

Inspection of Camborne Science and International Academy

Cranberry Road, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 7PP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

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

The principal of this school is Emma Haase. This school is part of Athena 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, Ben Parnell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elaine Marshall. There is also a regional director, Matt Thompson, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), know this is a school where staff have the highest expectations. There are clear and consistent rules and routines, which ensures that pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons. Most pupils also conduct themselves well around the school. Many aspire to achieve and take pride in their work. As a result, lessons are purposeful, and pupils learn increasingly well.

Most pupils appreciate the high expectations. They recognise that the expectations have helped to stop disruption in lessons. Pupils say most staff resolve issues, including bullying, quickly. However, some still find it difficult to rise to what is expected and do not agree that it is necessary. Like some parents, they also believe the new expectations on them are unrealistic. Coupled with a period of instability and a high amount of change, some parts of the community are unsettled and do not have confidence in the school. As a result, although most say they feel safe, some unnecessarily harbour concerns.

The curriculum supports pupils' wider development well. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to explore their interests and talents. Pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. Many rightly believe they are supported effectively.

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

The school is highly ambitious for this disadvantaged community. As well as expecting the highest standards of behaviour, leaders have constructed a well-sequenced, broad and relevant curriculum. This is particularly well designed and implemented in the sixth form. The school's work is rooted in a clear moral purpose: to improve outcomes for all pupils.

Leaders, including those from the trust, identify the strengths and weaknesses of provision accurately. They act swiftly to tackle areas that could be better. For example, the school has recognised the need to improve pupils' behaviour and achievement, which declined during and following the pandemic. Staff have ambitiously implemented a range of strategies to improve behaviour and ensure pupils' learning is more secure. This is already bearing fruit. For example, the implementation of the curriculum is consistent and secure across most subjects. Pupils remember key knowledge, particularly in recent lessons and programmes of study. As a result, pupils are now making better progress than has been the case historically.

The school ensures that pupils have access to appropriate academic and vocational courses. English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects are at the heart of the curriculum. The school has rightly focused on improving the quality of the curriculum to increase uptake of the EBacc and realise its ambition for more pupils to move into top quality further or higher education. For example, the school has focused on improving the curriculum in modern foreign languages, and learning in this subject is already

strong. Curriculum plans are carefully tailored to meet the needs and interests of pupils, including those with SEND. Most pupils recognise this, particularly in the sixth form. For example, many say they appreciate how well they are taught and that lessons are more focused on what they need to learn. As a result, many go on to secure further or higher education, employment or training.

The school's use of assessment is secure. Teachers are particularly adept at checking pupils' understanding during lessons to ensure everyone keeps up, including those with SEND. However, the use of assessment to check pupils' application of knowledge over longer periods of time is less well developed. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not link key knowledge learned in a previous year or key stage well enough to help them make the most of what they are learning now. It also means the school does not use assessment as well as it could to refine and strengthen the curriculum further.

The school has rightly prioritised the need to improve attendance. Staff have a sound understanding of the specific challenges of the community they serve. From this they have developed a clear and rigorous strategy to tackle persistent absence and improve overall attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is already improving. Pupils increasingly understand the importance of attending regularly. Sixth-form students already attend well, responding to the clear expectation for them to attend every lesson.

The school's aspiration for pupils is reflected in the promotion of pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils experience plentiful opportunities to explore their interests and abilities. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs through copious international trips, visits and work experience. This helps the school to support pupils to broaden their horizons and understand fundamental British values. Pupils appreciate the careers guidance they receive, including help to secure useful work experience placements. Students in the sixth form feel particularly well supported. They say they have had much help and guidance to secure appropriate university courses or apprenticeships.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is still developing and embedding. This means that, sometimes, the use of assessment is not as helpful as it could be. While teachers use assessment well to check how well pupils remember knowledge in lessons and at the end of a programme of study, the overall use of assessment to check how well pupils remember key knowledge in the long term is not as effective. The school should continue to refine the use of assessment to better identify where

pupils have gaps in their learning and where the curriculum can be further improved so that pupils make even better progress.

- The school has tackled with good effect several historic weaknesses in a short amount of time. However, it has not successfully secured the confidence of some members of the community about why these changes were needed or what difference they will make. This means that some members of the school's community, including pupils and parents, lack confidence in what the school is trying to do. The school should improve how it engages and communicates with all members of the community so that they pull together in the same direction.
- The school's strategies for improving attendance, although robust, are new. This means, although attendance is improving, there are still too many pupils who do not attend as well as they should. The school should embed and refine its strategies to ensure that more pupils attend well.

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	136524
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10323515
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,826
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	172
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elaine Marshall
CEO of the trust	Ben Parnell
Principal	Emma Haase
Website	www.cambornescience.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2018 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new principal has been appointed.
- The academy joined Athena Learning Trust on 1 January 2024.
- The school uses five registered alternative providers and five unregistered alternative providers.
- The school runs across two sites, with a main campus and separate campus called Nexus. The Nexus campus provides education for pupils identified as gifted and talented, as well as the Cornwall School of Mathematics and Science providing targeted A-level provision in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and

engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 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 met with leaders, including the principal, vice-principals and assistant principals. They met with the acting special educational needs coordinator and a selection of support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and the regional director from the trust. They also met the chair of trustees and three representatives of the newly formed local governing board, who were formerly trustees until 1 January 2024.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning and pupils' work linked to other subjects across the national curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text responses. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations, the school improvement plan, documents relating to governance and information about the school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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