

# Inspection of St Columb Minor Academy

Porth Bean Road, St Columb Minor, Newquay, Cornwall TR7 3JF

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Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Natalie Simmonds. This school is part of Kernow Learning Multi 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, Clare Crowle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Parker.

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

Pupils beam with pride at being a part of this tight-knit community. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance. The school has raised aspirations for its pupils. They now learn new content well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met through skilful adaptations.

The school has recently changed its behaviour systems. Staff and pupils understand this new approach. Pupils generally behave well throughout the day. They learn in a warm, calm and orderly environment. A few pupils still struggle to meet the school's higher expectations. Consequently, suspensions have risen during this period. However, staff calmly and compassionately support these pupils effectively. Children in the early years settle well. They quickly learn the rules and routines of the school day.

Sport has a high profile both in the curriculum and beyond. Pupils enjoy success in a range of tournaments. They experience a well-planned set of residential. This promotes pupils' resilience and independence. This is complimented through leadership roles, such as house captains.

Parents and carers are effusive in their praise for the recent changes made. They welcome their inclusion in the life of the school. One typical comment, stated, 'I feel the school spirit has returned.'

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

New leadership has resulted in a period of rapid, sustained improvement. Trust support has also been significant. Together, they have addressed a decline in the quality of education and pupils' behaviour. There has been significant support for staff throughout this. They describe how change has been managed well. Staff feel their ideas are heard and valued. Teachers state that despite the changes, their workload has decreased. This has helped to create a united vision for the direction of the school.

The school identified that the curriculum needed greater ambition. Several subjects have been redesigned. Pupils now learn a logically ordered and ambitious curriculum. The school has identified the specific knowledge and vocabulary pupils should know. This starts in the early years. Consequently, teachers know precisely what to teach. Extensive training has also supported them with their subject knowledge. Nevertheless, on some occasions, teachers do not give tasks which match the high ambition of the curriculum. When this happens, it limits what pupils learn.

Pupils' progress in the 2023 key stage 2 National Curriculum assessments were weak in mathematics and writing. The improvements to the curriculum mean that these do not reflect pupils' current learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils can make links to what they have learned previously. In writing, pupils now write with increased control and accuracy in their sentence construction using a carefully scaffolded approach.

However, some of the changes in the wider curriculum are very recent. Pupils can typically discuss their most recent learning. However, they have not developed a strong knowledge in the long term in some subjects, such as geography. This is because they have historical gaps in their learning from when the curriculum was not as well-considered. The school knows it needs to further embed these changes.

The curriculum has reading at its core. The school's outcomes in the phonics screening check continue to be above national averages. Children in the early years learn the phonics code as soon as they start school. Staff regularly check what pupils can do. They swiftly identify any gaps in knowledge. Carefully targeted help ensures pupils catch up and keep up. This includes pupils with SEND. The school has improved its systems for the early identification of pupils who need additional support. The number of pupils with education, health and care plans has risen sharply as a result. The school ensures these pupils learn the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers.

Historically, pupils' reading did not develop as well at key stage 2. The school has bridged this gap through changes to the curriculum. It uses high quality books to expose pupils to a rich range of literature. The school's focus on oracy means pupils confidently articulate their thoughts in lessons. Pupils revisit key themes regularly. Consequently, they learn to comprehend increasingly complex texts.

The school ensures pupils have a strong knowledge of healthy relationships. They understand how friendships can change over time. Pupils understand fundamental British values, such as democracy. Their knowledge of faiths and cultures is more limited. However, pupils display kindness and tolerance to people who are different to them. They talk maturely about how some of their peers need some extra help.

Governors and trustees make regular checks on the school's work. As a result, they know the school well. The trust has helped the governing body to develop its level of expertise. This means it can confidently challenge the school where appropriate. For example, governors closely monitor the trends in suspensions to ensure they are used proportionately.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some subjects are relatively new and are at the early stages of embedding. Furthermore, pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to historical weaknesses in the curriculum. As a result, pupils have not developed a deep long-term knowledge and struggle to make links between areas of learning. The trust should ensure that it continues to embed these subjects and check how well pupils are learning them.

- On some occasions, teachers do not provide work which matches the high ambition of the curriculum intent. When this happens, pupils do not develop their knowledge as well as the curriculum states they should. The trust needs to support teachers to implement the curriculum well and provide work which is ambitious and builds upon what they already know.

## 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>	136869
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10334696
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	438
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Parker
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Clare Crowle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Natalie Simmonds
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.scmminor.kernowlearning.co.uk">www.scmminor.kernowlearning.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Kernow Learning Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in autumn 2023.
- In September 2024, the school took charge of running its own breakfast and after-school provision.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 trust executive leaders, the headteacher, groups of staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body. An inspector also held a telephone call with the alternative provider.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, religious education and geography. 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of work in some other subjects.
- 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.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the pupil survey and staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Page

Ofsted Inspector

Neil Swait

Ofsted Inspector

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