

Inspection of a good school: Gulval School

School Lane, Gulval, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 3BJ

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Gulval School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this inclusive and nurturing school. They thrive in an environment where their social and emotional well-being is a priority. Leaders and staff share a common commitment to this. They support pupils to grow into confident, resilient young people, well prepared to face the challenges of modern life.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school. These cover a wide range of activities. For example, pupils can apply to help the youngest children by becoming nursery ambassadors. Another option is to be a café waiter. There is the chance to care for the school's animals by becoming goat or guinea pig farmers.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond very well to these. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and respectful and show much self-control. Pupils say bullying rarely happens. They trust adults to sort out any issues quickly and fairly. Pupils, including children in the Nursery and Reception, are happy, settled and feel safe. One pupil summed up the feelings of many by saying, 'The best thing about this school is you are listened to.'

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

Leaders' determination to provide a high-quality curriculum is clear. The ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum begins in the early years. Curriculum planning is reviewed regularly to ensure pupils' learning deepens.

In most subjects, curriculum leaders have identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn. This helps pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. However, in a small number of subjects, curriculum leaders are new to the role. They have not yet ensured that their curriculums outline exactly what pupils need to learn and when.

Children, including two-year-olds, get off to a strong start in the early years. Teachers develop children's knowledge in reading and number effectively. Adults and children build

warm and positive relationships. Children cooperate well with each other, sharing and taking turns.

Leaders support teachers so they have expert subject knowledge. In addition, curriculum leaders check that the curriculum is put in place as intended. Leaders ensure that staff use assessment to good effect. This enables teachers to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Teachers use this information to shape the next steps in pupils' learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. Starting in the Nursery, children begin to learn letter sounds. Leaders ensure that staff teach the phonics programme well. Staff match books accurately to the sounds that pupils are learning. This means that pupils can practise these sounds at home, as well as at school. Pupils read fluently as a result. Staff regularly check how successfully pupils learn new sounds. If pupils fall behind, staff provide additional support. Pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality books. They love reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they have read.

Classrooms are calm and productive places. Leaders ensure that staff follow a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Pupils follow staff instructions and listen attentively. The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum helps pupils develop respect for one another and people of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles. Leaders plan trips and visits carefully to provide pupils with new experiences. Staff include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in these activities.

Pupils with SEND learn and achieve well alongside their peers. This is because teachers adapt the curriculum efficiently to meet pupils' needs. Leaders work closely with staff and parents. Together, they ensure that pupils with SEND receive the right support at an early stage.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about their work and morale is high. Leaders communicate clearly. Therefore, staff understand the benefit of any changes to the curriculum or school systems. Staff have a manageable workload. Trust leaders and governors provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. Most parents and carers are very positive about the school experience for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff share a commitment to keeping pupils safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This ensures that they recognise the signs of a pupil needing help. Leaders follow up concerns without delay.

Leaders carry out statutory pre-employment vetting checks when recruiting new staff. The local governing body and board of trustees check safeguarding systems, holding leaders to account.

The school has suitable policies in place to raise awareness among staff and parents about the dangers of sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, curriculum leaders have not developed their curriculums fully. This means that what it is essential for pupils to know is not explicit. Leaders should support subject leaders to securely embed the key knowledge that pupils need to understand in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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](#)' 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	140837
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10240916
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anita Firth
Headteacher	Paul Baker
Website	gulvalschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust on 1 April 2019. When its predecessor school, Gulval School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Since the previous inspection, the school roll has increased. As a result, in September 2021, the school became a single form entry school. There are, now, single year group classes.
- In January 2022, the school took over responsibility for Gulval Little Learners, an on-site nursery which admits two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. He met with the chair and members of the governing body.

- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. As part of this work, the inspector spent some time in the Nursery, including observing staff's work with two-year-olds.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed documents and records, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The inspector considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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