

Lostwithiel School

Address: Bodmin Hill, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0AJ

Unique reference number (URN): 142241

Inspection report: 2 June 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.

Exceptional

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional 

Pupils at this school rarely miss a day. Staff's exceptional care, support and expertise help to make Lostwithiel a place where all pupils want to attend. They simply love coming to school, relishing the vibrant, interesting and varied activities planned for them. Persistent absence is extremely low. When necessary, leaders use their very positive relationships with parents and carers to help pupils attend very well. If any pupil struggles to come to school, leaders' support is incredibly successful in helping them.

Pupils' impeccable behaviour and attitudes to learning begin in the early years. Staff apply high expectations in every aspect of school life. Pupils want to behave well and always support each other. They see this as an important part of their role in school. On the very rare occasion that a pupil behaves less well, staff use highly effective strategies to help them get back on track. These are almost never needed.

Pupils' emotional knowledge and empathetic understanding are impressive. They hold the tools needed to manage feelings and behaviour. Pupils are therefore skilled at 'disagreeing respectfully'. Pupils routinely use their skills independently. Older pupils act as superb role models for younger pupils. Together, pupils and staff create an exceptionally positive atmosphere that helps everyone to focus on their learning.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils achieve very highly across the school. They typically achieve above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well. Pupils consistently produce work of very high quality. Pupils demonstrate very strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. This supports them to effectively access the wider curriculum. The school's emphasis on oracy ensures pupils are able to articulate their learning with detail and clarity. They are skilled at applying their knowledge and confidently use subject-specific vocabulary.

Pupils retain knowledge over time, which helps them to build on prior learning securely as they progress through the curriculum. They develop a deep understanding of the curriculum. They are adept at making connections in learning. For example, they understand in detail the geographical processes that caused the eruption in Vesuvius and its impact on Pompeii when learning about The Romans. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their next steps in education.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas of priority in the curriculum and teaching. They make pertinent, strategic decisions to ensure that rapid

improvement takes place in any area of development that they have identified. The school has strengthened the wider curriculum since the last inspection. It is now an ambitious and broad curriculum across all subjects. Content is designed carefully to build pupils' knowledge progressively as they move through the school.

Effective training ensures teachers consistently use their detailed subject knowledge to deliver and model information clearly. They are highly skilled in checking for understanding and addressing misconceptions. Therefore, any gaps in pupils' knowledge are routinely addressed before moving on to new content. In the younger year groups, teachers ensure that pupils gain secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Highly effective and targeted support is put in place to ensure that pupils who fall behind catch up quickly. Any older pupils who require extra support with English and mathematics are identified swiftly. Targeted intervention closes any gaps.

Teachers expertly support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers through carefully considered adaptations and strategies. Staff support these pupils to successfully access the curriculum and thrive academically.

Early years

Strong standard 

The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of all children. Learning tasks support all children to develop their vocabulary, build independence and learn social skills. This, alongside strong teaching approaches, ensures that children progress very well from their starting points. Leaders check rigorously what children know from the moment they start. They act quickly and close any gaps with care and skill.

Staff develop children's vocabulary with every interaction. They read stories, which helps children to learn a wider set of words. Reading is a priority. Staff teach sounds expertly. They help children blend them to read and write simple words. Any child who needs it gets targeted teaching, so no one falls behind. The classrooms and outdoor spaces are full of interesting activities. Children learn through play and through short tasks with adults. They follow routines with confidence.

Children learn to manage risks, for example when climbing or balancing. They also show growing independence when completing tasks. Staff encourage them to make healthy food choices and to hang up coats and bags. These skills prepare them very well for the move into Year 1 and later life. Staff offer guidance to families when needed. This communication helps parents and carers to work closely with the school.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders and staff swiftly identify any pupils who have potential barriers to learning. All hold a precise understanding of the barriers that pupils face. Leaders equip staff with the expertise needed to deliver high-quality support and adaptations, ensuring all pupils can fully access the curriculum. Successful support during lessons and throughout the school day is embedded across the school for these pupils. Carefully designed universal and specialist support for specific pupils reduces barriers further. These have a very positive impact on supporting pupils to improve focused areas of their learning or personal development.

The impact of support for pupils is monitored very closely. Leaders make precise adjustments where required to ensure that support remains effective. Leaders work closely with external professionals and families to ensure that pupils' needs are fully understood and supported.

Leaders carefully consider how to use additional funding to have the greatest impact on disadvantaged pupils and ensure that these pupils thrive. The impact of this is seen through the range of enrichment opportunities these pupils access, their contribution to the school community and very positive academic achievement over time, especially in reading.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and any weaknesses. For example, they understand that the mathematics curriculum and teaching are not as fully developed as other areas. The subject is next in line for the cycle of improvement work. All staff contribute highly effectively to collective improvement that results in rapid developments in any priority area. Decisions in the school are always taken in the very best interests of the pupils. Leaders are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils leave the school progressing with the knowledge, skills and characteristics required to contribute positively to local and wider society.

