

Inspection of Penponds School

Higher Penponds, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 0QN

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Rebekah Bailey. The school is part of The Rainbow Multi 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 (CEO), Samantha Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patrick McGovern.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Penponds School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff at Penponds are united in their vision for pupils to 'Aim high and achieve our best'. They know pupils as individuals and what makes them tick. Staff work tirelessly to check pupils' welfare and happiness. For example, they ensure that all pupils can name a trusted adult to go to if they are very worried.

The school explicitly teaches its pupils about what good behaviour looks like. As a result, pupils behave well with positive attitudes to learning. In the dining hall, pupils demonstrate patience, manners, cooperation while they hold conversations at the lunch table. Bullying is rare.

The school's relentless focus on the curriculum has been intertwined with an impressive personal development programme. It knows the importance of pupils learning understanding life beyond the locality. For example, pupils visit Bristol to learn more about multicultural societies. This helps prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Like staff and pupils, parents and carers feel positive about their relationship with the school. One comment, typical of many, said, 'Our children love their teachers and look forward to going to school. If we ever want to chat about anything with the staff, they always make themselves available.'

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

Leaders, including the trust and governors, know the school well. Their self-evaluation of the school is accurate. Frequent and robust checks across a wide range of areas such as the early years, safeguarding and curriculum subjects help to drive continual improvements. This includes external support to help quality assure these processes. The trust supports subject leaders within the school through its cross-school networks. This helps them to share best practice.

The school has crafted an ambitious and well sequenced curriculum from Reception to Year 6. It is planned to a high level of detail. This means teachers are clear on the precise knowledge pupils need to know and remember. Subject content has been carefully ordered to accommodate the mixed age classes. However, on some occasions the work that teachers give pupils does not match the high ambition of the curriculum. They do not take into account what pupils can already do and stretch their thinking. When this happens, pupils do not deepen their knowledge fully.

The school has considered the adaptations pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at every step of its design. The school is rightly proud of its work with these pupils, including those with education, health and care plans. It has clear systems to help identify those who need additional support. This starts in the early years. Pupils with SEND quickly have their needs well met.

Staff continually check how much previous learning pupils can remember. This ensures they quickly plug any gaps in knowledge. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum well over the long term. They recall and explain their knowledge well. For example, in science, pupils talk confidently about how animals adapt to their environment. In music, they use precise vocabulary such as minims.

Pupils learn to read well. Children in the Reception Year start to learn phonics as soon as they start school. Well-trained staff skilfully explain new concepts and identify any misconceptions pupils may have. They swiftly help the small number of pupils who fall behind to catch up. These well-established systems are reflected in pupils' very high outcomes in the 2023 phonics screening check.

The school offers a range of clubs for pupils to pursue their interests, such as creative club, choir and rugby. It diligently checks the take up of these to make sure that all pupils have a chance to take part. Pupils develop their leadership skills through roles such as prefects and the 'buddy' system. A series of residential develops pupils' confidence and risk-taking. 'Aspiration days' help pupils to consider potential careers.

The school utilises external organisations to help develop pupils' social and moral understanding. For example, it works closely with Cornwall Pride and Black Voices Cornwall to help pupils understand the diverse nature of society. Consequently, pupils talk about issues of discrimination with empathy and passion.

The school has clear and effective systems to ensure pupils' absence is kept to a minimum. Pupils attend well. This means they do not miss important content of the well-designed curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, teachers do not plan activities that match the high ambition of the curriculum. When this occurs, tasks do not take into account what pupils can already do and so they do not deepen their knowledge fully. The trust needs to ensure that tasks given to pupils match the curriculum intent.

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	140741
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10288193
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patrick McGovern
Headteacher	Rebekah Bailey
Website	www.penponds.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Rainbow Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 spoke to the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils, the CEO of the trust, the chair of the trust and the chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of work in science and music.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 around the school site.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Costello

Ofsted Inspector

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