

Caldew School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112440
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357103
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jean Kendall HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1007
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jennie Wilkinson
Headteacher	Mr Andy Abernethy
Date of previous school inspection	17 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 35 lessons and saw 33 teachers. They met with groups of students, governors, staff and a local authority representative. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's monitoring, tracking of pupils' progress, self-evaluation and planning. They took account of 122 parental questionnaires, 152 student questionnaires and 68 returns from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of teaching and students' progress in mathematics and science.
- The quality and impact of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The effectiveness of leadership in securing improvement and raising achievement.

Information about the school

Caldew is a business and enterprise specialist school of average size. The school is located in the village of Dalston but serves a geographically wide and socially diverse area including dispersed, isolated rural areas and parts of Carlisle. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and an above-average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. A resourced facility for students with profound autistic spectrum disorders opened in Spring 2009. Sixth-form courses are delivered in partnership with Trinity School, with Caldew the main provider. The school has recently been re-accredited with the Healthy Schools status.

The school has experienced some instability in staffing during the last three years. The senior leadership team has been restructured following the return of the substantive headteacher from a secondment and the appointment of two deputy headteachers who are new to the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Caldew is a satisfactory and improving school. It has good capacity for further sustained improvement. Standards are rising due to greater stability among teaching staff, good professional development and a clear steer from leaders. The school now has a highly effective team of senior leaders who are successfully driving improvement with the full support of staff. Their vision is based on good self-evaluation, leading to effective strategies to develop strengths, tackle weaker areas of provision and raise achievement for all students. Leaders receive excellent support and professional challenge from the governing body.

The school is highly inclusive, friendly and welcoming. It has significant strengths in the care and guidance given to all students and provides excellent support for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This ensures that students make good gains in their personal and social development. Their behaviour is consistently good and they feel extremely safe because they are confident that adults will deal appropriately with any issues. The vast majority of questionnaires returned from parents and carers expressed high levels of satisfaction and full confidence in school leaders. Many comments referred to the 'very good pastoral care' which helps students develop 'as well-rounded individuals'. Provision is further enriched by a wide range of partnerships in connection with the school's specialist business and enterprise status.

The percentage of students attaining five or more good GCSEs improved from below average to average levels in 2010. Standards in the current Year 11 classes show further improvement. Students are currently making satisfactory progress overall but there is some variability between student groups and key stages. For example, some more-able students do not make good progress at Key Stage 3 because they are not always sufficiently challenged in some mixed-ability classes. On the other hand, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are being well supported so that they make satisfactory progress academically and very good progress in their social skills.

There is also variability between subjects. Students make good progress in English, design and technology, history, geography, information and communication technology (ICT) and vocational studies. This is because teaching is consistently good and assessment is used effectively to plan for progression in these subjects. In 2010, students made significantly lower than expected progress in mathematics and science. Achievement in both these subjects is now improving, with the support being provided for students who are underachieving. However, achievement remains lower than it is in other subjects because the teaching is not as effective and does not consistently build on prior learning to develop students' skills progressively. Leadership of mathematics and science is not as well established or effective as it is in other subjects. The school has enough good practice to secure improvements, although it is not currently being shared as effectively as it could

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be. Some strategies are at early stages of development, but resources are being very well managed to ensure students' consistently good personal outcomes and rising achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement in mathematics and science by:
 - improving the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good
 - ensuring that skills are taught progressively and systematically build on students' prior attainment.
- Share the good practice in teaching and assessment at all key stages to secure consistently good provision across all subjects, by:
 - extending the good practice in assessment, marking and feedback in subjects such as English and design and technology to other subjects
 - ensuring that more-able students are sufficiently challenged so they can make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 3 mixed-ability classes
 - providing more opportunities for students' independent learning and active participation in lessons.
- Use the good practice in subject leadership to develop leadership and management in weaker subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students have a good attitude to learning and particularly enjoy lessons where they can persevere with challenging tasks, apply their knowledge and practise their skills independently. The 2010 examination results indicated that students made satisfactory progress from broadly average levels on entry to standards that were broadly average at GCSE. Work sampling and the school's tracking of students' progress indicate that standards are improving, although they remain lower in mathematics and science than in other subjects.

Students are considerate, helpful and polite. Any who struggle with behavioural difficulties are very well supported to uphold the behaviour code and maintain the high standards expected. The mixed-age tutor groups enable students to develop constructive relationships, both with each other and with adults. Older students readily take responsibility for helping younger students so that they feel well supported when they join the school. The school council has contributed to curriculum developments and a review of the behaviour code and rewards system. Students respond well to the school's health promotion strategies and develop a good understanding of personal health and safety. They particularly enjoyed the Caldew River Ramble Challenge' and are keen to take advantage of the many after-school activities. They make a good contribution to the local community including the organisation of sporting events and performing arts, mentoring with young offenders, and support for Age UK and in a local special school.

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Students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is effectively developed through 'Spiritual and Moral Development' and 'Skills for Life' lessons. Students are reflective and understanding about the lives of other people including those with different cultural traditions and faiths. Their full engagement with school life is reflected in the above-average attendance and good punctuality. Their workplace and basic skills are well developed across the curriculum and very effectively enhanced through work experience and participation in a broad range of enterprise activities. These experiences, together with their social skills and improving academic achievement, prepare them well for the next stage of their education or work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mostly good but varies from satisfactory to outstanding. In the most effective lessons students are provided with challenging, interactive activities that enable them to develop independent learning skills. Less effective lessons, and those that students least enjoy, are characterised by passive learning resulting from too much talk by the teacher and dull activities. The use of ICT is similarly inconsistent. Where it is integrated into lessons, it makes learning more interesting and accessible.

