

Inspection of Mount Charles School

Morven Road, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4PP

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Simpson. 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 (CEO), Dan Morrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Geoff Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this warm, happy school. Fostering a sense of belonging lies at the heart of the school's work. This is evident in the excellent, trusting relationships that staff build with the families they serve.

The school provides pupils with a wealth of new experiences. They go on trips that enhance their learning and have access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These carefully chosen opportunities broaden their horizons and extend their interests.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of all pupils. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations. They demonstrate a love for learning and an eagerness to participate in lessons. Attendance is high. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary.

Pupils relish the opportunities provided to develop their character and leadership skills. They contribute to school life through various roles. These include being head pupils, school councillors, eco-council members and reading ambassadors. Staff ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in these roles.

This is a very kind and caring school. Pupils feel safe. They know that their teachers will deal with any worries or concerns they may have.

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

The school has designed an ambitious, broad and well-structured curriculum. This runs from the start of the early years through to Year 6. It has identified the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn in each subject. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to teach and clearly explain new concepts. They check pupils' learning routinely. They use this information to identify gaps in pupils' understanding. This helps pupils build knowledge securely. They confidently recall what they have learned previously. However, when pupils have a secure grasp of a concept, sometimes staff do not move pupils on to their next steps soon enough. This can slow progression through the curriculum for some pupils.

Reading is a high priority and begins as soon as children start school in the early years. Teachers follow the school's chosen phonics programme closely. This provides a consistent approach to teaching reading and helps pupils to become successful readers. Books match pupils' phonics knowledge. This helps to develop their reading fluency. Pupils who fall behind receive additional support that helps them to learn to read well. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories.

The school has effective systems for identifying the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils are fully included in school life. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure support is well matched to each pupil's needs.

In the early years, children get off to a flying start. Staff have exceptionally high expectations, fostering a love for learning from the very beginning. Adults actively nurture independence, encouraging children to develop confidence in their abilities. Carefully designed indoor and outdoor activities provide rich opportunities to reinforce and extend learning. With expert guidance, children rise to challenges and consistently strive to achieve their very best.

The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Relationships throughout the school are strong. Pupils engage in learning well, remain focused during lessons and face challenging tasks with enthusiasm. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are polite and courteous around the school.

Pupils attend school regularly. Where necessary, the school works closely with families to provide additional help. Promoting positive attendance is a very high priority for the school. Strategies to improve attendance are effective and have a positive impact on the most vulnerable pupils at the school.

There is an exceptionally strong focus on promoting pupils' personal development at the school. There is a shared determination to support pupils to become confident, resilient, independent learners. The school provides well-planned, high-quality experiences through the curriculum, assemblies and enrichment activities. The school helps pupils understand how to be responsible, respectful and active citizens. Pupils gain an understanding of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles through the well-designed curriculum. The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils flourish both socially and emotionally at this school.

The school benefits from highly effective leadership. The trust and local governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what can be further improved. Trustees and governors use their expertise to support and challenge the school. Leaders ensure that staff access high-quality training, which helps them to develop their subject knowledge and continually improve the curriculum. Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. They appreciate the steps taken to support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, checks on pupils' learning are not used with enough precision to identify what pupils already know. As a result, staff do not move some pupils on to more complex learning when pupils are ready. Therefore, some pupils do not build their knowledge as well or as quickly as they could. The trust needs to refine the approach to these checks so that all pupils progress as well as possible through the curriculum.

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	142850
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10344722
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Brown
CEO of the trust	Dan Morrow
Headteacher	Sarah Simpson
Website	www.mount-charlessch.org
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In September 2019, the school joined Cornwall Education Learning Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- The school opened a nursery class in September 2024.
- The school runs its own wraparound care for pupils before and after school.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, management of the area resource base at the school has transferred to the Special Partnership Trust.

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 the head teacher, trust leaders, the chair of the trust and three members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils reading to an adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Marcus West	Ofsted Inspector

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