Those responsible for governance have a firm understanding of the strengths and priorities of the school. They provide robust challenge and support and ensure that the school moves in the right strategic direction. The school has built extremely close links with parents, carers and the local community. Leaders work closely with other schools in the trust and beyond, sharing their positive practice and supporting improvements to attendance and behaviour.

Staff across the school have access to high-quality professional training and learning. This ensures that teachers and support staff continue to develop and refine their skills and expertise. Early career teachers feel extremely well supported by the school in the development of their knowledge and experience. Leaders are considerate of teachers' wellbeing. Staff appreciate strategies that have been put in place that help to reduce workload where possible. Staff are fully supportive of the leadership at the school and ambitious for further improvement.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal development and wellbeing offer is high quality. Leaders ensure that pupils access learning that is meticulously designed across all areas of personal development. Pupils develop a deep understanding of the personal, social and health education and relationships education programmes. They build a deep understanding of relationships and friendships through working with external mental health experts. They partner with a range of local groups who prompt pupils to be agents of positive change in the school and local community. They put their learning into practice both in the school and externally.

The school develops a tangible sense of civic duty in the pupils. Pupils take great enjoyment in contributing to the school's impressive 'Team 12' school council. Older pupils mentor younger pupils and support with reading sessions. Pupils take part in fundraising activities for local charities. Pupils also lead litter picking campaigns in the local community. Such

programmes have a positive impact on how the pupils view their role in society and the difference they can make in their community.

All pupils take part in a broad and impressive range of wider opportunities. These are purposefully planned to ensure that pupils encounter a broad range of experiences. There is a focus on ensuring that the most disadvantaged pupils' needs are met. Trips to London and Bath develop their cultural understanding. Staff organise a vast range of high-quality enrichment activities and clubs, which the majority of pupils regularly take part in. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils can access and thrive in these opportunities. Attendance at clubs and contributions to the school community are closely tracked for every pupil through the leaders' meticulous monitoring.

Pastoral support for pupils is relentless and extremely supportive. Staff know individual pupils very well and provide personalised care for those who require additional support.

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

Pupils of all ages love coming to Lostwithiel School. They relish the opportunities available for them and behave impeccably. Staff look out for the smallest signs of concern so they can help anyone immediately. Almost all pupils attend school every day because activities are enthralling, playtimes are inviting and relationships are secure. Consequently, all pupils socialise confidently and feel safe and highly valued as part of a close-knit community.

Pupils receive clear, consistent teaching that helps them to focus and succeed. Teachers begin learning promptly with structured 'do it now' activities and guide pupils through carefully explained steps. Pupils practise, discuss and revisit learning regularly. Therefore, pupils know more, remember more and can do more over time. They speak confidently, use ambitious vocabulary and explain their thinking, especially in reading and writing, where high-quality texts and rich discussion bring learning to life. By the time they leave school, pupils' standards over time are consistently above the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics.

Across subjects, pupils build knowledge in a logical sequence. They explore topics in depth, from historical events to geographical processes, making meaningful connections between ideas. In the early years, children learn through talk, play and exploration, developing strong language, early reading and number skills.

Adults provide effective support during lessons. They notice when children need help and adapt tasks or provide additional guidance so everyone can succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive tailored support that helps them access the same learning as their peers and gradually become more independent.

Behaviour is exemplary and plays a significant part in pupils' achievement and experiences. Children listen carefully, follow routines and engage fully in their learning. At breaktimes, they play cooperatively, invent games and include others. Relationships between pupils and adults are very strong, creating a highly respectful and friendly atmosphere.

Next steps

- In line with school plans, leaders should further improve the mathematics curriculum and teaching so they match the scope, richness and ambitions of English and wider curriculum subjects.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Cornwall Education Learning 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), Dan Morrow, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Sally Foard.

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 headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and a group of staff to consider their views. The lead inspector held a discussion with the CEO and director of education from the trust and members of the trust board and local hub board.

Inspectors visited all classrooms to look at pupils' work and the curriculum and to speak with pupils about their learning and wider school activities.

Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Elaine Badger

Lead inspector:

Richard Light, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Greg Chantler, Ofsted Inspector

Angela Folland, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

182

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

175

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)

21.15%

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: 26.3%

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

2.20%

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

10.44%

Below 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	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	68%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	84%	60%	Above

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	90%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	100%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	95%	73%	Above

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	83%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	84%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	84%	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	83%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	84%	73%	Above

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	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	33%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	17%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	50%	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	76%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	33%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	83%	60%	Above

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	62%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	78%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average
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	52%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	56%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average

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	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	69%	-36 pp
2023/24 (final)	17%	67%	-51 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	66%	-16 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	76%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (final)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	80%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	83%	78%	5 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	62%	78%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	78%	78%	0 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
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	52%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (final)	56%	81%	-25 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp

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 (3 term)	3.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.7%	5.9%	Below

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 (3 term)	2.2%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.9%	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.

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.

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