

Inspection of a good school: Shortlanesend School

Northey Close, Shortlanesend, Truro, Cornwall TR4 9DA

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of school is Chad Wilson. This school is part of Aspire Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Vanessa Bragg, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Penny Shilston.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Shortlanesend School. They attend regularly. The values of 'smile, learn, excel' are at the heart of the school. Staff know pupils well. They take the time to build positive relationships with pupils to help them to be successful. Bullying is well understood by pupils. Most feel that their worries are dealt with. However, some pupils feel issues could be resolved more quickly.

The trust has supported the school to prioritise the development of the curriculum. This has been essential in raising expectations of what pupils need to learn to prepare them for their next stage of learning. These actions are starting to make a difference. However, these improvements are in the early stages. Consequently, the curriculum does not yet support all pupils to build their knowledge well enough.

The school provides many opportunities to support pupils' wider development. For example, pupils attend clubs such as choir and athletics. The school plans experiences to enhance the curriculum for pupils. This includes them visiting Geevor Tin Mine to learn about Cornish heritage. Pupils value the opportunity to work with peers from different age groups through 'house' events and as reading buddies. This helps them to develop a sense of community.

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

The school is ambitious for pupils. It has developed the curriculum since the previous inspection. Where subjects are more advanced in their design, the knowledge pupils need

to learn has been clearly identified and sequenced well. For example, in mathematics, the curriculum is coherently planned, starting in the early years. For subjects that are in their infancy, the precise knowledge has not yet been determined. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge as well. They have gaps in their knowledge and are not prepared well enough for future learning.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to help pupils learn. For example, in mathematics, a 'spiral review' helps pupils revisit previous learning. This helps them to remember what they have learned before. Assessment is used to check pupils' understanding. In mathematics, teachers assess prior knowledge to find out what pupils know and what they need help with. However, for subjects in the wider curriculum, assessment is not used with enough precision. As a result, pupils develop gaps in knowledge which are not identified. This prevents them from building their knowledge securely.

Teachers provide extra help for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adaptations are in place to support pupils. However, not all pupils with SEND get the support they need to catch up. Some learning targets can lack precision and do not focus on the most significant area of need. As a result, some pupils make slower progress.

A culture of reading threads through the school. For example, 'book swap' areas enable families to enjoy a variety of books at home. In addition, children in early years have a daily vote for the class story to read together. Staff receive the training they need to teach the phonics scheme successfully. Most pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This helps them to become fluent readers. The school identifies pupils who fall behind. Their gaps in phonics knowledge are well known. However, some of these pupils do not get all the precise support they need to catch up. As a result, these pupils find their learning more challenging.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils know the school routines well. This starts in the early years, where children respond well to the high expectations of staff. Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. In the more developed curriculum subjects, such as mathematics, pupils show high engagement and take real pride in their learning. If bullying occurs, the school takes action. However, for some pupils, bullying remains a concern for them for too long.

Pupils are supported to develop beyond the academic curriculum. The school empowers pupils through a range of pupil leadership opportunities. Pupils make meaningful contributions to the school. For example, school councillors recently purchased a playground friendship bench. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider world. For example, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution visits annually to teach beach safety.

Staff value the training and support they receive. They have benefited from the expertise of trust subject leaders, who have supported them to deliver the curriculum as intended. Trustees know the school well and know what the school needs to develop further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The precise knowledge pupils need to know and remember is not yet sufficiently identified and sequenced across all subjects. As a result, pupils find it hard to build their knowledge based on what they already know. They develop gaps in their learning. The trust must ensure that the precise knowledge it wants pupils to learn is identified and sequenced across all subjects.
- Assessment is not effective across the wider subjects. As a result, the school is not clear on what pupils know and can do. Some pupils do not build their knowledge well and find subsequent learning challenging. The trust needs to ensure that assessment is effective in identifying gaps in prior knowledge so that subsequent learning can build on what pupils already know and remember.
- Some pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need to keep up or catch up, including when learning to read. Some learning targets lack precision and do not focus on the most significant area of need. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge securely over time. The trust must ensure that all pupils with SEND receive the support they need to learn the curriculum well.
- Some incidences of bullying are not resolved swiftly enough. As a result, a few pupils' experiences of bullying go on for too long. The trust must ensure that any remaining bullying concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Shortlanesend Community Primary School, to be good in January 2013.

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	142303
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10298044
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	156
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Penny Shilston
CEO of the trust	Vanessa Bragg
Headteacher	Chad Wilson
Website	www.shortlanesend.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Aspire Academy Trust.
- This school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.
- The nursery provision has opened since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils, the chair of the trust board and representatives from the trust.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspector spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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