

Saltash.net Community School

Wearde Road, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4AY

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | This inspection: | Good 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE and equivalent qualifications, including English and mathematics at the end of Year 11, is well above average. This represents good progress over time.
- Achievement across the school is improving strongly, including in English and mathematics where students now make very good progress.
- The headteacher, governors, leaders and managers communicate high expectations and are relentless in their drive for improvement. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving quickly.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well through a wide range of opportunities and experiences.
- Students feel safe and their behaviour is outstanding. Students are proud of their school. They are polite, courteous and keen to achieve well.
- Teaching is typically good, with a significant amount which is outstanding.
- The sixth form is good. Student numbers are rising, and provision is good. Achievement is improving rapidly with an increasing proportion achieving the highest grades.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some subjects where students could make better progress.
- A small proportion of teaching still requires some improvement.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent, so students do not always have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- All students were off timetable during the first day of the inspection, with about half on visits away from school. As a result, no formal teaching was taking place. Most lesson observations were, therefore, undertaken on the second day of the inspection and all meetings on the first day.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons or parts of lessons. All of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked closely at samples of students' written work across a range of subjects. They also observed behaviour on corridors, on the playgrounds and in the dining hall.
- Inspectors held meetings with: the headteacher; senior and middle leaders; students from each key stage; members of the governing body; and an adviser who is called the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including: the self-evaluation and development plan summaries; data relating to students' attainment and progress; analyses of attendance; documents and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning and of performance management; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors analysed 87 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 45 staff questionnaire responses and two letters from parents.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Moazam Parvez, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Huw Bishop | Additional Inspector |
| Richard Butler | Additional Inspector |
| John Mallone | Additional Inspector |
| Susan Smith | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Saltash.net Community School is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- Saltash.net Community School converted to become a stand-alone academy school on 1 April 2011. When its predecessor school, Saltash.net Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of students receiving support through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those who are looked after.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic communities is considerably below national averages. The largest group is White British.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is slightly higher than the national average. The proportions of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are slightly higher than the national averages.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs (Trematon Unit) for 15 students from across the age range with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- A number of students attend alternative provision at a range of local providers including: SE Cornwall Learning Partnership; Cornwall College; Duchy College; and Caradon Alternative Provision. They offer accredited courses such as engineering, hair and beauty and animal care.
- The school on 1 January 2014 formed the Saltash Multi Academy Regional Trust (SMART) and has been given Department for Education approval to become a sponsor academy for a local primary school.
- The school runs a small farm which is used to support vocational courses and to develop the self-confidence and self-esteem of some students in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the variations in attainment between subjects in the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking always provides students with a clear idea about how well they are doing, specific guidance on what they need to do to improve and that teachers' comments are followed up by students
 - sharing outstanding practice that exists in the school so that all subject areas achieve equally well.
- Explore, with the relevant authorities, the possibility of funding additional learning spaces, circulation spaces and canteen space to ease the pressures on the built environment so that further improvements in achievement can be made.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is above average. This means that, over time, students make good progress from well below average starting points.
- By the end of Year 11, more students make expected progress than seen nationally in both English and mathematics. In both English and mathematics, increasing proportions of students make progress which is better than national levels.
- Inspection evidence indicates that many students have developed good speaking and listening skills and students are now reading widely and more fluently. As a result of staff training there is a greater focus on literacy in lessons.
- Students' mathematical skills are good; for example, in one lesson, students working on histograms were encouraged to use their own knowledge and understanding to solve mathematical problems very effectively.
- The most able students make good progress and the numbers attaining the highest grades in all subjects are increasing. The school's policy to enter students early for GCSE examinations has been effective in increasing the proportion of students achieving very good results. This policy has not limited students attaining the highest grades.
- All other groups of students, including the very small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress. The school's own tracking information shows that the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is improving quickly.
- The progress of students receiving education away from school is closely monitored and they do well. The students who attend work-related courses achieve in line with expectations, as well as developing greater confidence and self-esteem.
- The achievement of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is rising across all years. As a result, the gap between their attainment in English and mathematics, in relation to their peers, is closing. The school's data show that, on average, they attain only two thirds of a GCSE grade lower than their peers in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. Additional support helps eligible students to do well in reading, writing and numeracy, especially across Years 7 to 9.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding have been used well to provide support to enhance students' achievement through, for example, the breakfast and homework clubs and the purchase of new resources to improve students' reading skills.
- The students in the Trematon Unit are supported effectively and, as a result, achieve well. The school farm supports the social development of these students very effectively.
- The school's commitment to developing international links is outstanding. Students studying modern foreign languages take part in visits to France and Germany; in addition, links have been established with schools in many countries, including Uganda, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Israel. This provides students with opportunities to develop their languages skills and broaden their cultural understanding.
- Achievement in the sixth form is improving at a rapid rate for both Years 12 and 13, with a significant proportion of the students gaining the higher grades both at AS and A level. Almost all sixth form students continue into higher education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. As a result, most students make good progress and achieve well. This is a result of the drive by the leaders on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- In the sixth form, teaching is never less than good, For example, in a Year 13 government and

politics lesson, students were encouraged very effectively to explore alternative ways of presenting views on different political ideologies. Similarly, Year 12 history students very perceptively challenged their teacher in a discussion about the role of the media in the lives of the Royal Family.

