

# Settlebeck High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112380
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	357095
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Peckham HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mick Hoffe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Judith Greene
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Long Lane Sedbergh Cumbria LA10 5AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 620383
<b>Fax number</b>	01539 621024
<b>Email address</b>	office@settlebeck.org

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. A total of 16 lessons were observed, taught by 14 teachers. Meetings were held with students, teachers and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of students' work, policies and procedures, and the completed questionnaires from 35 parents and carers, 170 students and 32 staff.

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

- The extent to which all students are able to achieve challenging targets.
- The quality of teaching; in particular, the use of assessment to judge progress, guide learning and shape the provision of appropriate learning tasks and opportunities to match the abilities and prior attainment of all students.
- The accuracy and breadth of the school's self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

This is a very small secondary school serving the market town of Sedbergh and the surrounding rural area and villages. It is a sparsely populated area and many of the students live in quite isolated locations, travelling a considerable distance to school. Most of the students are from a White British background and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is much higher than in most schools. The school includes designated provision for students with autism. It has specialist status in both technology and science, and is part of a group of seven other small rural schools, known as the Rural Academy of Cumbria. It is also a member of the South Lakes Federation, which is a group of schools providing shared vocational education, professional development and school improvement support. The school has Investors in People and Healthy School status. The school site is shared with the local children's centre and the Sedbergh Community Development Centre, which provides adult education.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The care and personal development of students are at the heart of the work of this school. It is a true community school; the school has harnessed the support of local people and businesses, who give their time freely and extensively to support school staff, in order to provide highly individualised programmes for individuals or small groups of students. The small size of this school provides a unique environment in which students feel exceptionally safe, and where they are well prepared for life beyond school.

The attainment of students when they enter the school varies from year to year. Year 11 students in 2010 entered with average attainment and left with results which were above the national average. Students make increasingly good progress as a result of teaching which, at its best, encourages independent research and challenges students of all abilities to extend themselves. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including a significant number with autism, are fully integrated into the school and are well supported by some excellent teaching assistants who are deployed effectively. Able students make good progress and transfer very successfully to advanced-level study in local sixth forms or to courses at the local college. In a small proportion of lessons, teachers talk too much and do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to discuss their work or learn through active inquiry.

Students are very positive about the qualities of the school and the care, guidance and support that they receive. They appreciate knowing students across the age-range and the lack of pressure to conform to the expectations of peer groups. The staff have an in-depth personal knowledge of each student, which is used very effectively to integrate pastoral and academic support into a coherent and fully encompassing educational provision. The school is able to promote the holistic development of students very effectively, and all staff quickly know when special arrangements need to be made for individuals.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and good progress has been made in a number of areas since its last inspection. Techniques for analysing and improving the quality of learning, however, lack sophistication. The relative isolation of the school and multiple roles of the teaching staff make professional development a challenge. Staff have not always made the most of opportunities available within the federation of schools to update their skills and knowledge. There is strong support for the excellent leadership of the headteacher, particularly from the governing body and parents and carers. The school, therefore, has a good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best in the school through:

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- greater use of inquiry-based learning
- more structured opportunities for students to engage in robust discussion and debate
- a whole-school approach to consistent lesson planning and evaluation.
- Further improve the professional development of all staff by:
  - ensuring that all teachers regularly take advantage of opportunities to keep abreast of best practice and current developments in learning and teaching
  - involving all teachers and teaching assistants in the development of better techniques to plan for and measure the quality of learning in lessons.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Most students enjoy coming to this school. This is reflected in high attendance and good punctuality. Students are confident and nearly all of them make good progress. In lessons they are quick to respond and, when offered it, relish the opportunity to take charge of their learning through research, activity and discussion. In an outstanding history lesson, students from Years 7 and 8 grappled with conflicting sources of evidence about the use of the atomic bomb in 1945 and were able to explore empathy, bias and their own personal sense of morality. Achievement in most subjects is good and students know both their potential and current achievement. In many lessons, they are able to set themselves challenging targets and to judge for themselves and one another when they have been achieved. In a modern languages lesson for example, Year 11 students planned suitable learning tasks and objectives, having carefully analysed their performance to date, in order to prepare for their forthcoming examination. There are no underperforming groups of students. They all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make similar progress.

Not only are students confident that the school will deal effectively with issues that arise in school, but they are also well educated about how to manage potential risks to their safety beyond school. The students all know each other and they care for each other, accepting responsibility for others' happiness and security.

