

Inspection of Otterham Community Primary School

Marshgate, Camelford, Cornwall PL32 9YW

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Helen Ward. This school is part of Westcountry Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rob Haring, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Iain Grafton.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Otterham is a wonderful school with a big heart', was a comment made by a parent about the school and fully supported by many other parents and carers. Pupils who attend Otterham Community Primary School wholeheartedly agree. They say that the staff, with their care and nurture, are the best thing about the school. This enables them to feel safe and motivates them to meet the high expectations set.

Pupils and parents alike value the priority given to well-being and welfare. Pupils are ready to learn; they attend well and are proud of their school as a result. The attention given to increasing pupils' aspirations and awareness of the world around them is notable. Pupils enthuse about the visits to London, Penzance, Exeter University and Exeter Cathedral. They link these to their academic learning as well as appreciating the awe and wonder from the experience.

Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. In the playground and around the school, older pupils support and encourage younger pupils. Pupils are confident in expressing their views and opinions because of what they learn, academically, emotionally and socially. They are well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.

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

The school has responded to the improvements highlighted in the previous ungraded inspection. For example, it has taken steps to increase pupils' fluency in number so that they are able to reason and problem-solve with greater success. In history, the curriculum focuses on chronology, making connections across events in history and with pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils, from Reception class through to Year 6, are using increasingly ambitious vocabulary. They are strengthening their oracy skills because this is woven through the history, geography and religious education curriculum.

The school has responded to the low published outcomes in 2023. It is alert to the reasons for these, and positive impact can be seen on current pupils' learning and progress in core subjects. However, the writing curriculum is not as well developed as other core subjects. The school has strengthened aspects of the teaching of writing, but there remains a lack of coherence and shared understanding across the school about how effectively the curriculum is implemented.

Pupils in early years and key stage 1 are becoming increasingly fluent and confident readers. They read books that are matched to their abilities. When necessary, pupils get the support that they need to keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. In key stage 2, pupils read widely and often. They enjoy adults reading to them. Pupils can talk about their favourite authors and genres, and do so with enthusiasm because the school promotes a love of reading. However, this is not as secure in some areas as it could be. In English, along with some subjects in the wider curriculum, there is not sufficient capacity and expertise for the school to fully

impact on the quality, development and assessment of the curriculum. Consequently, there is not enough oversight of how well pupils learn to the best of their abilities and how effectively teachers are using their knowledge and skills to support pupils towards the best possible outcomes.

The school places great importance on knowing pupils well. This means that from the very start in Reception class, children develop an enthusiasm for learning because adults extend, challenge and hone their interests. The school quickly identifies pupils who need more precise and additional support to help them overcome barriers to learning. There is careful consideration for how these barriers are managed and reduced. This means that pupils, whether they have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or not, get the specific help they need, at the time that they need it.

The school's actions to improve attendance have resulted in pupils attending more. They, along with their families, understand the importance of being in school to benefit from the quality education on offer. Pupils' education is extended through the wider development they receive. As a result, pupils know how people can be different. They describe a culture of equality and respect in the school. Pupils are increasingly risk aware. They know the strategies that will help to keep them safe in areas such as online safety, healthy lifestyles and positive relationships. This prepares them well for the next stage and beyond.

The school is positive about the support it receives from the trust. Where this work has been focused, the impact on pupils' education is clear. Staff are dedicated and committed to work with the wider trust and do the best for the pupils at the school. This is evident in the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for writing is not as well developed as other core subject areas. This has contributed to low outcomes in writing. The trust should make sure that the design of the curriculum for writing is strengthened and that this continues to be reviewed to ensure that all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes in their writing.
- In some subjects, there is not sufficient accountability for curriculum development and quality of provision. As a result, the curriculum design is not as established, and the school does not fully evaluate the effectiveness and consistent delivery of the curriculum. The trust needs to ensure that those with roles of responsibility have sufficient capacity and expertise to impact on the quality of education for pupils.

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	146391
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10298066
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Iain Grafton
CEO of the trust	Rob Haring
Headteacher	Helen Ward
Website	www.otterhamschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Otterham Community Primary School converted to become an academy in June 2024. When its predecessor school, Otterham Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This school joined Westcountry Schools Trust on 1 June 2024. The trust is responsible for a group of primary and secondary schools across Plymouth, Devon and North Cornwall.
- This school is a smaller-than-average primary school with three mixed-age classes.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. In addition, an inspector met with the chair of trustees, the school improvement lead and the director of education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and trust leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- 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 and behaviour.
- An inspector listened to the views of parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. 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

Marcus West

Ofsted Inspector

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