- Across the school, teachers are very conscientious and highly committed. They have good subject knowledge and readily share their expertise with each other. The vast majority have high expectations. Learning is well planned so that most students really enjoy their learning.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement, for example when teachers do not check on students' progress well enough and so fail to adapt their teaching, when necessary, to ensure that all students understand the work.
- Some excellent examples of written feedback in the comments in teachers' marking were seen, enabling students to understand how to make better progress. However, some students receive too little feedback about what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- They take pride in their school and ensure, for example, that graffiti and litter are rare. Despite the difficulties caused by the size and the limitations of the site (with limited learning, circulation, and canteen spaces), students move sensibly in corridors during break times and between lessons, showing respect and regard for one another and the staff. They are extremely hospitable at all times and open doors for adults.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students are very positive about the school; for example, one described the school as having a 'good community feel'. They feel fully involved in the development of the school, an example being the students' involvement in monitoring documentation published by the school for parents.
- The school's mission statement 'Believe and Achieve' is evident in practice, for example in the excellent relationships between the staff and students, and between students. Students wrote the anti-bullying policy and monitor its implementation across the school. Bullying of any kind, including homophobic and cyber bullying, is rare and students are confident that support is available if they need it.
- All of the parents who responded to Parent View feel that the school looks after their children well, giving them every opportunity to succeed. They are pleased with how happy their child is at the school. One parent who wrote to the inspection team said that the pastoral care in the school was 'excellent and absolutely fantastic'.
- In almost all lessons students' attitudes towards learning are exemplary. Low-level disruption is rare and where it does take place it is a result of teaching that does not fully meet the learning needs of the students.
- Attendance is rising and above average. The proportion of students who are persistently absent is low. Exclusions from the academy have fallen over time and are very low.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher shows a relentless pursuit of excellence in all of the school's work, and is determined that the school continues to make a significant contribution to improving the life chances of all students.
- The leadership of the Trematon Unit, well supported by senior leaders, is rapidly improving.
- The high aspirations for all students are shared by other leaders, managers and all staff and, as a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving. Students' achievements are rising year on year. The conversion to academy status has provided the boost to drive up standards.

- The school's view about how well it is doing is accurate and leaders are clear on what needs to be tackled next to maintain the momentum for improvement.
- The school has an established partnership with a leading information and communication technology (ICT) provider and so students are able to develop the skills that will support them later at work or at college. Exceptional ICT practice was identified in the school, leading to students participating in a global event in Barcelona. The school is one of only nine schools internationally to win an award for innovative ICT practice led by students.
- Staff have a very positive view of the school, for example with one stating that 'this is an incredible place to work' and 'I have never worked in a place where I feel so supported and inspired by people around me – students and staff'.
- The headteacher and leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching across the school and have successfully improved students' rates of progress. Governors are fully involved through regular reviews with heads of departments and in challenging their work.
- The impact of middle leaders has been very effective in raising standards due to good checks on teachers' work and ensuring that students are supported in their learning. Although occasionally students are not provided with appropriate guidance on how to improve, this issue is being addressed and improvements are apparent.
- The subjects taught meets students' needs very well and enable them to make good progress. The school provides opportunities for students to develop a range of skills, such as leadership, creativity and resilience, through the 'SECRET Skills' programme. A large number of extra-curricular activities support students' social development, and links with schools in many different countries add to their cultural awareness.
- A scheme to support Year 6 learners from local primary schools, in the move to secondary school, includes regular 'master classes' in communication and mathematical skills especially for those whose literacy and numeracy skills are less well developed. A parent from a primary feeder school described her child's experience as 'extremely positive and wonderful'.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported. A range of successful, work-related opportunities, such as land management, is well matched to students' aptitudes and needs. Alternative courses delivered off the school's site are also well targeted, and the quality of experiences and outcomes is continuously monitored. These courses make excellent contributions to individual students' self-esteem and confidence.
- Parents have a very positive view of the school's work and a very high proportion would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed and active in the life of the school. The governors, through regular visits to the school, have a clear insight into the work of the school and many have a strong sense of responsibility for its success. They hold leaders to account and challenge them to be ever more successful. They have a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning. They manage the performance of staff effectively and are rigorous in ensuring that a salary progression is justified. Governors check carefully on the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up, in improving the achievement of eligible students. As a result, they provide very effective support to the school. They oversee the management of finances and resources expertly. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136575 |
| Local authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 412840 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,329 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 195 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kate Waghorn |
| Headteacher | Isobel Bryce |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 01752 843715 |
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