Behaviour is exceptionally good almost all the time. Students are polite and cooperative, often supportive to each other and to the staff of the school. On occasions, the behaviour of some students with autism is more challenging, but this is almost completely confined to younger students and is well managed by the school. On the rare occasions when behaviour is not good, it takes place when the teaching is insufficiently engaging or is not suitably adapted to the needs of all students. Students make an excellent contribution to the school and the community by taking on responsibilities, such as helping younger students with homework, supporting 'meals on wheels' or putting on a concert for local senior citizens.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. In an outstanding religious studies lesson for Years 7 and 8, for example, students made very rapid progress in understanding elements of racism, stereotyping and discrimination in the context of learning about key features of Islam.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

There is some excellent and highly effective teaching in the school, exemplified by the work of the specialist subjects of science and technology. At its best, teachers are able to use their comprehensive knowledge of students to plan learning activities that are tailored to the needs of each of them. Many teachers use very targeted questions – challenging for those who need to be challenged, supportive for those with less confidence. In a Year 10 and 11 science lesson for example, the teacher, knowing how important it was for a student to develop his speaking skills, gave sufficient time and encouragement to enable him to articulate a complicated answer. Teachers often provide different resources or activities to support students with differing abilities. On occasions, however, high levels of care and support prevent students from developing independence and confidence. Some teachers are less good at tailoring the work of the lesson to suit different abilities and learning styles. While relationships between teachers and students are nearly always positive, in some lessons, students are noticeably less willing to become involved.

Whole-school assessment procedures are very good. The current attainment of students is carefully monitored and action quickly taken if they fall behind. Teachers and students understand how targets are derived and students know their own in all subjects. Most marking is effective and useful. As a result, students can usually explain what they need to do to make progress. Teachers have helpful guidance available about how best to

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structure the learning of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and in many cases make excellent use of it.

The school's curriculum is outstanding, making best use of all resources available to compensate for the limitations of the small size of the school. The care for students is demonstrated through the curriculum as leaders and managers actively seek exciting and innovative opportunities for students to match their needs and interests. For example, one student has been provided with the opportunity to study photography supported by on-line materials and members of the local community. Local farmers have been trained by the school to provide a higher level agricultural qualification for four students. Mixed-age classes work well in all subjects. Students sit some GCSEs earlier than they would in other schools. This provides time to help ensure that there is both breadth and balance in subject choice. Opportunities beyond the formal curriculum are impressive for such a small school, with a wide range of visits and activities. All Year 8 students take part in a visit to France. Caving and canoeing are two popular clubs.

The care of students is at the heart of everything that this school undertakes. Each student's abilities, ambitions and needs are known by every adult who works in the school. The small size of the school enables quick, effective and comprehensive intervention to support students in their learning and in their personal development or when external circumstances are creating particular problems.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school has benefited substantially from the experience, vision and drive of the current headteacher, who was appointed very shortly before the last inspection. She has built on the school's strong care and guidance by encouraging better practice in teaching and learning. The headteacher is well supported by other leaders in the school and by a competent and committed governing body. Although middle leaders are effective in their roles, the lack of an agreed whole-school framework for planning and evaluating lessons makes it difficult to judge the quality of students' learning consistently.

There are particular strengths in the school's leadership. For example, it has contact with every single family, made possible by flexible and highly personalised approaches, including some home visits where necessary. The efforts made to integrate autistic students into the full life of the school are evidence of its commitment to equality and tackling discrimination. The school has also ensured that it knows and understands the particular circumstances of its largely rural community well, while at the same time providing for the students, and sometimes their families, a glimpse of the wider world.

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The school's practices in supporting safeguarding are good. Great care is taken in the appointment of staff and volunteers, and there is good management of all the risks associated with the school site and its activities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded were exceptionally confident about the safety and progress of their children. Some expressed concern about the behaviour of a small number of students. Inspectors explored this and are confident that the school manages challenging behaviour well. Staff give students who present difficulties the time and support to learn how to behave acceptably. Many positive and appreciative comments were also received.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Settlebeck High 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	40	18	51	1	3	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	19	54	15	43	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	54	15	43	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	37	22	63	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	43	18	51	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	46	16	46	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	37	16	46	2	6	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)	12	34	21	60	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	49	15	43	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	19	54	7	20	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	34	13	37	6	17	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	43	15	43	4	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	43	18	51	0	0	1	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 Settlebeck High School, Sedbergh, LA10 5AL**

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school this week. It is clearly quite a special place and many of you told us how much you appreciate its small size, friendly atmosphere and strong care and support.

We found that you are able to take advantage of excellent opportunities for learning, and that most of you make good progress in your lessons. Most of your teaching is good or outstanding, and you are able to learn at a suitable pace. When you are actively involved in your own learning, you enjoy and rise to the challenge of investigating and discussing. We have asked your teachers to try to ensure that all your lessons are as good as the best ones. We also believe that they could take better advantage of training opportunities available in nearby schools.

You are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school thanks to the considerable efforts put in by your teachers. The school tries very hard indeed to make sure that you can study the subjects and courses that you wish, and that you can visit colleges, workplaces and universities so that you are prepared for your next steps.

We were particularly impressed with the opportunities that you have to extend your work beyond the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs and activities and many of you have been able to take part in school trips in this country and abroad. We feel that your contribution to the life of the school and the community around the school is a credit to you.

I would like to wish you all the very best of luck if you are taking examinations this summer and I very much hope that you will continue to enjoy the opportunities open to you through your outstanding school.

Yours sincerely,

John Peckham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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