

Penryn Primary Academy

Treverbyn Rise, Penryn, Cornwall TR10 8RA

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- For the last two years, too few pupils in Year 6 have reached expected standards in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils have not made good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. This includes the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- Many teachers have left the school and others have joined. This has slowed down the momentum of school improvement.
- Leaders' actions to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes are not yet leading to consistent improvement across all year groups or classes.
- The progress made by pupils who receive support for their special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, but do not have an education, health and care plan, is not good.
- Teaching is not matched closely enough to the learning needs of pupils, including in the early years, to ensure that they make good progress.
- The lack of consistent challenge provided for middle-attaining pupils, including in the early years, has stalled some pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics.
- The attendance of pupils, although improving, is not good. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- The curriculum does not support the rapid development of pupils' skills in history or geography.
- Although much improved, pupils' behaviour is not good enough. On occasion, pupils' behaviour disrupts other pupils' learning.
- Leaders' plans for improvement have not been sufficiently precise or targeted accurately enough to tackle weaknesses.

The school has the following strengths

- Penryn Primary Academy offers a caring community. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued. Parents agree.
- The teaching of phonics has led to improved standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Current leaders have united in their efforts to raise standards. Pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Support provided by Aspire Academy Trust, including hub councillors, is inspiring new teachers and middle leaders to further improve their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, including for many children in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - work is matched more closely to the pupils' learning needs
 - the drive to improve standards in phonics continues
 - teachers provide greater support and challenge to enable more middle-attaining pupils to achieve the highest standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that leaders increase the urgency of their actions to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent
 - further improving systems already in place so that pupils' behaviour is consistently strong across the school
 - improving pupils' understanding of healthy eating.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' academic outcomes by ensuring that:
 - existing plans to strengthen improvement are sufficiently well targeted, using precise information about pupils' progress
 - leaders have clear strategies to meet the learning needs of all of the pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities so that the provision for these pupils is effective
 - the curriculum supports the rapid development of pupils' skills as well as their knowledge of facts in subjects such as history and geography.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders are not securing consistently good outcomes for pupils. Although senior leaders are driving improvement, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.
- Despite many staff changes in the past, since September 2017, staffing and recruitment have been stable. Leaders are focused on building a strong and effective team. Staff morale is good. All members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said that they are proud to work in Penryn Primary Academy.
- Senior leaders recognise that teaching is not consistently good. They are not complacent but they have yet to establish consistently good teaching across the school.
- Until very recently, school strategies to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have lacked precision. Leaders have rightly identified that a lack of progress information resulted in their not being clear about the impact of some initiatives. More recently, the trust has appointed a pupil premium champion to support the drive for improvement for disadvantaged pupils. It is too soon to see significant impact on either pupils' outcomes or their attendance.
- Similarly, the additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not leading to significant improvement of these pupils' academic progress. Leaders' systems for target-setting and checking the academic progress of pupils receiving SEN and/or disabilities support are not good enough. Consequently, progress for this group of pupils is too slow.
- The new leader for SEN and/or disabilities is beginning to tackle weaknesses more effectively. For example, her partnership work with external agencies is helping to target more precisely the needs of those pupils who require social and emotional support. Leaders' investment in specialist staff is also beginning to have a positive impact. As a result, there have been notable improvements to pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons and around the school.
- Leaders make effective use of funding to deploy highly skilled staff in the specialist provision of the area resource base. Consequently, the high needs of pupils who have education, health and care plans are well met.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are too wide ranging. They do not focus sharply enough on measuring pupils' academic progress in the short and long term. Consequently, this limits leaders' ability to make rapid progress in bringing about improvements. In addition, the lack of clear targets limits hub councillors' ability to provide robust challenge.
- There has been a high rate of pupil exclusions. However, there is an improving trend. Leaders have worked relentlessly and effectively to improve the provision for pupils who display emotional behaviour in the school. Staff are consistent in applying the school's behaviour policy, and this is improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Many parents told inspectors that they have concerns but that 'things are

improving'. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is much better but there are still occasions when their learning is disrupted.

