

Saltash.net community school

Wearde Road, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4AY

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders did not halt the decline in standards quickly enough. This year, new leaders and more precise actions are starting to have an impact and standards are beginning to rise.
- Trustees and governors have not held leaders to account stringently over time and this has slowed the pace of change.
- Middle leaders do not have the skills to monitor their teams effectively and hold teachers to account. Consequently, in some subjects, teachers have not supported pupils in making rapid progress.
- Too many teachers do not assess pupils' knowledge effectively, so planning is often weak. This means that some pupils' needs are not met. Because of this inconsistency in teaching, some pupils' progress is slow.
- Leaders in charge of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are not providing a suitable personal, social, health and economic education. Because of this, pupils in every key stage have a limited understanding of British values and are unaware of the influences of extremism.
- Outcomes in mathematics remain too low. Teaching does not build upon pupils' prior learning effectively. Too few pupils apply their skills to reasoning and problem solving.
- Expectations of some teachers are too low so pupils, especially boys, produce work that is incomplete and scruffy.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders of the sixth form provide students with well-planned study programmes which prepare them well for life beyond school.
- Pupils are safe in school.
- Most pupils are polite and courteous to each other and adults.
- Pupils are ready to learn and keen to engage when teaching is planned appropriately.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of governance to provide effective strategic leadership that:
 - supports and challenges school leaders to bring about the improvements needed more rapidly
 - holds leaders to account more thoroughly over time so that improvements are sustained.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders have the skills to monitor the quality of teaching so that it improves quickly
 - assessment informs future planning so that every pupil's needs are met
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are high
 - teachers of mathematics build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding so that fluency skills are applied to reasoning and problem solving.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development and welfare by:
 - providing a meaningful and effective personal, social, health and economic education programme that prepares pupils as future citizens
 - providing a spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum that embeds British values so that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Trustees did not hold governors and leaders to account effectively for several years and this allowed standards to slip to an unacceptable level. More recently, trustees and governors have taken swifter and more focused action which is starting to make a difference to pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders have not received the necessary training and development to check their teams efficiently. As a result, teaching is inconsistent, and planning is weak too often and does not match the needs of pupils.
- Newly appointed leaders are providing the extra capacity needed and have a clear strategic vision for the school priorities. Their actions are having an immediate impact on improving pupils' progress.
- Leaders have high expectations for pupils' social behaviour and when learning. Pupils demonstrate this in lessons and when walking around the school. They are polite and respectful.
- This year, the spending of pupil premium funding is making a positive difference and there are signs of better progress for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders use funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) wisely in the Area Resource Base (ARB) and for pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils with highly complex needs integrate well into the main school community.
- The curriculum at key stage 3 has been too narrow and has limited pupils' preparation for key stage 4. Leaders have changed the curriculum for the next academic year.
- Pupils experience a wealth of extra-curricular activities related to their locality, such as windsurfing and sailing, as well as performance art productions, adventure activities and sports.
- Leaders have not used assessment information to improve standards throughout the school until recently. Previously, the focus was on Year 11 pupils alone, which impeded progress in other years.
- Pupils are not receiving a suitable curriculum on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Although an evaluation of the curriculum took place, it was not used to improve the personal, social, health and economic education so pupils lack knowledge of fundamental British values.
- Teachers have received professional development on teaching strategies in the recent past. Some, such as those for the start of the lesson, are effective. Others are less secure.
- Leaders have worked hard to engage with the wider community, both parents and local residents. This has culminated in some successfully attended meetings and school support.

Governance of the school

- Since the multi-academy trust's (MAT) formation in April 2017, the focus has been on the wider trust rather than the specific needs of the school. Meetings take place between trustees, governors and leaders which provide professional development but lack accountability.
- Governors in charge of public funds, such as pupil premium, Year 7 catch up and SEND, are not overseeing the spending with enough attention to detail. Their actions have started to make an impact on the achievement of these vulnerable pupils but it is not sufficient yet.
- Governors do not provide coherent strategic direction to school leaders but rely too heavily on the headteacher for information on the school's priorities for improvement.
- Some of the newer governors have a clearer understanding of their role and are asking more challenging questions of school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks for safer recruitment of staff are stringent.
- Staff receive appropriate training and updates on safeguarding regularly.
- Leaders work effectively with social services and other agencies to protect pupils from abuse and neglect. Leaders escalate issues when necessary to safeguard pupils.
- Some of the record-keeping is not organised well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' planning does not meet the needs of pupils effectively. There tends to be a 'one size fits all' approach too often, without enough stretch and challenge for the most able or support for those with lower ability.
- Many teachers' expectations are too low, which means that several pupils have incomplete and poorly presented work.
- When teachers follow the school's marking policy, pupils respond well. However, too many teachers do not check pupils' responses and, at times, this leads to misconceptions continuing.
- Leaders have not refined a policy for literacy, so teachers check pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation in English only. Consequently, too few pupils are secure in basic English.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to articulate their learning. On the occasions that they do, teachers fail to help them speak correctly and in standard English. The exception to this is within English.
- Pupils within the ARB demonstrate high levels of achievement in relation to their starting points.

