

Caldew School

Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7NN

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The standard of education provided at the school declined after the last inspection. As a result, in 2017, too many pupils did not attain the examination grades that they should have.
- The quality of leadership and management is variable. The headteacher and other senior leaders appointed recently typically provide effective leadership. Other areas of leadership, especially middle leadership, are inconsistent and require strengthening.
- Some leaders do not routinely monitor, evaluate and refine plans. As a result, the pace of school improvement is inconsistent
- Pupils' rates of progress have improved this academic year. However, they remain variable, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities support.
- Despite improvements in teaching and learning, variability remains, including in mathematics, science and history.
- Teachers do not consistently set the least and most able pupils work that closely matches their ability.
- Pupils have a variable experience of careers guidance. Too many say that the information they receive about their next steps in education and employment do not match their needs.
- A minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with how some incidents of bullying are resolved.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is improving, but it remains below average.
- Students' outcomes in science courses in the sixth form do not consistently match the good outcomes in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders, including governors, have demonstrated the capacity to improve the standard of education provided by the school.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum, so that the courses offered match pupils' needs and interests and prepare them for their next steps in education or employment effectively.
- Leaders' actions have led to routinely good teaching and learning in a number of subjects, including English, art and drama.
- The sixth form provides a good standard of education. Consequently, most students attain strong outcomes and move on to suitable next steps in education and employment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - eradicating variation in the quality of middle leadership
 - insisting that leaders monitor, evaluate and refine improvement plans routinely, so that the impact of improvement plans gathers pace.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - removing variation in the quality of teaching, including in mathematics, science and history
 - insisting that the most able pupils are routinely set work to stretch their thinking, so that they consistently attain the high levels they should
 - ensuring that pupils with low starting points are consistently supported and challenged to make good progress.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - increasing the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is at least in line with the national average
 - addressing the views of a small group of pupils who believe that bullying is not dealt with consistently
 - strengthening the advice that pupils are given about their next steps in their education and careers.
- Further improving the quality of the 16 to 19 study programme by ensuring that teaching in science vocational courses consistently matches the good standard of others.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The standard of education provided by school leaders declined after the previous inspection in 2014. As a result, too many pupils did not make good progress. Teaching was weak and leaders did not provide the impetus or capacity to improve the school. The appointment of a new headteacher and other senior leaders recently has resulted in improvements and, despite remaining variability in teaching and pupils' progress, the standard of education the school provides is on an upward trajectory.
- Senior leaders recognise the school's priorities for improvement. The positive differences that they have already made, such as improving the quality of teaching in English, demonstrate the capacity to further boost the standard of education provided. As a result, pupils' work seen in English books shows improved progress. Senior leaders have put in place sensible plans to upgrade weaker aspects, such as the current variability in pupils' progress and inconsistencies in middle leadership.
- Middle leadership, including subject leadership, is more effective than previously, but variation remains. For example, leadership of English, art and drama is stronger than that of science or history. Where this level of leadership is weaker, middle leaders do not routinely monitor, evaluate and refine the plans and standards that they are responsible for, so that aspects of the school's improvement are not rapid and secure.
- Senior leaders have focused correctly on teachers' professional development as the way forward to improve teaching. Staff are positive about the training that they receive. Senior leaders promote an expectation of high standards of teaching, so teachers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Consequently, senior leaders are securing more consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment than was the case previously, although variability remains.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the pupils' curriculum. Pupils' courses at key stage 3 provide them with opportunities to study a wide range of subjects that meet their interests and needs. Pupils' choices at key stage 4 are designed to prepare them well for the next stage of their education and careers. Senior leaders have evaluated the impact that the curriculum has had on pupils' outcomes at key stage 4, and have made the changes necessary. Leaders have taken positive steps to widen pupils' participation in the range of cultural, creative and sporting activities that take place beyond lessons, including for the significant proportion of pupils who do not live locally.
- Leaders provide a careers guidance programme, which is planned to raise pupils' aspirations. However, this aspect of leadership requires improvement. Too many pupils who responded to the pupil survey at the time of the inspection said that the support that they are given is not fully effective. This view was shared by pupils with whom inspectors spoke. They cited current inconsistencies in the range of independent careers guidance and next steps in education information that they are given.
- Leaders' use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is more effective than it was previously, but it is not fully effective. This aspect is receiving the sharp focus of senior leaders, but it requires further strengthening by middle leaders to quicken the pace of improvement. In particular, school leaders are not consistently precise and

robust in assessing, evaluating and refining the actions that they take to improve these pupils' education. As a result, despite some signs of improvement, the attendance and progress of these pupils do not routinely match those of others nationally.

