

Mounts Bay Academy

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

Unique reference number (URN): 136873

Inspection report: 24 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school has taken effective action to address low attendance. Pupils generally attend well and many have improved their attendance over time. With support from the trust, school leaders have developed supportive relationships with pupils, parents and carers, while maintaining high expectations. Rates of persistent absence for pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities remain high. However, leaders' work to tackle this has resulted in significant reductions in these rates over time.

The majority of pupils behave well. Lessons are rarely disrupted and pupils value being able to learn in calm and purposeful classrooms. Staff value the clear behaviour policy and apply this consistently and fairly. The school's expectations are high. This means that minor infringements of the policy can escalate, resulting in some pupils receiving multiple suspensions. This affects their attitudes towards school and is particularly notable in older pupils. The school is taking action to address this but remains steadfast in ensuring that the climate within the school is conducive to learning and improved achievement. While a small minority of pupils feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively, the school has clear systems in place to report incidents and takes these seriously.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive school. Staff accurately identify any barriers pupils may face, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In addition, leaders have worked with the local authority to ensure they effectively support the small number of pupils who have been located into the area from other countries.

Leaders have established systems to support vulnerable pupils effectively in lessons. Most of the time, teachers use information they have about pupils to inform and adapt their teaching. Leaders of SEND and 'autism champions' have supported staff, providing additional training to help them understand and reduce barriers to learning. Leaders monitor the effectiveness of support for pupils with SEND and make adjustments where needed. Leaders work effectively with parents, carers, external agencies and the local authority in order to best support pupils with SEND. For example, some pupils access alternative provision. This is carefully commissioned to ensure that placements are in the best interests of pupils.

The school has successfully used additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to help increase their attendance and reading fluency. While this work is ongoing, it has had a positive impact.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school has undergone many changes in recent times, some of which have been challenging. However, the school is led with purpose and openness. Leaders want the best

for pupils and make decisions, including difficult decisions, with the best interests of pupils at heart.

Typically, leaders have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders' actions have had a positive impact on behaviour and attendance, while maintaining an extensive extra-curricular offer. Staff typically feel well supported and valued, including those at the early stages of their career. The school has recently joined a new multi-academy trust and is in a state of transition. The challenges that come with this are being managed effectively. The new trust is supporting leaders effectively and has quickly identified where further improvements need to be made to the quality of curriculum and teaching. Staff already receive regular training appropriate to their roles and the trust is able to extend this further, knowing that some of these improvements need to be accelerated. Where key improvements are needed, leaders are taking quick and effective actions to ensure that these areas are addressed quickly.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They are united in their vision for the school and commitment to drive improvements where needed. They recognise the importance of the school's place and reputation in the local community. They understand their statutory duties as well as their role in supporting and challenging school leaders.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils typically have positive relationships with staff and feel their wellbeing is supported. The school provides an extensive extra-curricular programme. It is rightly proud of its music provision, which includes access to a wide range of instrumental lessons, the opportunity to be part of the school's own record label and performing in concerts and ensembles. Many pupils take part in sports clubs and teams, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other clubs such as photography, art and community service. Pupils have the opportunity to raise money for charity and many take on positions of leadership as pupil parliament representatives during their time at the school. The school reduces effectively barriers to participation for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that they benefit from what the school has to offer.

The school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum is comprehensive. It is supplemented by assemblies, for example when issues arise within the community. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online. They understand how to spot the signs of unhealthy relationships and the dangers of substance misuse. Pupils develop their understanding of why particular characteristics are protected in law and why they should not discriminate against others who may be different to them. Pupils enjoy opportunities to discuss and debate these ideas and to engage with ethical questions. Pupils mostly understand the fundamental British values, which are closely aligned with the school's values of respect, responsibility and relationships. This supports pupils' character development and prepares them well for life beyond school.

