

Sennen Community Primary Academy

Address: Sennen, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7AW

Unique reference number (URN): 144894

Inspection report: 24 February 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

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically achieve well. They generally gain the knowledge and skills they need across the curriculum. For example, older pupils talk confidently about different historical periods and younger pupils use scientific vocabulary accurately. Pupils make a positive start in early reading, reflected in the high outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Over time, most pupils reach the expected standard in end of key stage 2 national tests, meaning they are well prepared for secondary school. Disadvantaged pupils achieve broadly in line with disadvantaged pupils nationally. While there was a slight dip overall in pupils' achievement in mathematics in 2025, leaders acted quickly to address this. Pupils' high achievement in the Year 4 multiplication tables check reflects the school's work to ensure they secure important number facts. However, too few pupils reach the higher standard in national tests, reflecting a need for teachers to deepen pupils' learning. This is particularly the case in writing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders know that some pupils' attendance has not been high enough. They have improved the systems used to monitor and support attendance. As a result, attendance is now in line with national averages. There has been a clear reduction in the number of pupils with high levels of absence, and leaders continue to work closely with the small number of families where absence remains a concern. Leaders check patterns of attendance carefully so they can intervene quickly, drawing on support from the trust when necessary. They then review whether attendance improves and escalate their actions if necessary.

Leaders have revised the school's behaviour systems so that staff and pupils understand them well. Pupils' behaviour across the school is positive and pupils respond well to demonstrating 'green behaviours'. Classrooms are calm and purposeful spaces where pupils conduct themselves with maturity and respect. They show enthusiasm and curiosity for their learning. At social times, pupils of all ages play happily together. Bullying is not tolerated and when concerns arise, leaders act quickly and effectively. Pupils are kind and compassionate towards one another. The use of derogatory language is very rare.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Teaching in the school is effective because leaders know where it is working well and where further improvement is needed. They check the quality of teaching regularly and act quickly when changes are required. For example, the increased focus on pupils' handwriting has led to more pupils forming letters accurately and writing fluently. Pupils who have not yet secured basic skills in English and mathematics receive precise support to help them catch up. Staff ensure that pupils' language, both spoken and written, develops well. Pupils talk confidently about their learning, using subject-specific vocabulary accurately.

Leaders have revised the curriculum to ensure it remains broad, balanced and ambitious. It helps staff to understand what to teach and when so pupils learn new content in a logical

order. Working with the trust, leaders provide regular training to help staff develop the expertise needed to teach the curriculum well. This supports teachers to adapt learning appropriately for pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, adaptations for pupils with SEND are not as impactful as they could be and the tasks provided do not deepen pupils' thinking as much as they could. This is particularly the case for pupils who have already grasped key learning.

Early years

Expected standard 

The school's recent expansion of the early years to include a nursery has been successful. Staff show high levels of care and attention to help new children settle quickly. Leaders have redesigned the curriculum so that it builds well from the Nursery Year, starting with the three-year-olds, into the Reception Year. Knowledgeable staff have the expertise needed to teach the wider age range effectively. Staff engage in high-quality interactions with children to develop their communication and language skills, helping them become articulate and confident learners.

The school prioritises reading from the start. Younger children learn familiar rhymes and songs and enjoy sharing books with staff. In the Reception Year, teachers deliver phonics well and use consistent routines to help children learn to read. Children recall and apply the sounds they know with increasing confidence.

Across the provision, the activities provided match children's starting points well, including during independent tasks. Staff expectations for children's pencil grip and accurate letter formation have been raised this year. As a result, more children now have the age-appropriate skills and knowledge they need for writing. By the end of the early years, most children are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school fosters an inclusive culture for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) while maintaining high expectations for their learning. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly. With the recent opening of the nursery, leaders have ensured that the same effective systems are in place so that the youngest children benefit from early checking of their needs. Leaders make sure that pupils' learning plans set out clearly the support each pupil needs. They use external expertise when needed to ensure that provision matches pupils' needs well. Leaders check carefully whether support is having the intended impact and adjust it when necessary. They work closely with families so that their views are heard throughout.

