



# Mounts Bay School & Community Sports College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112066  
**Local Authority** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 289166  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Stuart

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Boscathnoe Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Heamoor
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Penzance TR18 3JT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 363240
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	888	<b>Fax number</b>	01736 331633
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Robin Webb
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Davey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Mounts Bay School and Community Sports College is a bit smaller than most comprehensive schools. There are slightly more boys than girls in the school. The school became a specialist sports college in 2003 and has been oversubscribed for a number of years. Many students come from areas of social disadvantage though the proportion eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Few come from minority ethnic groups. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school with several outstanding features. It has improved in recent years and is capable of further good improvement because, under her very good leadership, the headteacher and other leaders are setting a very clear direction for the school to follow. This strong direction is focused on promoting high achievement and care for all students. It is firmly based on exemplary self-evaluation that is accurate and perceptive. As a result the school knows itself well and is able to plan further developments within very clear systems and structures.

Students achieve well, with standards rising from average on entry to above average when they leave. All groups achieve equally well, including boys who, unlike the national picture, do as well as girls. Achievement is assisted considerably by the outstanding curriculum which has been rigorously reviewed and revised so that it now very successfully meets students' needs. Teaching is good and this is also a major contributor to students' good learning and achievements. Much of the teaching in the school is of high quality. A challenge for the school in its drive to raise standards is to raise the quality of all teaching to the best that already exists. Differences in the quality of teaching are factors that contribute also to variations in performance between subjects. Although improving, mathematics is weaker than English.

The school community of students and staff work together very well. Students are given thorough training to take on an impressive range of responsibilities. This not only benefits them personally but also allows them to contribute very effectively to the school community. The wider community also benefits enormously from the school's influence. It is outward looking and works very well in partnership with others. The impact of the school's sports college status is outstanding in both the school and the whole community. The planning and delivery of the opportunities this status has brought are first-class.

Students' personal development and well-being and the level of care, guidance and support are outstanding. Most students behave well, enjoy their education and value the opportunities open to them. The school's international dimension and the arts are notable strengths. Students appreciate the good relationships they have with each other and with their teachers. Most of the large numbers of parents who returned the questionnaire are very supportive of the school. Concerns that were raised, including communications about the recently reviewed behaviour policy, have been brought to the attention of the headteacher. Overall there is a culture where success and achievement are celebrated, and the school is strongly committed to the inclusion of all students, regardless of their circumstances and abilities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and achievements in mathematics so that they are comparable with those in English.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by, for example, drawing on the considerable amount of very good practice that exists in the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards by the end of Year 11 are above average. This represents good achievement from students' average levels of attainment on entry. The school uses a wide range of information to judge students' standards and their performance. Systems for tracking students' progress are very good indeed. As a result, underperformance by individuals, groups of students, classes or subjects is quickly identified and action taken. Because this action is usually effective, achievement is rising from previously satisfactory levels to the present good levels. There is convincing evidence that improvements that were evident in the 2006 results are accelerating further in present work across the school.

There is a good degree of consistency in the achievements of different groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with particular gifts and talents. Whilst boys nationally perform less well than girls, there is no difference in their results at this school. However, although achievement is at least satisfactory in all subjects, there are differences between subjects. This is mainly because of variations in the quality of teaching and the use teachers make of performance information. Unexpectedly high levels of staff illness have also adversely affected standards recently in some areas, including science. Of the core subjects, mathematics is weaker throughout the school despite some improvements in 2006. The English results in the Year 9 tests in 2006 were outstanding and students achieve particularly well in GCSE, especially in English literature. There are strengths in many subjects across the curriculum. For example, over a period of time there has been very positive 'value-added' in several subjects including art and design, textiles, physical education, German and history. By contrast, as well as mathematics, there has been weaker performance in graphics and resistant materials.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students flourish and mature, with nearly all enjoying school and having very positive attitudes to work. Attendance is now above average. The vast majority of students behave well, with only a very small minority who spoil things at times. The recently reviewed behaviour policy has been welcomed by most students, who believe that it has improved behaviour generally, although a few parents feel that the policy is too rigid.

Students seize very enthusiastically the numerous opportunities to take responsibility in many areas such as the student council, 'buddies' to younger students and as mentors, counsellors or prefects. Many students make admirable contributions through the skills they have developed in sports. Older students who are proficient enough help to teach foreign languages to students in their own school and in local primary schools.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Students use opportunities well to reflect on their own lives and those of others. The school's

exceptional international links across the curriculum, such as those in dance with a school in Mumbai, make students very aware of other cultures. They show considerable respect for one another and for others' views and opinions. Students show a first-class awareness of safety matters and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Most make suitable choices in the dining room and very large numbers take part in extra-curricular sport in addition to their timetabled physical education. As well as their literacy and numeracy skills, students also develop useful skills very well to equip them for their adult life, including having the confidence to speak in public, working as part of a team and using computers.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully so that the work builds on previous learning. Usually teachers provide an interesting variety of activities to sustain students' attention and ask questions to assess what has been learnt and to make students think more deeply. The very good relationships and expectations of high standards of behaviour mean that learning nearly always continues uninterrupted. This also enables activities such as group work to be effective. For example, in a Year 9 drama class, group work led to outstanding learning because students listened to one another and co-operated excellently while planning a showcase performance. Similarly, there were outstanding lessons in Year 11 religion and philosophy classes where teachers actively involved students in their own learning and made them think deeply about challenging concepts.