- Penryn Primary Academy follows the national curriculum. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive a generally broad curriculum. However, currently, pupils' skills in subjects such as history and geography are underdeveloped. Senior leaders have appointed a new leader to attend to weaknesses in curriculum provision, but it is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- Leaders have recently introduced a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education as they recognise weaknesses in the provision. Pupils now have a good understanding of right and wrong. This is reflected in their improved learning behaviours. However, pupils' understanding of healthy eating during PSHE activities is less developed.
- Leaders have used the primary physical education and sport premium effectively to widen the range of sporting activities available to pupils. There are 16 different sports on offer. Pupils' participation has almost doubled over the last year, and over half of the school takes part in at least one club.
- The management of leaders' and teachers' performance is thorough but not ensuring improvements at a sufficiently speedy rate. Staff are positive about the challenge and support that leaders provide. Regular meetings with teachers to review the progress of pupils in their classes are bringing about some improvement, albeit too slowly. As a result, underachievement still exists.
- The significant changes in staffing have been a cause for concern for many parents. However, many parents who responded to the online questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors commented on the recently improved levels of communication from the school that kept them updated.
- Leaders at all levels are embracing effective support from other schools in the Aspire Academy Trust, and this is beginning to pay dividends. Middle leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, have a secure subject knowledge. There have been notable improvements in the school's work since September. For example, pupils' writing in books reflects teachers' higher expectations. The staff team is united in its determination to improve pupils' outcomes and feels well supported in doing so.

Governance of the school

- The Aspire Academy Trust operates through a local hub councillor group.
- The trust's systems for managing the performance of staff, including at leadership level, have ensured that all staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- The trust has allocated funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, and approved new interventions to better support these pupils. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these initiatives.
- The close support of other schools in the trust is a strength and is now more closely linked to the professional development needs of staff. For example, it is having a positive impact on improving teachers' subject knowledge. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve is further strengthened.

- The trust has been effective in ensuring that the school fulfils all of its responsibilities in respect of the school website.
- Although hub councillors make regular visits to check on the school's work, their work has had variable impact to date. The lack of precise information on the impact of initiatives on pupils' progress hampers councillors' ability to offer robust challenge, particularly in relation to pupils' progress and attainment.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at this school. Policies and procedures are thorough, comply with the most recent government guidelines and reflect consideration of lessons to be learned from national serious case reviews.
- Hub councillors and senior leaders across the trust carry out focused monitoring activities regularly throughout the year to assure themselves of the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Hub councillors and senior trust leaders ensure that staff are recruited safely. Leaders ensure that all staff are thoroughly inducted. All are well trained to spot and act on signs of risk or harm, including child exploitation. Leaders are resolute in working with external agencies to ensure that families receive the support they need. Leaders have developed a team of staff who are on hand to support families. In addition, leaders are resolute in working with external agencies to ensure that families receive the support they need. Leaders keep meticulous records and are vigilant in acting on any concerns they have about pupils' welfare.
- The impact of staff training is borne out in the daily work of staff. They refer concerns to those with responsibility for safeguarding and do not hesitate to escalate and follow up referrals when the need arises. Robust systems are in place to minimise pupils' risk of harm. For example, when exclusions have taken place, leaders execute rigorous plans to ensure that pupils are safe. Where pupils are in alternative education, leaders make checks and keep detailed records of pupils' welfare.
- Pupils are unanimous in saying that they feel safe. They know what to do if they have any concerns and trust adults to sort out any issues quickly. Leaders maintain a high presence around the school and pupils warmly greet them. A small number of parents said that they would like to see a higher level of supervision in the playground and a greater presence of senior leaders at the beginning and end of the school day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not good enough and remains too inconsistent across classes, year groups and subjects to eradicate previous underachievement. This year, leaders have been able to build on the strengths of the teaching team after previously significant changes in staffing. There are signs of better teaching, and this is leading to some early and encouraging signs of improvement in pupils' outcomes.
- Assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress is unreliable. Leaders' work in implementing a consistent approach to assessment has begun to take hold, but is

not having a sufficiently rapid impact to raise standards quickly enough. Where teachers are closely following the school's policy on feedback, pupils' progress is more discernible.