- Teachers and pupils have positive relationships. There is a climate of respect when pupils are learning.
- Some of the more recent changes to teaching, such as memory recall activities at the start of lessons, happen consistently. This is helping pupils engage with their learning in a better way.
- Parents and carers receive reports that show the progress their children make over time and their attitudes to learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are keen to learn but lack greater awareness about ways to improve their own learning.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe, especially on the internet, but there is not enough awareness of the 'Prevent' duty and British values.
- Leaders have not developed pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education effectively. Pupils are not prepared well about citizenship in the modern world.
- Leaders ensure that pupils at school are safe. The headteacher improved the safety of the site by having new ID-tag operated doors fitted. She made the site more secure by ensuring that pre-existing gates were locked.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and the site. There is very little litter.
- Most pupils say that staff deal with bullying effectively despite some concerns being raised by parents on Parent View.
- New initiatives to ensure that pupils' well-being is secure have been introduced this year. Pupils are trained as house champions and anti-bullying ambassadors to support their peers in emotional times. Older pupils liaise with staff on the trials and tribulations of being a modern teenager; the information is used to support transition programmes for pupils from Year 6 to 7 and Year 9 to 10.
- Pupils receive well-planned and impartial careers guidance. Year 10 pupils go on work experience which prepares them well for the world of work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have made huge inroads into improving behaviour in the school since September 2018. Pupils are orderly when walking down narrow corridors and stairwells. They behave well when learning and there is no disorderly conduct at break and lunchtimes.

- The occasional low-level disruption occurs when teaching is weaker because pupils are bored and disaffected.
- Pupils attend school regularly and in line with the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND attend in line with similar groups nationally.
- Pupils attend alternative provision regularly, but leaders do not check on this daily yet.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils enter school with prior attainment that is average. Previously, pupils were making poor progress in the end of key stage 4 examinations. However, current pupils are making better progress in English and science and some of the foundation subjects. Progress is not yet in line with the national average, but the gap is closing.
- The most able pupils are making better progress this year but those with lower ability are not. There is not enough support for pupils because too few teachers are planning to meet their needs.
- Pupils are still not making enough progress in mathematics. Teachers are not building on pupils' prior knowledge from key stage 2 effectively. Older pupils are not applying their knowledge to reasoning and problem solving.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in 2018. Leaders are using pupil premium funding more strategically to support disadvantaged pupils' academic progress.
- Pupils with SEND who have EHC plans are making strong progress; many of these are in the ARB. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils well. Other pupils with SEND are not making as much progress yet.
- Leaders have not planned reading activities strategically for pupils so some benefit but not all.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding well for reading and writing. Pupils are able to achieve in line with their peers during Year 7. However, pupils who need to catch up in mathematics are not receiving such strong support so are still lagging behind.
- Leaders receive termly updates about pupils' progress in alternative provision. Most courses are chosen well and suit pupils' needs.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have planned effective study programmes which have level 3 qualifications mainly at the centre. Students receive strong guidance on employability skills as well as work experience opportunities. There is a good range of enrichment activities, including volunteering. Although some aspects of personal, social, health and economic education are helpful such as relationship education, there is not enough taught about the influences of extremism and British values.
- Students feel safe at school and know whom to see if there are any concerns. Students are aware of online security and how to use social media responsibly.

- Students achieve in line with others nationally in A levels and significantly above in applied A levels. In the few A levels where students were underachieving, leaders have put successful support plans in place and current students are making better progress as a result, one such is geography. Some A levels, such as sociology, have consistently strong practice.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan well for sixth-form students. Their subject knowledge is strong, and most students are on target to achieve their potential.
- Students engage well with their learning. They explain their thinking articulately and with precise technical vocabulary.
- Teachers and students have good working relationships which help promote successful learning. Teachers challenge students in their thinking and they respond well.
- Students who retake level 2 qualifications are successful in English but less so in mathematics. Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully for when students pass English in November. They have work placements which complement the level 1 and 2 qualifications taken.
- Students receive a full range of careers guidance on how to apply for apprenticeships, university places, employment and training. Many visiting speakers from local companies, as well as higher education institutes, provide meaningful information on future careers and pathways. Two thirds of students applied to university in 2018 and were successful.
- Students attend regularly and there are effective systems in place to deal with any students who do not do so.

School details

Unique reference number	136575
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10086891

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,267
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	146
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kate Waghorn
Headteacher	Kate Littleddyke
Telephone number	01752 843 715
Website	http://saltash.net/
Email address	enquiries@saltashcloud.net
Date of previous inspection	March 2014

Information about this school

- Saltash.net community school is larger than the average secondary school.
- The school converted to an academy in 2012. The school became part of the South East Cornwall Multi-Academy Trust in January 2017. There are three secondary schools and three primaries in the trust. There are eight directors, including the chair of the trust, who have links with particular schools. Each school has a local governing body.
- The proportion of pupils who receive pupil premium is slightly lower than average.

- There is a greater than average proportion of pupils who have an EHC plan and pupils with SEND. There is an Area Resource Base at the school with 20 pupils who have an EHC plan.
- The school uses the following alternative provision for pupils: Livewire, Take 2, Wave, Duchy College and Cornwall Hospital Education Services.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5, as well as with other pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and the chair and chief executive officer of the trust.
- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding and school evaluation.
- Inspectors took account of the 138 responses and comments on the online Parent View survey, the 184 responses to the online pupil survey and the 88 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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