- Leaders' use of the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable. The support for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is matched to their specific requirements. Consequently, these pupils typically make good progress and move on to next steps in education and employment. However, the variation in the quality of the teaching that pupils with in-school support plans receive, means that the progress of these pupils is inconsistent.
- Leaders' use of Year 7 catch-up funding is effective. Pupils receive a range of support measures, which generally match their literacy and/or numeracy requirements. Accordingly, most of these pupils catch up and keep up with others.
- Leaders' plans to support the pastoral transition of pupils from primary school are thorough. Leaders ensure that staff visit each of the many primary schools from which pupils join the school to gather information that supports pupils' transitions. This includes those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Staff share and use this information effectively, so the Year 7 pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the school. Staff also gather information about pupils' academic performance, to ensure that they are set work that matches their requirements. However, this information is used inconsistently, because of variation in the quality of teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governance has strengthened this academic year, because of the useful guidance of the school's improvement partner, recent appointments to the governing board and governors' training.
- Governors understand their role in setting and securing the school's vision. They do this effectively. Consequently, school leaders and staff are clear about the expectations that governors have of them, and the reasons for these standards.
- Governors' expertise in financial management means that the school has a secure financial base from which to strengthen the quality of education that it provides.
- Governors failed to take effective action to avoid the dip in pupils' outcomes following the previous inspection. This decline motivated them to become more proactive. Consequently, they have improved their understanding of their roles and duties. Records of governors' meetings demonstrate that the support and challenge that they set senior leaders are increasingly effective. As a result, they enhance the school's capacity to further improve the standard of education that it provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks made by inspectors found that staff, including non-teaching staff, are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. They know pupils well and are vigilant in supporting pupils' safety. As a result, there is an effective culture of safeguarding.
- Checks made by inspectors to test the security of the school site found this aspect of safeguarding to be effective.
- School leaders work effectively with external agencies, parents and carers. They act

swiftly when required. Referrals are followed up and recorded.

- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including online. Pupils know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The current senior leaders have challenged weaker teaching more effectively than was the case previously. Additionally, they have secured improvements through the support and training programmes they provide for teachers. As a result, teaching is improving and is good across a range of subjects, including English, art and drama.
- However, leaders have not secured teaching that is consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should. Overall, teaching requires improvements because inconsistencies remain across and within subjects, including in mathematics, science and history.
- Senior leaders expect teachers to use the information they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. However, despite leaders providing training to support this aspect of teaching, teachers' practice is variable. Pupils with mid starting points usually learn well because they are typically set work that matches their ability. However, teachers' planning to support the learning of pupils with low starting points is not consistently effective. Similarly, the most able pupils are not routinely challenged to allow them to make good progress and attain the highest levels.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning are typically good, so that teachers focus on pupils' learning rather than managing poor behaviour. Low-level disruption during learning is rare.
- Pupils are taught by teachers with good subject knowledge more regularly than was the case previously. As a result, in English for example, teachers are more likely to probe pupils' understanding and support higher levels of learning. Leaders have taken sensible action to support and strengthen teachers' subject expertise where it is required. The work that inspectors saw demonstrated the positive impact of these actions on pupils' learning; pupils' rates of progress are improving. Pupils in key stage 3 have especially benefited from these improvements, although some variation remains, especially in mathematics and science.
- Pupils have benefited from teachers' training to improve the effectiveness of their questioning. Pupils' learning is deepened where teachers use secure subject knowledge alongside accurate assessment information, to engage and challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding through questioning. For example, in English, pupils are provided with regular opportunities to extend and apply their knowledge through extended written and spoken activities.
- Senior leaders have introduced assessment systems that strengthen teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress. Their regular analysis of assessment data is helping teachers identify groups of pupils who have fallen behind. For example, too many pupils in key stage 4 have not made the progress that they should in mathematics in

previous years, because of poor or inconsistent teaching. Teachers are taking steps to support these pupils in catching up. As a result, despite remaining inconsistencies in pupils' attainment, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, pupils are making better progress than previously because gaps in their learning are being addressed.

- The quality of homework that is set for pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Parents say that homework is set regularly, and the work is usually of an appropriate standard.
- School leaders provided inspectors with copies of reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain clear and useful information about pupils' recent progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Senior leaders have promoted an expectation of heightened aspirations and standards since the appointment of the current headteacher. This strengthening of care and support has had a positive impact on most pupils. It was clearly visible when inspectors met pupils during the inspection. They demonstrated confidence as learners, and typically enjoyed positive interactions with one another and adults.
- Many pupils and parents believe that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. However, senior leaders are accurate in recognising that a minority of pupils say that bullying issues are not resolved to their liking. Inspectors investigated school procedures and case studies of bullying incidents. They found that incidents of bullying are generally dealt with effectively. Inspectors also spoke with some pupils who have concerns regarding how well issues are resolved. Inspectors found that while the numbers of pupils who hold these views are diminishing and senior leaders are taking sensible actions to eradicate these concerns, this aspect of pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Too many pupils say that the careers guidance programme that the school provides requires improvement. Less than half of those who responded to the pupil survey at the time of the inspection said that they received the right amount of information and that it was helpful. This matched the views of the pupils with whom inspectors spoke. Those who were not satisfied with the careers guidance that they have received typically felt that a sharper emphasis on a wider range of aspirational next steps would benefit them.
- Leaders carry out effectively their responsibility for pupils' mental and physical health. They take steps to ensure that these aspects are widely promoted through pupils' learning and through the support services. Leaders provide a range of support measures for these pupils, including healthy-eating options in the school canteen and an on-site counselling service. Pupils are taught how to remain safe online, and how to protect themselves from exploitation.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is effective. Leaders ensure that

pupils learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures regularly. Incidents of racism and homophobia are rare, and are dealt with robustly when they do occur. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke recognise and value differences, and respect views different from their own.

