

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Liskeard School and Community College

Luxstowe, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3EA

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Liskeard School and Community College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Dan Wendon. This school is part of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust (SMART), 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 Buckley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lee Hallam.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has established a strong sense of belonging and community. Pupils are happy and enjoy their time at school. School leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils. Pupils feel safe and benefit from positive relationships with staff. Students in the sixth form receive personalised support and guidance.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Most pupils make good progress through the curriculum, as shown in the school's recent published outcomes. Clear routines ensure that there is a calm and purposeful environment, both in lessons and at social times. Most pupils behave exceptionally well. Staff reward pupils for demonstrating the school's values of courage, resilience and kindness.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, acting as prefects, members of the school or trust council and as mentors for pupils when they join in Year 7. These roles are inclusive of all pupils. Pupils relish this responsibility and make a difference to school life. For example, pupils choose charities that the school will support and make improvements to corridors and social spaces. Students in the sixth form run coffee mornings for pupils in younger years. A sixth-form presidential election has also recently taken place.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum which prepares pupils well for their next steps. In the sixth form, students can study a range of subjects which include A levels and vocational courses. The number of pupils who study the suite of subjects known as the English Baccalaureate at key stage 4 is below the government's ambition. However, there are significantly more pupils following this pathway in the current Year 10 and 11 than previously.

Across the curriculum, the school has carefully considered the knowledge pupils need to learn. Teachers have secure subject knowledge which ensures that pupils receive expert instruction. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding. However, how the school uses this information to plan the next steps of pupils' learning is, on occasion, not as effective as it could be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who attend the school's area resource centre (ARC) also take part in the wider life of the school. For example, they benefit from going on trips and taking part in work experience. Some pupils from the ARC follow a bespoke curriculum. The school regularly reviews this provision and adapts it to pupils' changing needs.

The school are tenacious in their commitment to inclusion. Most pupils with SEND access the curriculum alongside their peers. Staff are confident in identifying where pupils may have additional needs. The school puts support in place quickly and works effectively with outside agencies, as appropriate. As a result, pupils with SEND thrive in the school environment and are increasingly successful in their learning.

Reading and the development of pupils' wider vocabulary is a priority for the school. Pupils who join the school that find reading difficult, receive appropriate phonics provision so that they catch up quickly. The tutor reading programme introduces pupils to a range of diverse and interesting texts. Across the curriculum, staff reinforce subject specific terminology and encourage pupils to use it in their own work.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are clear that the use of derogatory or discriminatory language is not tolerated by the school. Pupils learn in a disruption-free environment. At break and lunch times, pupils interact sensibly and enjoy playing in their year group social spaces. Students in the sixth form make good use of their recreational and study areas.

Strategies to improve attendance are starting to have a positive impact. Pupils' punctuality to school has improved. However, a significant number of pupils are still persistently absent from school and therefore miss important learning.

Through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, pupils learn about the importance of protected characteristics, healthy relationships and how to keep safe in the community. The school has put in place additional workshops in response to pupils' suggestions. For example, age-appropriate lessons on finance delivered by a national

bank. Pupils and students in the sixth form receive regular, helpful careers guidance. Work experience runs for all pupils in Year 10 and students in Year 12. This provides them with a real life, meaningful introduction to the workplace.

Staff are supportive of the changes at the school. They are positive about the professional development opportunities available to them. The school and trust consider the workload of staff in the decisions they make. They are reflective and open to challenge. Although many parents and carers are also positive about improvements to the school, there is further work for leaders to do in strengthening the partnership between school and home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although teachers consistently check pupils' understanding in lessons, how this information is used to plan the next steps of pupils' learning is, on occasion, not as effective as it could be. Therefore, some gaps in pupils' knowledge remain. The trust should ensure that teachers use their knowledge of how well pupils have learned the curriculum content consistently well so that teaching is responsive to what pupils know and can do.
- A significant number of pupils are persistently absent from school. As a result, they miss key parts of their learning which hinders their progress through the curriculum. The trust should ensure that it further strengthens its work with pupils and their families to remove the barriers that prevent pupils from improving their attendance.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the

date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Liskeard School and Community College, to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2013.

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	144291
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10371335
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1149
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lee Hallam
CEO of the trust	Dan Buckley
Headteacher	Dan Wendon
Website	www.liskeard.net
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school has an Area Resource Centre (ARC) for 36 pupils with SEND in Year 7 to Year 11. Pupils in the ARC have a primary need of social, emotional and mental health or autistic spectrum disorder.
- The school uses three registered and one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the chair of the local governing body, a trustee and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to curriculum leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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