- Teaching in mathematics does not challenge pupils well enough. Work in books shows that pupils spend too long on exercises that they have already mastered. This slows down the progress of middle-attaining pupils in particular.
- Teaching is beginning to tackle previous weaknesses in mathematics. However, less-able readers are sometimes unable to understand or access what they need to do in their mathematics learning. Progress slows when this occurs.
- Interventions to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not sharply focused on what pupils know, can do and understand. Consequently, these pupils do not make good progress. However, highly skilled staff in the area resource base match activities to pupils' learning needs particularly well. As a result, these pupils experience success and make at least good progress.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff implement the school's recently developed behaviour policy effectively. Consequently, classrooms have become orderly places in which to learn. However, where work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs, pupils lose concentration and their progress falters.
- Over time, the teaching of reading has not led to pupils making good progress. New approaches to the teaching of reading have increased pupils' interest in books and their desire to read. There are some encouraging signs of improvement, particularly in the most able readers. However, the legacy of weak achievement in low-attaining and disadvantaged pupils remains.
- Teachers' high expectations of handwriting and presentation are beginning to take hold. Work in books shows that more pupils are following teachers' guidance and are taking pride in their learning. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- The teaching of physical education is effective. Extensive staff training has ensured that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to support pupils in making good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A few parents expressed concerns about the school's management of bullying and poor behaviour. However, pupils said that bullying is rare and that adults deal with unsafe or disruptive behaviour quickly and effectively. Staff agree.
- Pupils move around the school safely and show respect for others and their environment. At break and lunchtimes, pupils play happily alongside each other and share equipment well. Pupils spoke to inspectors about how lunchtimes have improved because there is more equipment to play with and there are more activities to do inside and outside.

- Although the increased range of sporting opportunities is supporting pupils' healthy lifestyles, the school has more to do to support pupils' understanding of healthy eating. Inspectors observed a number of pupils eating unhealthy snacks at breaktimes.
- Pupils said that they know that they can trust staff to listen to them and they are encouraged to speak out when they have any concerns. Pupils told the inspectors how they could keep safe from dangers on the internet.
- Teaching staff are caring and vigilant in passing on concerns to senior leaders where they notice changes in pupils' physical or emotional well-being. No stone is left unturned in helping pupils and their families in getting the support they need.
- Leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils who have social, emotional and/or mental health issues, and their families, receive the support they need. The trust has invested in staff training, and a large team of specialist teachers enhances the support provided for these pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Records show that incidents of poor behaviour of a few pupils have been high. The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions because of poor behaviour is above the national average. Records show that the school is becoming more adept at supporting these pupils. Staff recruitment, training and the engagement of specialist advisers are all helping to tackle this issue, which has been a priority for leaders. Incidents are reducing.
- While the overall attendance of pupils has improved, their attendance remains below the national average. Leaders' strategies to improve attendance have only been partially successful. The attendance of some groups of pupils, such as the disadvantaged, is not improving quickly enough. In particular, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school remains high and shows little sign of improving.
- Where teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils struggle to sustain their concentration and do not apply themselves well enough to the tasks set. Consequently, learning time is lost and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders' actions to engender positive attitudes to learning are beginning to make a difference. Work in pupils' books this term demonstrates that the majority of pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils' improved attitudes to learning, where teaching is better matched to their needs, are supporting them in catching up.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For the last two years, at the end of Year 6, a smaller proportion of pupils than nationally reached the expected standards for their age in reading and mathematics. As a result, some pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Across the school, too few pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. This does not represent good progress for middle- and low-attaining pupils across the early years foundation stage or in key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' progress has accelerated in

some subjects and in some year groups since September. Pupils' current progress in Year 6 is particularly strong. Consequently, more pupils are on track to achieve the expected standards.