The use of assessment to promote learning is satisfactory overall but variable between subjects and key stages. In some subjects, such as English, history, and design and technology it is integrated into lessons so that students are able to reflect on their

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learning, have a good understanding of their learning targets and know how they can improve their work. However, the good practice is not widely adopted across the school. Assessment is generally used more effectively at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3 because grade criteria are explicitly shared with students. The quality of marking and feedback varies across subjects.

The curriculum provides a good range of courses and opportunities to enrich students' learning. The Key Stage 3 curriculum provides a good foundation for learning and the development of basic skills, with appropriate additional support for students who need it. At Key Stage 4, students have a good range of options through 'personalised pathways' which enable them to pursue a pure GCSE route or a combination of GCSE, vocational and Level 1 courses. The curriculum is enhanced through partnerships with a local college to afford greater vocational options and by the provision of specialist options such as agricultural studies. Extra-curricular opportunities are varied and well attended.

Students make good gains in their personal development because they receive good personal guidance and support in lessons and tutor groups. Those who are at risk of disaffection, who have behaviour difficulties or who are returning from a fixed-term exclusion are helped to catch up on their learning in the Learning to Learn Centre, from which they reintegrate effectively into the main school. This helps to keep the incidence of exclusion low and is reducing the number of repeat exclusions. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support in the Year 7 and 8 'Nurture Group' and from support staff in lessons across all key stages. The recently opened facility for students with autistic spectrum disorder provides good support for students with statements of special educational needs and works effectively in collaboration with the main school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and newly formed senior leadership team provide clear direction and set high expectations based on their in-depth knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. They have introduced a comprehensive system to monitor students' progress and teaching and learning, and established a good programme of professional development to support improvement. However, some initiatives are recently introduced and are not consistently implemented across subjects. The quality of subject leadership varies, with weaker structures in mathematics and science. The governing body is extremely knowledgeable and well organised and maintains close and highly effective links with staff, students, parents and carers to review the work of the school.

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The school has robust safeguarding procedures including those for vetting and recruiting staff. Its training and policies are fully up to date. It has identified aspects of its work to promote community cohesion that require improvement based on a clear analysis of its own context. The adoption of the 'Open Minds' programme is successfully supporting students in reflecting on their own experiences within a multicultural society. A number of partnerships enhance the school's provision, including those with local businesses, the college and with schools further afield. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in all areas of the school's work. Senior leaders regularly review students' progress and any students who are not making the expected progress receive appropriate support. The attainment gap between different groups is closing as a result.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Recruitment to the sixth form and rates of completion are good. Most students make the progress expected given their starting points and achieve average standards. Almost all students go on to higher education, further education or employment. Students are very positive about their experiences, which are reflected in their above-average attendance and good punctuality. They feel safe and make a good contribution to the safety and well-being of others in the school. The school's enterprise specialism is used to good effect in the sixth form. The excellent Wubbish presentation by Year 12 students deservedly won several awards in the district Young Enterprise Competition.

Recent developments in teaching and assessment are helping students to learn well. The students receive mostly good teaching, though the quality of teaching reflects some of the inconsistencies in subjects across the main school. Assessment is mostly of good quality, and provides students with timely and consistent feedback. Students are well cared for and receive good advice on their options and next steps. The curriculum is broad and

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students feel it meets their needs well. Leaders and managers have undertaken a thorough analysis of provision and achievement and have a clear plan for improvement. Developments are at early stages but indications are that improvements are set to continue and weaknesses are being addressed.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Around 12% of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Most of these parents and carers are highly supportive and feel the school is well led and managed. They are especially pleased with the pastoral care and the extent to which their children are kept safe; most also feel that behaviour is good. The inspection confirmed these views. There are two areas that a number of parents feel could be improved. These are: the extent to which the school helps them to support their child's learning, and the extent to which the school takes account of their suggestions. Several parents and carers referred to the school's approach to parents' evenings as an area they would like improved. These views have been shared with school leaders who are reviewing their communication systems and approach.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Caldew School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,007 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	34	73	60	6	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	38	31	83	68	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	17	86	70	9	7	4	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	20	82	67	8	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	17	85	70	11	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	11	77	63	20	16	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	20	83	68	10	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	16	79	65	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	19	81	66	10	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	23	75	61	8	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	12	77	63	12	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	29	24	84	69	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	34	72	59	6	5	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Caldew School, Carlisle, CA5 7NN

Thank you for your helpful contribution to the inspection and for your warm welcome. We enjoyed talking with you, reading your questionnaires and hearing your views. Inspectors found Caldew to be a satisfactory and improving school. It has good capacity for further sustained improvement.

Your school is safe, welcoming and friendly and you play a really important part in this. We were most impressed by your good behaviour, respect and consideration for each other. We also found the care and guidance provided by your teachers and other adults to be a key strength. The support for students with particular needs is excellent. The opportunities to develop enterprise skills are also strengths of the school. This helps you to be well prepared for the next stage of your education or employment. We thought the Year 12 Wubbish! presentation on recycling was brilliant and the awards you won in the Young Enterprise Competition were very well deserved.

School leaders are providing a very clear direction for improvement and staff are fully committed to help each of you achieve the best you can. They have reviewed many of the school systems and are working together to make sure teaching is the best it can be. This is already bringing about better results in examinations and tests and is beginning to raise your achievement across the whole school, including the sixth form. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and some of you are not doing as well as you should in some subjects. We are confident that the school can improve these aspects because there is already some very effective practice in the school. These are the areas for improvement we have agreed with school leaders:

- raising students' achievement in mathematics and science by improving the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good
- sharing the good practice in leadership, teaching and assessment to secure consistently good provision across all subjects.

We would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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