

Inspection of Poltair School

Trevarthian Road, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4BZ

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Mark Everett. This school is part of Cornwall Education Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lisa Mannall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Geoff Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

Poltair School has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and high aspirations for their futures. The warm and respectful relationships that exist between staff and pupils underpin school life. Pupils are proud to attend the school. They are polite and enthusiastic and look after their school environment. Pupils are unwavering in their views that differences are celebrated and that any unkind behaviour is dealt with swiftly and supportively.

Pupils here learn from a highly ambitious curriculum and achieve well. They are well prepared for their next steps. The school ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are able to succeed academically. Pupils' character development is valued equally alongside this. Pupils here develop confidence and resilience.

The 'Poltair+' programme provides all pupils with a range of opportunities in sports, performing arts, science and music. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils of all ages take on leadership responsibilities. The recent appointment of reading ambassadors has raised the profile of reading within the school. Older pupils often support younger pupils, including with reading. They help their younger peers to settle into secondary school and support with clubs.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and carefully designed. It is academically ambitious, but it does not compromise on creative and practical subjects. In all subjects, the school has identified precisely what pupils should learn and in which order. Staff are experts in their subjects and present information clearly. The school's published outcomes at key stage 4 are strong in nearly all subjects. Younger pupils also learn effectively in most subjects. This is reflected in the work they do, the knowledge they remember and the confident way in which they talk about their learning.

In a few areas, the work pupils complete does not ensure that they learn effectively. In these areas, activities do not always help pupils to remember important information. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to deepen their thinking and respond to feedback. As a result, pupils are less confident when discussing their learning and they achieve less well.

Pupils with SEND are accurately identified and supported well, both in mainstream lessons and with additional personalised support when needed. The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure pupils with SEND receive appropriate support. Well-trained staff help struggling readers to catch up.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards school. They value the clear behaviour policy which is understood by all. When pupils do not meet the school's high expectations, sanctions are proportionate and supportive. This happens rarely because there is a culture of mutual respect.

The school is meticulous in its recording of any negative incidents. It responds quickly and appropriately. Bullying is not tolerated.

The school ensures that attendance is viewed as everyone's business. The school identifies patterns in and barriers to attendance. It takes effective action so that pupils and families have the support needed to improve their attendance.

Pupils' mental and physical health is supported through exceptionally strong pastoral care. Their achievements are publicly celebrated. Many pupils wear various rewards badges with pride. They are proud to contribute to their school community. Pupils remember important information about how to keep themselves safe, about healthy relationships and online risks. They enjoy the discussion of challenging issues as part of 'The Great Debate'. The majority of pupils benefit from the extensive extra-curricular programme. The school ensures any barriers that may prevent pupils from taking part are removed. This includes transport for pupils attending after-school clubs and ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are able to participate fully.

The school has been supported by the trust to ensure that the improvements which were needed have been effective and sustained. Staff at all levels describe feeling part of a strong and collaborative team, with a common purpose. This means there is a relentless drive to provide the best possible life chances for pupils. This is visible in the curriculum, the focus on pupils' character development and the exemplary conduct of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is not consistent in a few subjects. The work pupils complete does not always enable pupils to achieve the aims of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not always remember what they have learned, or they are not given opportunities to deepen their thinking. The trust must ensure that teachers are supported to consistently implement the curriculum as intended so that pupils know and remember more in all subjects.

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 [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	147442
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10298087
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	856
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Brown
CEO of the trust	Lisa Mannall
Headteacher	Mark Everett
Website	www.poltairschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Poltair School converted to become an academy in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Poltair School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement overall.
- Since the school joined Cornwall Education Trust in September 2019, it has undergone significant change.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses four registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.

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.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, physical education and modern foreign languages. 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 analysed 168 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered the responses of staff to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils during lessons and social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector 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.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and discussed how pupils with SEND are identified and supported.
- Inspectors met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the trust and a member of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Burgess	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Forster	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024