

Inspection of Caldew School

Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7NN

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are proud to attend Caldew School. They feel well supported, happy and safe in this welcoming community. There are high levels of trust and respect between pupils, students and staff.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' and students' behaviour and learning. Pupils and students behave well in lessons and around the school site. They are polite to each other and look out for others in the school. Pupils and students are expected to participate fully in learning during lessons. They are confident that on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, leaders will deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils and students value the wide range of opportunities that they are offered. They benefit from working with pupils and students across all year groups on musical performances and shows, and in the wide range of clubs available across the school. Pupils and students particularly enjoy the opportunity to learn on the school farm. They described their enjoyment of raising chicks from when these first hatch and caring for a range of animals. Pupils and students achieve well.

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

Leaders have created a welcoming and supportive environment at this school. Pupils and students achieve well in their learning. They are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training

Leaders have made significant progress in improving the school since the previous inspection. They have focused on creating a broad and ambitious curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils must learn. Teachers use effective assessment strategies to check that pupils know and remember the curriculum. Pupils who attend the specially resourced autism provision are included in all aspects of school life and are well supported. These pupils also achieve well.

Effective systems are in place to identify pupils and students who may have SEND. These systems also identify any pupils or students who struggle with reading. Leaders make regular checks on pupils' reading in key stage 3 and ensure that pupils receive the support that they need to catch up. However, pupils in key stage 4 who struggle with reading do not receive the same quality of support to develop their reading confidence and fluency.

Staff receive helpful information which helps them meet the needs of pupils and students with SEND, including those pupils who attend the specially resourced provision. Appropriate support is in place for them to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils and students behave well around school and in lessons. Any disruptions to pupils' or students' learning are rare. The pupils and students who spoke to inspectors said that they would be confident to report any worries to a trusted adult. They said that any concerns reported to staff would be taken seriously.

Leaders have created effective systems to improve the attendance of pupils in school. They use a range of methods of support, including that from external agencies when needed, to ensure that pupils attend more regularly.

An effective programme of personal development has been created for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. This prepares pupils well for their future, giving them opportunities to have important discussions about healthy relationships, social and moral issues. However, this programme is not as structured or well developed for students in the sixth form.

Pupils and students contribute well to their local community and take opportunities to raise money for local and national charities. There are a wide range of clubs available for pupils to attend, including sports, music and an LGBTQ+ group. Their attendance at clubs is not at pre-COVID-19 levels. Leaders are working to improve the numbers of pupils and students who attend these clubs.

Leaders provide effective careers guidance to pupils from Year 7 through to Year 13. Clear guidance, including preparation for interviews and 'work ready days', helps pupils and students to make considered choices for their next steps.

Governors provide appropriate challenge to leaders. They carefully question the decisions that are made, to make sure that these are in the best interests of the pupils and students. Leaders, including governors, are very mindful of the workload and well-being of staff. Staff feel well supported and listened to by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding in place, with clear systems to record any concerns. Leaders keep safeguarding relevant to all members of the school community through regular updates, training, alerts and reminders. This helps staff to be alert to any signs that pupils or students might be at risk from harm. Leaders engage well with other agencies when required to help keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that pupils and students learn how to keep themselves safe from local and national risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The support for pupils who struggle with reading in key stage 4 is not as effective as it should be. This means that some pupils struggle to access the curriculum in key stage 4. Leaders should ensure that staff receive training to support those older pupils who find reading difficult, so that they become fluent and competent readers.
- Students in sixth form do not have access to a sufficiently strong personal development programme. This means that students are not able to build on the solid foundations that they gain in key stages 3 and 4. Leaders should ensure that students have access to a more effective personal development curriculum, including coverage of relationships, health and sex education.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137254
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10212288
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	938
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jennie Wilkinson
Headteacher	Victoria Jackson
Website	www.caldew.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school hosts a local authority commissioned specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. There are currently seven pupils across key stage 3 and 4 on roll. Some of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses two registered and two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, English, science, history, design technology and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils, students and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work. Inspectors also spoke to curriculum leaders, visited some lessons and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work from other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the trust board and other governors. Inspectors also considered the minutes of several trustees' and governors' meetings.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, staff, students and pupils to discuss wider aspects of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, pupils' and students' behaviour, leaders' improvement plans and leaders' self-evaluation.
- Inspectors observed pupils' and students' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke with pupils and students about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students about their programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Annabel Bolt	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Cahalin	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Ofsted Inspector

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