

Inspection of Mounts Bay Academy

Boscathnoe Lane, Heamoor, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 3JT

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected nine years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud to attend Mounts Bay Academy. Across the curriculum, pupils have many opportunities to enrich their learning. Pupils can attend a range of clubs, such as choir, drama and sport. Leaders and staff nurture pupils' creative responses to the world around them. As a result, pupils feel empowered to apply their learning in innovative ways. Pupils record their own music with the school's record label and run their own festival to highlight environmental issues.

Pupils receive a good quality of education at Mounts Bay. They develop strong knowledge of a range of subjects across the curriculum, which prepares them well for life beyond school. Pupils have high aspirations and achieve well.

Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils state that bullying is rare at the school and that staff resolve it quickly if it occurs. Staff provide pupils with carefully tailored information about careers and further education. Pupils feel very well supported in making decisions about their next steps.

Pupils learn about the importance of helping others. For example, pupils fundraise to visit Uganda to teach local children. Pupils value taking on leadership roles, such as being a prefect.

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

Leaders have created a well-sequenced curriculum in most subjects. Leaders and staff have enriched the curriculum with opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in the world beyond school. For example, pupils studying French visit Concarneau. In physical education (PE), pupils learn a range of water sports in the local bay. Through the curriculum, pupils develop strong aspirations to achieve well. Pupils enjoy learning their subjects as well as the extra-curricular activities.

The art and PE curriculums are strengths of the school. Leaders have structured what pupils learn as well as how they learn with great care. Through the study of a range of artists and artistic mediums, pupils learn how to develop their own artistic interpretations of the world around them. In PE, pupils draw skilfully on their prior knowledge to learn new concepts. Consequently, pupils achieve well. However, leaders and staff have not ensured the same consistent approach to curriculum design across all subjects. As a result, pupils do not develop as secure a knowledge and understanding in some subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with SEND receive tailored support to enable them to learn confidently and successfully. Leaders use assessment information about pupils to adapt the curriculum. For example, some pupils receive additional support with their reading to enable them to learn more effectively.

Leaders have established a very well-designed careers education for pupils. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Leaders and staff manage behaviour well. Due to the development of positive relationships between staff and pupils, there are rarely behaviour issues. Staff use dialogue with pupils to model positive behaviour and positive relationships. As a result, most pupils are respectful, kind and empathic towards each other.

Pupils are punctual to lessons and attend school well. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely to ensure that pupils are in school and learning the curriculum.

Leaders have planned the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum with clear consideration for the knowledge that pupils should learn. However, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well across the year groups. As a result, some pupils do not deepen their understanding of issues that they might face in the wider world.

Trustees and governors know the school well. Their work complements the school's improvement priorities. Through monitoring of the curriculum and safeguarding, governors challenge and support school leaders in equal measure. Leaders and governors pay great attention to the well-being and training needs of staff, including early career teachers. Staff state that leaders are mindful of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils are both physically and emotionally safe. They act speedily and appropriately when pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders liaise well with external agencies to keep pupils safe and are not afraid to challenge when they have concerns.

Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. They know how to refer their concerns to leaders and how to identify when a pupil is at risk. Leaders ensure that appropriate background checks are carried out on adults working within the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum in some subject areas does not ensure that pupils have consistent and secure knowledge and understanding. Leaders must ensure that all subject curriculums enable pupils to develop strong knowledge, which they can apply independently and successfully.

- The implementation of the PSHE curriculum is not consistent across the year groups. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the confidence and expertise to enable all pupils to learn about social issues in preparation for the world beyond school.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136873
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10202087
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1008
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Eason
Principal	Les Hall
Website	www.mountsbay.org
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2012

Information about this school

- Mounts Bay Academy is part of the Leading Edge Academies Trust, which formed in August 2018.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal and members of the leadership team.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: modern foreign languages, PE, mathematics, art and music. This meant that, in each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the views of pupils who responded to the pupil survey. They also spoke to pupils around the school. They evaluated the views of staff from the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- Inspectors held discussions with the chief executive officer, the chair of the Leading Edge Academies Trust, the chair of governors and the governor for safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with single-sex groups of pupils to gather their views on the culture of the school.
- Inspectors met with the special educational need coordinators and spoke to pupils with SEND in lessons. Pupils with SEND were included in group discussions about the quality of education in different subjects.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Favager-Dalton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Donna Briggs	Her Majesty's Inspector

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