

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Upton Cross Academy

Upton Cross, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 5AX

Inspection dates:

17 June 2025

Outcome

Upton Cross Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Emily Goodey. This school is part of Kernow Learning Multi 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), Clare Crowle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Parker.

What is it like to attend this school?

Upton Cross Academy's vision, 'inspiring and achieving success for all', permeates through the school. Pupils are polite and respectful. They enjoy sharing the reasons they are rightly proud of their school. Staff build warm relationships with pupils to ensure they feel well supported. This starts in the early years, where children get off to a strong start. Parents and carers highly value the care and support in place for their children.

Staff are united in their high expectations of what pupils can achieve through the well-designed and ambitious curriculum. Pupils live up to these expectations and learn the curriculum well. In lessons, they are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. They are eager to be successful. Pupils move around the school sensibly to ensure that it is a calm place to learn.

The school supports pupils well beyond the academic. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities and experiences that enhance the curriculum. For example, children in Reception Year visited a local zoo linked to their 'Dear Zoo' project. The outdoor learning area is a valued part of the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn more about nature with activities such as bug hunting and creating habitats.

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

The school has maintained a sharp focus on the design and implementation of the curriculum. Across subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge it wants

pupils to know and remember. It has considered the needs of mixed-age classes well to ensure that pupils build their knowledge based on what they have learned before. Reading and vocabulary development are at the heart of the curriculum, ensuring pupils are exposed to a breadth of genres and language. The development of oracy is a priority. Consequently, pupils are confident speakers and actively take part in lessons.

Staff benefit from training led by subject experts to support the teaching of the curriculum. They use a variety of strategies to help pupils learn. Pupils are given regular opportunities to recap prior knowledge to remember their learning. For example, 'fast maths facts' help pupils to secure their fluency knowledge in mathematics. Teachers make checks on how well pupils are learning the curriculum to identify and support pupils who have gaps in their understanding. As a result of these strategies, pupils learn the curriculum well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are identified early to ensure they get the support they need.

The school promotes a love of reading in a variety of ways. Pupil 'reading ambassadors' take an active role in looking after the library as well as recommending books in the newsletter. The school prioritises helping pupils to learn to read. This starts in the early years, where staff check for gaps in communication and language to identify and support any children who need extra help. Staff benefit from training to ensure they teach phonics expertly. The school checks with rigour any pupils who need extra help to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils write widely and often across the curriculum. This begins in early years, where children are given regular opportunities to practise writing the sounds they know. On occasions, some pupils repeat errors in their handwriting, spelling and punctuation and these are not addressed swiftly enough. As a result, these pupils progress less well through the writing curriculum and make similar errors in their writing in other subjects.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They take pride in their work and value the recognition they receive for their successes. The school is relentless in its drive to promote high attendance through its focus on a sense of belonging for each pupil. This work is having a strong impact. Attendance is well above national averages, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND.

The school has considered carefully how to support pupils beyond the academic. The curriculum teaches pupils about health, well-being and living in the wider world. Pupils show a clear understanding of protected characteristics and the importance of equality. To develop talents and interests, pupils appreciate a range of clubs such as gardening and art. In addition, the school utilises the local arts centre so pupils can watch a range of performances to spark their interest.

Leaders at all levels, including those responsible for governance and the trust, have an accurate view of the school. Together, they are determined for pupils to achieve well. Staff feel their workload and well-being are well supported. They are proud to work at 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)

- Some pupils are not given the support they need to grasp the basic transcription skills of writing, such as letter formation, punctuation and spelling. As a result, these pupils make errors in their writing that go unaddressed. The trust should develop staff expertise to ensure they are clear about the writing knowledge pupils must secure at each stage so that pupils can write accurately and with confidence across subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Upton Cross Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2015.

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	144523
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10378961
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Parker
CEO of the trust	Clare Crowle
Headteacher	Emily Goodey
Website	www.uptoncross.kernowlearning.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Upton Cross Academy is part of Kernow Learning Multi Academy Trust.
- This school is smaller than the average-size primary school. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, staff, those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trust board, and trust executive leaders, including the CEO.

- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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