- Over time, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics have remained weaker than in writing. Pupils' progress in mathematics is accelerating in some year groups where work is now more closely matched to pupils' needs. For example, pupils in Year 3 are catching up quickly from their low starting points, particularly in mathematics. However, pupils' weak reading skills are sometimes preventing them from applying reasoning skills in mathematics successfully. In addition, gaps in pupils' knowledge of number facts hinder their ability to accurately problem-solve in mathematics.
- Pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities make variable progress. Interventions are not sharply focused on what pupils know, can do and understand. Consequently, pupils' progress slows. However, those pupils who have education, health and care plans and who attend the area resource base are making good progress from their starting points.
- For the last two years, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has not been good enough. Too few pupils have achieved the standards expected for their age across all subjects. There are some very recent positive signs that support for disadvantaged pupils is beginning to tackle their previous underachievement in some year groups and subjects. However, differences are not diminishing quickly enough.
- In 2017, Year 6 pupils' attainment and progress in writing were in line with the national average. Work in pupils' current books shows that pupils' writing skills are better developed than their skills in mathematics.
- The number of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2017 was in line with the national average. This was an improvement on the previous year's outcomes. Pupils' phonics knowledge in the early years and key stage 1 is improving rapidly. Consequently, standards in reading and writing in these year groups are improving. However, too few of the older pupils who previously struggled with phonics are catching up quickly enough.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of Reception are low. Too few children are prepared well enough for Year 1.
- The activities that teachers provide do not ensure a high level of challenge for all groups of children. For example, the most able children and some of the middle-ability pupils do not make sufficient progress. Too few children make good progress to exceed in their early learning goals. However, adults' accurate assessments of current children suggest that more children are beginning to make more rapid progress this year.
- Leaders' use of additional funding in the early years has not been effective enough to support disadvantaged children. Over time, children who have SEN and/or disabilities have not been supported sufficiently well to overcome barriers to their learning. Too few make good progress.

- The learning environments, both indoors and out, provide safe and attractive areas in which children can choose from the teachers' ready-prepared activities. The early years leader has rightly raised the profile of writing, having identified that boys' writing was weaker than that of girls. However, when children are working independently, some activities do not engage their curiosity or interest, and this causes lapses in their concentration, resulting in slow progress in their learning.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Adults deal with any lapses in behaviour swiftly so that children's learning is not interrupted. Children are motivated and interested when working with adults. Most listen attentively.
- The early years leader is new to the post. She has accurately identified the areas needed for improvement. Changes are beginning to take hold. For example, all adults are well trained in the teaching of phonics and follow the school's policy rigorously. This is supporting children's growing confidence in early reading and writing.
- The Nursery provides an effective start for children. Records of assessments show that children make good progress, particularly in aspects of communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. The early years leader has recognised the need to engage parents more in capturing their child's developmental steps. Parents who spoke to inspectors were full of praise for the work of the early years team. They feel that all adults are approachable and they welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare. Adults are well trained in safeguarding procedures and the expectation that all children must be safe at school. Leaders carry out risk assessments effectively to ensure that the learning environment is safe.

School details

Unique reference number	139073
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10037066

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy convertor
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair	Jacky Swain
Executive Principal	Andrew Earnshaw
Heads of School	James Hitchens and Daniel Hadley
Telephone number	01326 372438
Website	www.penrynprimary.org
Email address	secretary@penrynprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school and was formed in 2015 with the merger of two schools: Penryn Nursery and Infants School and Penryn Junior School.
- The school is part of the Aspire Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust of 21 Cornish primary schools.
- The school provides an area resource base, which has places for 10 pupils who have complex SEN.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than the national average.

- The Nursery provides for children aged three and four on a part-time basis. Children in Reception attend on a full-time basis.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school uses an alternative provider.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes several times. Visits were mainly accompanied by senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders including the deputy chief executive officer for the Aspire Academy Trust, who was present on both days of the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with three representatives of the school’s hub council and held a meeting with the school’s educational welfare officer. Meetings were also held with a group of senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector also met with teachers in their first or second year of teaching.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including the trust’s and hub councillors’ minutes of meetings and their records of school visits. Inspectors also analysed the school’s assessment information and its development plan. Inspectors looked closely at evidence relating to safer recruitment and child protection and scrutinised exclusion and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors undertook a book scrutiny in writing and mathematics alongside senior leaders to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information held by the school. An inspector conducted an additional workbook scrutiny and learning walk as part of an evaluation of the breadth of the curriculum.
- Children spoke to inspectors during various activities throughout the inspection. Inspectors heard pupils read in lessons.
- The inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in the breakfast club and at break and lunchtimes.
- The 52 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors considered comments provided alternatively, such as in meeting directly or from the free-texts received. Inspectors also took account of the 21 responses to the staff survey and met with individual staff to hear their views. Fifty-two responses from pupils were also taken into account. Inspectors met with parents on both days of the inspection at each end of the school day.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Anthony Epps	Ofsted Inspector
Aisha Waziri	Ofsted Inspector

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