

Inspection of Sithney Community Primary School

Crowntown, Helston, Cornwall TR13 0AE

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

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	Outstanding

The head of this school is Helen Neil. The school is part of Crofty 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), Simon Hague, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Hosking. There is also an executive headteacher, Linda May, who is responsible for this school.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sithney Community Primary 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. However, the academy received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act on 16 September 2021. 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?

Pupils at Sithney Community Primary School start each day with a smile and an enthusiasm to learn. Most pupils attend well and are punctual. They value the nurture and care they receive from supportive staff. This helps them to feel safe. Parents and carers wholeheartedly agree.

Pupils are polite and 'respectful communicators'. They play and learn well with their peers. Many pupils take on school responsibilities, which they do with pride. For example, members of the Eco Council are environmental ambassadors, who help the school and local area to be more eco-friendly.

Pupils enjoy learning new knowledge. They learn about career aspirations and business enterprise through opportunities planned in the wider curriculum. This supports them to be well prepared for their next stage of education and life.

Pupils thrive because staff celebrate their achievements regularly. Some pupils achieve 'star badges', others receive recognition in the weekly 'reading roll of honour'.

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

The trust and the school understand what is working well and what needs further improvement. Pupils learn well in many subjects. For example, in geography, younger pupils locate key countries on a map confidently. Older pupils use their knowledge of maps to discuss the geographical features of a country. Where the curriculum is strongest, teachers use assessment to check carefully what pupils remember, including new and ambitious vocabulary. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the school makes expert adaptations, so that pupils learn successfully.

However, some subjects and areas of learning in the early years are less well developed. Where this is the case, it is not clear what is important for pupils to learn and by when. Therefore, pupils sometimes find learning difficult because they cannot draw on what they already know. The school and the trust's work to strengthen these subjects is in its infancy.

Pupils are confident readers who read widely across the curriculum. The school skilfully teaches children to read as soon as they start school in the Reception Year. Pre-school and Reception children enjoy listening to adults read stories and rhymes. The phonics curriculum supports pupils to decode new words successfully. For some pupils, including those with SEND, the school provides additional, timely help to ensure that they learn the sounds that letters make. The reading curriculum supports pupils to explore a range of high-quality texts. As a result, most pupils love to read.

The vast majority of pupils behave well and enjoy learning. However, the school does not have high enough expectations of the work pupils produce in some subjects. Therefore, pupils do not always take pride in their work. They make careless errors, which hamper their future learning.

The school places the utmost importance on pupils' personal development. The carefully planned assembly programme, curriculum subjects and wider opportunities help to develop 'resilient individuals'. Pupils have the skills and knowledge to become thoughtful 'world citizens'. They demonstrate and celebrate positive characteristics, such as enthusiasm. Pupils are respectful and positive about themselves and others. In the early years, children learn to use kind words and play with others co-operatively. They develop independence, for example when putting on their own waterproofs and wellies.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. For instance, older pupils identify which webpages are safe to use. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and physical health. They learn about different religions and faiths through visitors to the school. Pupils say that they are well prepared to 'make decisions when they are older'.

The school supports staff to extend their expertise through trust subject networks and hubs. Staff are very positive about how leaders help them to manage their workload. The school also communicates well with parents and carers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects are more developed than others. Where the curriculum is weaker, the school does not identify the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and by when. This makes it difficult for pupils to build their subject knowledge in the depth required for future learning. The school and the trust should ensure that the curriculum identifies the key knowledge and concepts that pupils need to know in all subjects.
- In some subjects, staff's expectations about the quality of pupils' presentation are not high enough. Therefore, pupils do not always take pride in their work and make errors that can hinder their future learning. The school and the trust should ensure that all staff insist on high expectations for pupils.

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	143998
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10240543
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	82
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Hosking
CEO	Simon Hague
Headteacher	Linda May – Executive headteacher Helen Neil – Head of school
Website	www.sithney.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 September 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school took up her post in September 2023.
- The school is part of Crofty Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club.

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 school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the head of school, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, and the interim executive headteacher. Inspectors also met with trustees, the chair of the local governance committee, the CEO of the trust, the vice CEO of the trust, and the school improvement leader who oversees provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- 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 spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection to gauge their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Donna Briggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Horne

Ofsted Inspector

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