gaps in foundation subjects. For example, in art and design, pupils have a limited recall of artists. The school has not yet developed precise systems to check what these gaps are and to address them accordingly. In addition, some subject leads are new to their role and do not have a strong understanding of how the curriculum develops from early years to Year 6. This means that they have been slower to drive forward improvements that are necessary.

The school provides a well-considered curriculum beyond the academic. Pupils learn and recall topics such as consent and different types of relationships. Through assemblies, they discuss world issues and have their achievements celebrated, such as the award of certificates. Trips and visitors help to deepen pupils' knowledge of the curriculum. For example, pupils visit Looe to understand the history of the fishing industry.

The school has made significant improvements in pupils' attendance. Through careful analysis and swift intervention, pupils now attend school more regularly than in the past.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff, including in early years, do not teach content in line with the curriculum intent. Learning activities sometimes do not deepen pupils' knowledge effectively. As a result, pupils do not always learn a well-sequenced, ambitious curriculum. The school needs to ensure that it supports staff to understand and teach the identified knowledge in the curriculum and deepen pupils' learning through purposeful tasks.
- In foundation subjects, pupils have not developed a significant knowledge of the curriculum, and the school has not identified these gaps precisely. The school

needs to identify these gaps through assessment and check that pupils catch up in their learning.

- Some subject leaders do not have a strong knowledge of the school's curriculum from early years to Year 6. As a result, they are not able to drive forward improvements across all year groups. The school needs to ensure that middle leaders are well trained in understanding their subject so that they can make the necessary improvements.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142239
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10298040
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	141
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Brown
CEO of the trust	Lisa Mannall
Headteacher	Elizabeth Measom
Website	www.fowey-ji.cornwall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in October 2022.
- The school is part of Cornwall Education Learning Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant staff turnover.
- The school has changed its class structure with effect from September 2023. From Year 2 to Year 6, there are single-age classes. There is also a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils, the chief executive officer of the trust, executive leaders from the trust, trustees and members of the RIG.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with pupils and looked at their work in English, geography, science, and art and design.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Gower

Ofsted Inspector

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