Leaders provide regular, high-quality training for staff across the full range of SEND and other barriers to learning. This helps most teachers to make suitable adaptations so that pupils can learn successfully alongside their peers. Occasionally, these adaptations are not implemented as well for a small number of pupils.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively in order to overcome barriers to learning. For example, leaders' actions to improve attendance for these pupils have begun to bear fruit.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have moved the school forward after a difficult period between changes of leadership. They have taken time to build positive relationships with parents and carers, easing any worries and explaining the school's direction. As a result, parents hold very positive views about the school.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. They act from a clear commitment to putting pupils' interests first. When weaknesses emerge, leaders respond quickly and make necessary, and sometimes difficult, decisions. They review their work regularly and look for ways to improve all aspects of the school. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to secure greater consistency in teaching. They have already made progress through well-focused training and coaching for staff. Leaders have ensured that the new nursery is fully integrated into the school and that it has enriched the quality of early years provision.

Leaders have a productive partnership with the trust and local monitoring committee. The trust provides effective support in areas such as attendance to help the school secure improvements. The local monitoring committee carries out regular checks on the school's work, helping members of the committee to maintain a clear view of its performance.

Leaders consider staff workload carefully when making changes. They communicate clearly and work thoughtfully with staff so that decisions affecting wellbeing are considered with care. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a well-structured and purposeful personal development programme that reflects its context. For example, leaders place particular emphasis on water safety because of the school's coastal location. Staff ensure that the personal, social and health education curriculum is implemented well. This helps pupils understand themselves and the world around them. Pupils learn about changes to their bodies at an age-appropriate level. They have a secure understanding of online safety, positive friendships and the difference between appropriate and inappropriate relationships. Through assemblies, pupils develop empathy, respect and the ability to reflect thoughtfully on people's experiences and perspectives.

Leaders have recently increased the range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life through roles such as house captains and sports leaders. These responsibilities help pupils develop confidence, leadership and a sense of belonging to the school community. Leaders promote cultural diversity through the curriculum, although they recognise that more work is needed to strengthen this further. Pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures is less well developed, although they remain respectful and curious about others' experiences.

Pupils can explain the school's values clearly. Through regular revisiting, they can describe fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law, and give relevant examples of how these apply in everyday school life. Leaders check how well disadvantaged pupils benefit from the school's personal development offer and remove barriers so that all pupils can take part fully.

Leaders provide carefully targeted pastoral support for pupils. This supports their mental health and helps them to be ready to learn. Leaders ensure that pupils in Year 6 receive clear and timely information about the move to secondary school, helping them feel prepared and confident for the next stage of their education.

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

Pupils receive a joyful education at this school. From the moment they join in the early years to when they leave at the end of Year 6, they build safe, trusting and caring relationships with their peers and staff. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of living out the school's values of being 'ready, respectful and responsible'. They show these values through their positive behaviour in lessons and at social times. Bullying is not an issue and is resolved swiftly by staff if it arises. Pupils take great pride in their school, reflected in their recently improved attendance.

Pupils generally learn well across the curriculum. Leaders have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve so that they learn even more. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils reach the expected standards in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) generally receive the support they need to help them become successful and confident learners.

Sennen is a school for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND take part fully in school life. They join their peers in a range of clubs designed to spark interests, such as cooking, chess and drama. Pupils help to shape the range of clubs on offer and often take an active role in leading them. This reflects the prominent presence of pupil voice across the school. Pupils develop a love of the arts through performances at a local outdoor theatre. Trips beyond Sennen, including visits to London, broaden pupils' horizons and help prepare them for life in modern Britain. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to deepen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity, although pupils do develop an understanding of their local heritage through the curriculum and workshops.

Next steps

- Leaders should sustain the upward trend in pupils' attendance by embedding the school's systems and continuing to work with families where pupils' absence remains a concern.
- Leaders should support staff to refine task design and adaptations so that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can develop their

knowledge more securely and more pupils achieve high standards at the end of key stage 2.

About this inspection

This school is 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), 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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO), deputy CEO and the chair of the trust during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up her post in February 2025.

The school opened a nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds in September 2025.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Samantha Gillion

Lead inspector:

Jason Edge, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Richard Vaughan, 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 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

94

Well below 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: 272

School capacity

105

Well below 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: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

17.02%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

2.13%

Close to 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: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.89%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	59%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	60%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	79%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	59%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average

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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	36%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	33%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	68%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	33%	66%	-33 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	80%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	57%	78%	-21 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	77%	-27 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	7.0%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	5.9%	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)	25.9%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.0%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.3%	16.2%	Below

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.

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