The careers programme is a standout feature of the school. Pupils receive comprehensive advice and guidance. The school successfully supports all pupils into work experience placements and appropriate post-16 courses and employment.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

A number of the school's published outcomes have been below national averages for some time. While the number of pupils passing both English and mathematics at key stage 4 is in line with the national average, those achieving strong passes is below. Pupils' progress from their starting points is not as positive as it should be in a number of areas. Variability in teaching across the school and high absence of some vulnerable pupils have contributed to historic weaknesses in achievement over time. In some subjects, the achievement for disadvantaged pupils is significantly below national averages. Overall, this means that some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment as they should be. Conversely, pupils' achievement in subjects such as dance, art, hospitality and catering has been more positive.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

While pupils learn from a broad, ambitious and well-planned curriculum, the work they are given does not always enable them to deepen or apply their learning effectively. Teachers do not consistently check that pupils have understood, or how well they have grasped what has been taught. This means teachers do not adapt their teaching responsively, for example to provide more complex learning for pupils with high academic starting points.

Leaders have taken action to address weaknesses in the quality of teaching. While staff's subject knowledge is secure, leaders understand that pedagogical knowledge and expertise need to improve in order for pupils' attainment and progress to improve. Leaders have provided clarity about what effective teaching looks like, including how to adapt learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have strengthened the professional learning programme for staff. This is having a positive impact in some areas, but remains inconsistent.

Pupils who have fallen behind in reading receive additional support. However, some of this work is in its early stages and the school understands there is more work to do to ensure that all pupils who need to fill gaps in their reading, writing, mathematics and spoken language get the help they need.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

This is an inclusive school where the majority of pupils behave well and are kind and respectful to one another. Pupils feel safe. They enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including a range of sports. Activities related to the school's own record label are particularly popular among pupils, parents and carers alike.

Many pupils have positive relationships with staff. Leaders have made a range of changes in recent times, including raising expectations of pupils' behaviour and punctuality. Overall, these changes have been received well and they have had a positive impact for pupils.

Learning is rarely disrupted and the school is calm and orderly. Leaders continue to work closely with some pupils and parents to adjust to these expectations.

Pupils study from a broad curriculum, including a range of practical subjects at key stage 4. However, the consistency of teaching is variable across the school. This impacts how well some pupils progress through the curriculum. With support from the trust, inconsistencies are being addressed. Achievement at the end of key stage 4 has been below the national average for some time. This has limited how well prepared some pupils are for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Leaders recognise that pupils' achievement needs to be better. They have taken decisive action to tackle this, which is beginning to have some positive impact.

The barriers to learning or wellbeing that some pupils may face are typically well understood. Leaders have put systems in place to reduce or remove these barriers. Pupils benefit from provision and support in school that helps them to access learning. While a few pupils feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively, this is not widespread. Leaders take bullying seriously and are committed to addressing issues if and when they arise.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the activities given to pupils are well matched to the aims of the curriculum so pupils achieve more highly and make better progress from their starting points.
 - Leaders should ensure that formative assessment is consistently well embedded so that staff tailor teaching effectively.
 - Leaders should take appropriate action to ensure that gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge are well understood and addressed in a systematic and effective way.
 - Leaders should ensure that the rates of persistent absence of vulnerable pupils continue to reduce over time.
-

About this inspection

The current principal was appointed in March 2024. The school joined a new multi-academy trust in February 2026.

This school is now part of Truro and Penwith 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), Dr Jennifer Blunden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anita Firth.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, senior leaders, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and groups of staff. The lead inspector met executive leaders and those responsible for governance, including the chair of board of trustees and chair of the local monitoring committee.

Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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 four unregistered alternative provisions and two registered alternative provisions.

Principal: Simeon Royle

Lead inspector:

Victoria Griffin, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matthew Collins, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Burgess, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Coulson, Ofsted Inspector

Lee Sargeant, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

975

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,020

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

22.05%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.05%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.31%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.7%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43.9%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	43.7	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.7	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45.1	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.56	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	5.4%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17.1%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	12.5%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	30.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.0	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.89	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.00	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	5.4%	53.1%	-47.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	17.1%	53.1%	-36.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	12.5%	52.4%	-39.9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	30.2	50.4	-20.3
2023/24 (final)	33.0	50.0	-17.0
2022/23 (final)	31.0	50.3	-19.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.89	0.16	-1.05
2022/23 (final)	-1.00	0.17	-1.17

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	91%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.8%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.3%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	26.9%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	35.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