- School leaders manage effectively the personal development and welfare of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- School leaders have created a secure and orderly environment. Pupils' conduct around the school is generally positive. At break, lunchtime and at the change of lessons, pupils typically move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils arrive punctually at lessons.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons, have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. However, a few lose concentration when teachers' expectations do not match those of school leaders, or when teaching is not pitched at the correct level for pupils.
- Pupils' overall attendance has improved this academic year, and is in line with others nationally overall. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. Systems introduced to secure the good attendance of these pupils are showing signs that they are effective. Consequently, some of these pupils are starting to attend school more regularly.
- School leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' examination results in 2017 were variable. Overall, they were lower than those of others nationally. This was the case especially for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils with low starting points. Pupils' examination results in maths, science, humanities subjects and modern foreign languages were poor. However, girls' results and those of pupils with mid starting points were better than others at the school. They made good progress and attained grades that were at least in line with the national average.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that their progress is improving overall. This trajectory of improvement means that more pupils are working at the standards expected of their ages and starting points. However, variation in progress remains across and within subjects because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and leadership. Pupils generally make good progress in English, art and drama because of the typically good teaching that they receive in these subjects. Overall, progress requires improvements and is not consistently good, especially in mathematics, science and history.
- Work seen by inspectors shows that the differences in progress between current disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing. However, this improvement is not yet

consistent across subjects and year groups. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are not making consistently good progress.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and are supported by an EHC plan typically make good progress. Inspectors analysed the impact of these plans and found that staff use the information provided to ensure that the support they provide is well matched to pupils' needs. However, those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and are not supported by an EHC plan make variable progress, and this requires improvement.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to other pupils, but not enough make good progress to reach higher standards. This is linked directly to some teachers failing to challenge these pupils. Overall, pupils with low starting points are making stronger progress than previously, but too many inconsistencies remain, especially where the work that they are set does not match their needs.
- Leaders closely monitor the quality of education that the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision receive. These pupils benefit from appropriate curriculums that prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is in line with the national average. Some pupils are well prepared for their next steps, and they move on to challenging courses and employment destinations. However, because of weak examination results recently and a legacy of careers guidance which requires improvements, some pupils do not move on to work towards the higher qualifications of which they are capable.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form provides a standard of education that is better than in the rest of the school. This is because teaching across a broad range of subjects is good. Sixth-form leaders and teachers are experienced, and are effective in ensuring that the good outcomes that students have previously reached at the end of the sixth form are sustained. As a result, students benefit from an education which enables them to move on to further success when they leave.
- Students' outcomes are good. Most students follow A-level courses and make good progress from their starting points. A significant proportion of students typically attain the highest grades, including at A* to B, at A level. A small number of students follow vocational subjects. These students are as successful as students following academic courses, because they attain the grades that they need to move on to their chosen destinations.
- Students make good progress because of the typically strong standard of teaching. Teachers generally have high levels of specialist knowledge, which they deploy to plan and assess learning effectively across a broad range of subjects. Leaders have taken steps to strengthen teaching where this has been required, such as in science. As a result, although some variability remains in this subject, most students are now making stronger progress than previously in the science courses that they follow.
- Leadership is effective and ensures that teachers know students well. They assess, monitor and evaluate students' learning effectively. Where students make slower

progress than they should, teachers spot this and provide the support needed to overcome barriers to learning.

- Students are offered courses that cater for their different starting points and plans. Students can choose A-level courses, including university-facilitating subjects or vocational qualifications. The small number of students who resit GCSE English and/or mathematics make better progress than others nationally in improving their grades and in gaining the required GCSEs. Students' courses prepare them to move on to their next steps effectively.
- Leaders ensure that the students' curriculum is a rounded experience. It meets all requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Students' personal development and work experience are planned and assessed effectively. Consequently, they are of a consistently good standard.
- Careers guidance is effective. Rates of retention are typically high, so most students complete the courses that they start. Those who do not are supported by sixth-form leaders to move on to other education or employment. Disadvantaged students and those who do not have a family tradition of university education are supported effectively, so these students move on to the next steps that they should. In 2017, the majority of students chose to continue their education at university, including a significant proportion of students at Russell Group universities.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. Students are well prepared for adulthood. Students' behaviour and attendance are good. They are confident about looking after their own welfare.
- Students who met with inspectors were positive about the standard of education that they are provided with. They spoke with maturity and represented leaders' high expectations credibly.

School details

Unique reference number	137254
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10048426

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1046
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennie Wilkinson
Headteacher	Victoria Jackson
Telephone number	01228 710 044
Website	http://caldew.cumbria.sch.uk/
Email address	Vicki.Jackson@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4.
- The school is not considered as coasting by the Department for Education's definition.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an EHC plan is above the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision at Carlisle College for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers and members of the governing body.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 52 staff survey responses, 102 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 48 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered 52 pupil survey responses
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Erica Sharman	Her Majesty's Inspector

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