

Inspection of Fowey River Academy

Windmill, Fowey, Cornwall PL23 1HE

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Ben Eddy. This school is part of the Leading Edge Academies Partnership which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Kelley Butcher, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jackie Eason MBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fowey River Academy is ambitious for its pupils to achieve highly and develop their own individual characters. The focus on developing the curriculum has resulted in pupils' examination outcomes rising. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of the changes at their school.

The school has significantly raised the expectations for pupils' conduct in school. Pupils can learn without disruption and they are encouraged to try their best. However, at times some pupils' engagement with their learning falls below expectations and this is not challenged consistently by staff. Other pupils become frustrated by this because it interrupts their learning.

The school provides high-quality pastoral care for pupils. There is a culture of inclusivity at the school. Pupils trust staff with any concerns or worries that they have. For example, about their exam nerves or bullying. Pupils have faith that adults will help them, so they feel safe.

The school's 'Enrich' programme provides pupils with opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Gig racing, paddle boarding, rugby and music are just some of the many activities enjoyed by pupils. Pupils are proud of the leadership roles they have within the school. They want to be role models for younger pupils and contribute to the school community.

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

The Fowey River curriculum is broad and ambitious. Subjects have set out what pupils will learn, so that their knowledge and skills build securely over time. At key stage 4, pupils study a range of qualifications that are aligned to their future goals. An increasing number of pupils now complete the subjects that form the English Baccalaureate. The school's improvements to the curriculum and how it is taught are evident in current pupils' progression, however they are not reflected in 2024 published outcomes.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are keen to share their passion for their subject with pupils. Most subjects have identified the most effective teaching methods for delivering their curriculum. However, these strategies are not consistently used as effectively as they could be. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and do not build their understanding as securely over time.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive the information and training they need to support these pupils well. The pupils speak highly of the additional help they are given by 'The Compass.' Consequently, pupils with SEND learn the curriculum as well as their peers.

The school is beginning to grow a culture of reading. Pupils who need additional support to develop their reading confidence and accuracy are quickly identified. A range of effective interventions are in place to help these pupils to catch up and keep up with their

peers. School events such as author visits and competitions engage pupils in reading beyond the curriculum.

The school works determinedly to raise attendance. It consistently promotes the importance of high attendance for all pupils. The school identifies and addresses barriers to attendance of pupils who are absent too frequently. It works closely with families and pupils through strategies such as attendance clinics. The school's work is leading to a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are absent from school. The school and trust are committed to improving attendance still further.

The school's personal development curriculum prepares pupils well for adult life. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to look after their mental and physical health. The school adapts the curriculum to ensure that pupils understand the risks they may face, for example online and in the local area. Pupils are clear about the importance of showing respect for other people's faiths and beliefs.

Pupils learn about the world of work, including apprenticeships. 'I love my job' events with local employers, CV writing workshops and trips to universities all help to raise pupils' aspirations. This means that pupils move successfully on to their next step in education, employment or training.

The school has taken great care to consider the workload and well-being of staff when implementing changes and improvements. Staff value the ongoing professional development they receive from the school and trust.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and priority development areas for the school. The school proactively engages with parents to hear their views. Those responsible for governance both support and challenge the school. There is a shared ambitious vision for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the curriculum is not well implemented. On these occasions, some pupils do not receive the same high-quality education and, as a result, do not learn the curriculum as well as they could. The school should ensure that the curriculum is consistently implemented effectively across all subjects so that pupils build their knowledge and understanding securely over time.
- The school's high expectations for positive attitudes towards learning are not always realised in all areas of school life. At times, lapses in pupils' behaviour and attitude towards their work are not addressed quickly enough and therefore pupils do not

produce work to the standard they are capable of. The school should ensure that its expectations for pupils are consistently upheld and that pupils are supported to meet them.

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	140836
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10378947
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	665
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Eason MBE
CEO of the trust	Kelley Butcher
Headteacher	Ben Eddy
Website	www.fracademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Leading Edge Academies Partnership trust.
- 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.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a 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 held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff, trust executive leaders, local committee members and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited additional lessons and tutor periods to consider the effectiveness of the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Coulson	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Burgess	Ofsted Inspector

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