

Inspection of Alverton Primary School

Toltuff Crescent, Alverton, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4QD

Inspection dates:	19 and 20 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Nichola Smith. 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, Jennifer Blunden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anita Firth.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They treat each other well and with respect. Pupils take pride in doing the right thing. Their positive attitudes to learning in lessons and around the school reflect this. Staff take time to build warm relationships with pupils. This helps them to feel safe and well looked after. Pupils are proud of their school community. They typically said, 'we are all like a family.'

The school and trust are determined for all pupils to be successful. An ambitious curriculum demonstrates the high expectations the school has of what pupils will learn. Pupils rise to these expectations and learn the curriculum well. This starts in the early years where children get off to a strong start.

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. They benefit from a breadth of opportunities and experiences that go beyond the academic. To develop talents and interests, pupils value a wide variety of clubs. This includes drama club where pupils work towards an annual performance. The school closely tracks the attendance of clubs to ensure all pupils benefit from the school's offer, including disadvantaged pupils.

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

The school has gone through a period of significant leadership change. The trust has acted quickly to stabilise the school. It has supported staff to ensure pupils continue to learn well. Alongside those responsible for governance, the trust and the new headteacher have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Across the curriculum, the school has identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn, starting in the early years. There has been careful consideration of how pupils build their knowledge based on what they have learned before. The school has incorporated the needs of some mixed-aged classes well within the design of the curriculum.

Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils learn the curriculum. They model new learning clearly and help pupils to remember what they have learned before. This helps pupils to secure knowledge into their long-term memory. Teachers check how well pupils learn the curriculum. They use this to identify and support gaps in pupils' knowledge. This helps pupils to learn the curriculum well.

The school is currently refining the English curriculum to include new approaches to the teaching of writing. This is helping pupils to build their knowledge more securely in punctuation, grammar and handwriting. However, some pupils make repeated errors in their work that can go unaddressed. This is because the school is less clear on the important knowledge pupils must secure and by when. Consequently, some pupils are not well prepared for future learning.

The school has improved the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). With help from the trust, the school ensures that learning plans are

precise and focus on pupils' areas of significant need. The school has strengthened the process to identify pupils who need more support. However, it is early days. There are inconsistencies in how well staff provide help outlined in learning plans. Occasionally, the school does not identify pupils with SEND early enough. As a result, some pupils do not get the support they need to learn the curriculum well.

Teaching pupils to read and to develop a love of reading is a school priority. This starts in the early years where children enjoy a wide range of books that underpin the early years curriculum. Pupils across the school value 'book club' where they talk about books and share recommendations with peers and staff. To teach phonics, staff benefit from training to support pupils to build their knowledge of sounds. The school makes checks on how well pupils are securing their phonics' knowledge and provides support for pupils who need more help. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers.

The school is calm and orderly as pupils know the routines and high expectations in place. For example, children in the early years know to put their wellies on independently when learning outside. The school works closely with families to promote high attendance. This ensures that most pupils attend well.

The school supports pupils to be responsible, respectful and active citizens through opportunities such as pupil leadership roles. They have a lived experience of democracy through the school's parliament and school council. Pupils value this and they know that they make a difference to their school. The school teaches pupils how to look after their mental health and well-being. Regular pastoral support is available to pupils who may need it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils with SEND do not have their needs identified swiftly enough or do not benefit from the support outlined in learning plans. As a result, these pupils are not learning the curriculum well. The trust needs to develop staff expertise to identify pupils' needs early and ensure pupils receive the support they need to learn well across the curriculum.
- The school does not ensure that pupils' writing is of a consistently high standard. This is because staff are not clear on the important knowledge pupils must learn and by when. The trust must ensure the writing curriculum defines the essential knowledge pupils must secure at each stage and ensure staff use this to identify and support any gaps in knowledge.

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	142240
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10298041
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anita Firth
CEO of the trust	Jennifer Blunden
Headteacher	Nichola Smith
Website	www.alverton.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Alverton Primary School is part of Truro & Penwith Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in headteacher. The headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, the school has taken on the nursery that was previously run by an external provider. It admits children from two years old.

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 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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, curriculum leaders, parents, governors and representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English including early reading, mathematics, religious education and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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