

# Inspection of Mullion Primary School

Willis Vean, Mullion, Helston, Cornwall TR12 7DF

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Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Rob Chirgwin. The school is part of Truro & Penwith 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 (CEO), Jennifer Blunden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anita Firth.

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

Mullion Primary is a school that has changed for the better recently. It is a happy, warm and welcoming place. Strong relationships between pupils and staff are prevalent throughout. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They reflect this in their improved attendance.

New leaders recognise that there is more work to do to improve the quality of education. They have made many positive changes. Pupils have started to learn more than in the past. Nevertheless, it is too early to see the impact of this work in pupils' outcomes over time.

The school has brought in a new behaviour policy. It has made sure that both staff and pupils understand it. Pupils follow the 'Mullion 3' well. In lessons, pupils listen carefully. There is less low-level disruption than in the past. This helps pupils to focus on their learning. Changes to social times have reduced the number of incidents on the playground.

The school has a strong focus on developing pupils' character. Pupils develop their independence through residential trips. Through carefully planned sessions, older pupils learn about empathy. Pupils have a good understanding of discrimination. They say that at Mullion, everyone is treated equally, regardless of gender, background or disability.

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

Following the previous inspection, the school declined further. Staff turnover meant that pupils had a disjointed education. Pupils experienced a weak curriculum and did not learn well. Some pupils' behaviour was poor. Parental confidence in the school fell.

Under the new trust, the school has started to improve quickly. The recently appointed headteacher has driven this through his methodical and tenacious leadership. He has gained the trust of pupils, staff, and parents and carers. The school and the trust know precisely where the school is on its improvement journey. This is helping to tackle the legacy of underachievement. As one governor described it, 'We are building the foundations.'

The school has established a well-sequenced curriculum that takes into account the mixed-age structure well. Some of its implementation is in the early stages. Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some systems designed to meet the needs of these pupils better are at an early stage. Staff do not adapt the learning for some pupils with SEND well enough. As a result, their needs are not met fully.

Where the curriculum has been implemented for longer, pupils show a greater depth to their learning. For example, in mathematics, older pupils recall what they have

learned well. In history, pupils' knowledge of the Stone Age and the Second World War is strong. However, pupils still have gaps in their knowledge caused by the past weaknesses in the curriculum. This means that they sometimes find it difficult to build on their current learning.

The school ensures that reading has a high profile. This starts in early years, where staff regularly share carefully chosen books with children. The school has a highly systematic approach to ensuring that pupils learn the phonics code. Staff regularly check what pupils can do. They swiftly identify and help those pupils who have fallen behind. As a result, younger pupils learn to decode well.

However, this is not sustained once pupils move to comprehend and interpret texts. The school recognised this and put in a new curriculum, which has been carefully sequenced until Year 6. In particular, this has sought to address issues with pupils' reading fluency. However, the curriculum needs further refinement. Pupils do not learn to infer from texts early enough. Consequently, pupils' gaps in reading persist.

Children in early years get off to a strong start. The school has identified the precise vocabulary it wants them to know and use. This helps develop children's communication and language skills. Staff carefully plan activities linked to the curriculum. These are precisely matched to children's needs. As a result, children show resilience and sustained concentration on tasks.

Pupils have a voice in the school through the school council. They help to shape changes in the school, such as the wildlife garden. Through initiatives such as the 'daily mile', pupils learn about the importance of keeping physically healthy. Pupils pursue their talents and interests through clubs such as those for handball, Lego construction and rugby.

Many of the members of the local governing body are new to its role. Governors have started to make checks on aspects of the school's work, such as safeguarding. This helps governors to form an accurate picture of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The reading curriculum that is used once pupils complete the phonics programme is in its early stages of implementation. It needs further refinement. In particular, pupils do not learn to use inference early enough in order to help them understand texts. As a result, pupils do not learn to comprehend texts well. The trust should ensure that there is an ambitious curriculum that ensures pupils learn to comprehend texts well.

- In some subjects, pupils have historical gaps in their knowledge and understanding. As a result, they are not always able to build effectively on what they already know and can do. The trust needs to ensure that staff are supported to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge so that pupils know more and remember more.
- The school does not adapt learning well enough to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not achieve well. The trust needs to make sure that learning is adapted when necessary for pupils with SEND, so that they are supported to achieve well across the curriculum.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143992
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288217
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Anita Firth
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Jenny Blunden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Chirgwin
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mullion.eschools.co.uk">www.mullion.eschools.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school transferred to the Truro & Penwith Academy Trust in January 2023.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced several changes of leadership.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school reduced its number of classes in September 2023 due to a fall in roll.

## 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 CEO of the trust, executive leaders from the trust, trustees and members of the local governing body.
- 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.
- The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of work in science and in 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

Laura Horne

Ofsted Inspector

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