There is much high-quality teaching in the school, but some lessons are only satisfactory, especially when teachers fail to enthuse students in the subject. Because teachers sometimes talk for too long, lessons are not always sufficiently matched to the needs of different students. This means that interest is lost and learning suffers. Most teachers use assessment data well so that work is planned to meet the abilities of their students. Marking is generally good and students say that comments on written work help them to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstandingly imaginative and innovative curriculum. All students are well catered for. For example, in Year 9, gifted and talented students follow a fast-track GCSE in expressive arts and all students begin a GCSE short course in religious education so that they can go on to complete the full course by the end of Year 11 and reach high standards. The newly introduced Year 7 integrated humanities course is an excellent response to a review of the curriculum and a recognised need to increase students' awareness of the locality. Similarly, the more established Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, part of the Cornish Baccalaureate, is particularly

well designed to prepare students for their futures. Very effective attention is given in small group work to developing basic skills for younger students who need extra help with reading and writing.

The school has made excellent use of its status as a community sports college to increase sports facilities for the benefit of students and the community at large. There is a huge variety of activities on the formal timetable and in the excellent selection of extra-curricular activities, which are enthusiastically supported. Extensive participation in the outstanding range of other extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including the arts, is also contributing tremendously to widening students' horizons and developing all aspects of their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Students enjoy an outstandingly caring and supportive environment in which they can feel secure and valued. Vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported very well. This atmosphere establishes a very firm foundation for all students to develop socially and academically.

Tutors and heads of year monitor carefully students' academic and personal development. They use their detailed information about students' achievement and progress very well to identify any problems and involve parents effectively. The school's procedures for child protection meet current requirements. Students are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they need guidance. They speak very positively of the school's approaches to dealing with what they believe are the few occurrences of bullying. For example, the role of trained students as anti-bullying mentors is highly regarded as a way of reducing the amount of bullying.

The school makes excellent use of outside agencies to help students who may need additional expert guidance. Similarly, the guidance for students about the next and further stages of their education and careers is of very good quality and students speak very highly of it.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection the senior leadership team has been strengthened very successfully to address the weaknesses identified in monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. The headteacher and senior team set a very clear direction for the school that is driven by the aim of providing opportunities for all students to achieve as well as they can. The well-understood structures and systems ensure that leaders at all levels review their areas rigorously, identify strengths and weaknesses and set clear priorities for improvement. Leadership of key areas of the school is generally good and outstanding in some. However, achievement and teaching are weaker in those areas where leadership and management are less effective.

Leadership and management are proactive in seeking the views and involving students in decision making. Therefore throughout their time in the school students know that they are listened to and can influence what happens. Parents' views are gathered informally and through surveys, though a small minority feel there is insufficient consultation or communication with them. Governors have a very good understanding of the school through their attachment to subjects and through being informed by accurate evaluations by key staff. Governors are not afraid to challenge and question the information provided. For example, their recent intervention encouraged a more rigorous approach to behaviour management. Funds are well used. The school has very successfully used additional sources of funding it has attracted for sport and other facilities and initiatives.

The school is outward looking and plays a key role in leading learning in the whole of Penwith and Cornwall. The way it has successfully managed its sports college status and the first-rate practice in a number of areas shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

It was a pleasure to spend two days in your school and, on behalf of all the inspection team, I thank you very much for your help and friendliness.

We believe Mounts Bay is a good school with several outstanding features. It is very successfully providing a wide range of opportunities for all of you both in your lessons and in extra activities. It is doing this within a framework of excellent care, guidance and support for you as individuals. As a result you are achieving well in most of your work in response to good teaching overall and you are developing into fine young people. You should be proud of yourselves!

Your headteacher, other leaders and governors know the school extremely well. Because of this they are able to plan what needs doing to make it even better. The improved results recently are an indication of the success of what is happening. Becoming a sports college has been a great success. This has helped not just in sport but in bringing other modern facilities to the school and the local community. Another splendid feature of the school is the way very many of you have opportunities to contribute to the school's success. You tell us that you welcome being consulted on matters such as the behaviour policy. We hope you will all want to play your part in taking the school further forward.

Although most of you are achieving well and generally reach above-average standards, we believe you could do even better if everything came up to the standards of the best. So we are asking the school to look at two things in particular as it continues to improve:

- Raise standards and achievements in mathematics so that they are as good as those in English.
- Work towards making all teaching and learning as good as the best that already exists in large amounts in the school.

I wish all of you and the school great success for the future.