

Inspection of a good school: North Cornwall Alternative Provision Academy

3-5 Barn Lane, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 1LZ

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

North Cornwall Alternative Provision Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Relationships are at the heart of the offer that pupils who attend North Cornwall Alternative Provision Academy receive. The strength of the care for and understanding of pupils' individual needs is clear across the school. Pupils come to the school with significant negative experiences of school and life in general. They describe a 'sense of connection' that they have not experienced previously. This enables them to feel that they belong and are valued.

Pupils experience success. They are able to build ambitious aspirations for the future because the education offer is bespoke to their academic, social and emotional needs. There is an exceptional range of high-quality enrichment opportunities. These broaden pupils' experiences of the world around them. It helps pupils to understand themselves, their difficulties and their strengths.

Pupils feel safe in meeting the expectations staff have of them because there is a culture of trust and fresh starts. This is not always successful but challenging behaviour is managed through de-escalation and precise knowledge of each individual's 'triggers' and 'calmers'. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. This is despite the majority of pupils having a history, in previous settings, of exhibiting high risk, challenging behaviour.

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

The school's education offer is ambitious. The curriculum is designed well. Considerations are given to overcome the challenges faced by pupils, such as attendance. It begins with a focus on readiness for learning and accurately identifying the stage at which a pupil is at.

The school is not complacent in its determination to meet the ever-changing cohorts of its pupils. It looks to continually improve and strengthen its provision. Consequently, some aspects of the school are under development or new in their implementation. For

example, new leadership roles and new systems and processes to support knowledge about pupils. The school, alongside the wider trust, has identified these areas accurately and there is a clear rationale behind decisions that are made. However, the impact this has on pupils' learning is not as secure as it is elsewhere where provision is more embedded.

The school prioritises reading across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading get the phonics provision they need. As a result, they become increasingly confident and fluent readers. Accurate assessment across all subjects in the curriculum ensures that gaps in learning are identified and addressed quickly. Teachers have the subject knowledge needed to do this effectively. This supports those pupils who are dual registered to successfully re-integrate and those who are single registered to move successfully on to their next stage. There is a focus on improving pupils' view of reading for pleasure which is proving successful. Through the English curriculum, pupils read high-quality texts which cover a broad range of issues and themes that pupils can identify with and immerse themselves in.

Pupils are supported to become resilient, independent and confident members of society. Partnership work with different employers is a model of good practice that has been recognised at a national level. The experiences pupils get have been well-considered to re-engage pupils with learning new skills, problem solving, applying academic knowledge and physical activity. Pupils take part in work experience and regular employer encounters. This prepares them well for adulthood. Pupils complete ambitious qualifications, such as BTECs, and other certification to support them in their post 16 destinations.

Pupils' attitudes to learning come from a low starting point due to their previous negative experiences of school. The wider development of pupils alongside strong relationships with staff increase the positive way in which pupils respond to the education offer. Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly in order to benefit from this. The school takes appropriate action to improve the attendance of those pupils who struggle to be in school. However, there remains a minority of pupils who are not in school often enough.

Those responsible for governance have an extensive knowledge of the school and the quality of provision. Staff are dedicated to getting the very best for pupils. They are well-supported in this by the leadership of the school and the trust. It enables staff to be authentic in their roles so that pupils feel safe enough to lower their defences and become more receptive to learning and developing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the school are under development or new in their implementation. As a result, the impact these areas have on how well pupils learn is not fully evident or not as successful as it is elsewhere. The trust needs to strengthen and embed new or developing practice and provision, so that it is as strong as it is in the more established areas. The trust should ensure that staff have the support they need to develop and hone their skills and expertise to make the best possible impact on pupils.

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 school to be good in April 2015.

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	139759
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10322270
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Justin Day
CEO of trust	Rob Gasson
Principal	Richard Triggs
Website	www.wavemat.org
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Places at the school are commissioned through the local authority. Pupils can start at the school at any point.
- The majority of pupils are single registered with the school. This has been a significant change since the previous inspection.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.
- The youngest pupils on roll are in key stage 1. There are no children in early years currently on roll.
- 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

- 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 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 the principal, the vice principal, the school's two special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinators, the trust's director of education and deputy director of education. In addition, an inspector met with members of the monitoring hub and the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English including early reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Burgess

Ofsted Inspector

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