

Cartmel Priory CofE School

Headless Cross, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria, LA11 7SA

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in most subjects. Achievement in mathematics is outstanding; attainment and progress are consistently better than average. Achievement in science is good. Typically, achievement in English is good. The school recognises that the achievement of current Year 11 students in English is not as strong as in other years.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers expect a great deal of students and usually get the most out of them. Positive relationships with students, well-targeted additional support, where it is needed, and a good variety of interesting tasks in most lessons help students to gain great confidence as learners.
- Students thrive in this highly caring school where staff know individual students and their families very well indeed. Students feel safe in school and very well cared for.
- Students' behaviour is often exemplary. They are courteous to and considerate of each other and adults. Students work diligently in lessons and are eager to learn and do well.
- The headteacher has a major influence on ensuring that a powerful ethos of care, support and ambition pervades the school. Staff, leaders and governors work as a highly motivated team and are successful in maintaining good teaching and achievement. There is no complacency, and well-planned training and support of staff result in improvements in teaching and progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not sufficiently outstanding to speed up progress further and a small amount still requires improvement.
- Teachers' marking of written work is inconsistent in its effectiveness. Students are not always required to make improvements in response to teachers' guidance.
- In a few lessons more-able students are not challenged to do their best or less-able students are held back by tasks that are too difficult.
- Students are not expected to consistently produce neat and presentable written work. Some poorly presented work is accepted by some teachers and not commented on.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 part-lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors analysed students' workbooks in key subjects.
- Discussions were held with staff, students, governors and a member of the Cartmel School Academy Trust.
- Documents looked at included the self-evaluation document, improvement plans, information on students' progress, records of students' behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 33 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted on-line survey). The lead inspector held a conversation with a parent who requested it. The views of staff were taken into account through the 33 staff questionnaires received.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Jim Bennetts	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cartmel Priory CofE School converted to become an academy school from September 2011. The school is managed by the governing body. It is the only school in the Cartmel Priory CofE School charitable trust, which is a company limited by guarantee. When its predecessor, also known as Cartmel Priory CofE School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is much smaller than an average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- A well-below average proportion of students are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools by the government for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. An average proportion of students are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- Alternative courses are provided for a small number of students at Kendal College of Further Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is all at least good in all years and more is outstanding, so that students' progress speeds up even more and is at least consistently good, by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking of students' written work sets out clear instructions on what to do next to improve and that students make improvements to their work as a result
 - ensuring that all lessons include activities that get the most out of the more-able students and ensure that students are fully aware of what more they should do to reach the highest levels of achievement
 - carefully planning activities in all lessons so that less-able students do not struggle and that there are clear steps in learning to help them make good progress
 - keeping teachers' expectations of the care with which students present their written work consistently high.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most students make good progress from overall average starting points. Many boys have weaker literacy skills than girls.
- Achievement in mathematics is outstanding. Attainment is well above average and the proportion of students making expected progress or making better progress than this is consistently higher than the national average. Students are fully challenged to solve problems, and work together to find solutions. They are encouraged to select the most efficient approaches to solving problems and calculations. Students reach their full potential in examinations and are not held back from achieving the highest grades by any policy for early GCSE entry.
- Achievement in English is good. The gap between girls and boys is closing and the school is doing a great deal to engage students, especially boys, in meaningful literacy work across different subjects. The school supports weaker readers well and is encouraging wider reading among all students. Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to ensure that weaker students receive additional teaching and effective support.
- Achievement across most subjects and in most year groups is good for all different groups of students. Overall, higher- and lower-ability students make good progress, although this slows in classes where teachers do not set work that gets the best out of students. Progress of the current Year 11 is less securely good across all subjects. Despite a great deal of additional support over the past two years, a significant minority of students are not set to make good progress in all subjects.
- The small numbers of students known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. In 2012 their progress in English was better than that of other students and their attainment was only slightly behind that of other students. In mathematics they were around one GCSE grade behind other students. The school tracks the progress of every individual student very carefully, demonstrating its very strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Potential underachievement is picked up and acted upon quickly so that most students make good progress. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to support the most disadvantaged students. Additional teaching and mentoring are particularly effective in helping most of these students to catch up.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress. Class teachers are made very aware of students' different needs and they work effectively with teaching assistants to encourage learning and develop their independence.
- The very small number of students attending courses in institutions beyond the school achieve well. Their attendance improves and they maintain an interest in their future education and training.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers' positive relationships with students and their close knowledge of each student's progress and circumstances help to ensure that classrooms are productive and business-like, good humoured and a place to learn. Students appreciate the approach of their teachers and the additional support they provide.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge enables them to give clear explanations and demonstrations so that students are usually clear about what they are learning. Teachers question students frequently to check their understanding and to develop deeper thinking. Teachers pay good attention to developing students' literacy skills across subjects.
- Most lessons are carefully planned and take account of students' prior learning. Tasks are usually challenging and manageable so that students make good progress through well-staged steps in learning. In a few lessons tasks do not get the most out of more-able students. In these lessons it is not clear what further skills, knowledge and understanding they should be achieving.

- Teachers work closely with other adults to ensure that the right balance of support is usually offered so that less-able students and those with special educational needs make good progress and develop confidence in their abilities. Occasionally, tasks are not set at the correct level and are too difficult for less-able students and their progress slows.
- In the lessons students appreciate the most they are actively involved in discussions, finding things out for themselves or reviewing their own and each other's work. This is often the case in mathematics.
- Some marking of written work and feedback in lessons is finely tuned to ensure students are continually challenged and gives them very clear instructions on how to improve. However, this is not always the case, and the marking of written work does not give students enough precise guidance on how to improve and there is little expectation that they will make improvements. Some poorly presented work is accepted by staff without comment so that for some students there is little improvement in presentation and handwriting over time.
- Excellent teaching across a number of different subjects is characterised by very high expectations of students so that students often work on solving challenging problems (mathematics), work independently and conscientiously on improving their work (art and design) or take a lead in activities with confidence (physical education). Teachers' questions are very probing, recognising the way students are thinking so that further challenges are posed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' conduct around the school is most often exemplary. They are highly considerate and respectful of others. They are orderly, courteous and polite. Students value the positive relationships they have with staff.
- Incidents of bullying are very rare. Students have every confidence in the systems that help to sort out any difficulties. They have a very good understanding of different types of bullying. Students have no concerns about their safety in school and feel they are very well cared for by staff. They know how to keep themselves safe when using modern technology.
- Almost all students are highly committed to learning and aspire to achieve well. They concentrate well in lessons and get down to tasks in a business-like fashion. They are very supportive of each other and give helpful and sensitive feedback to each other on their work.
- Learning in lessons is very seldom disrupted. Systems to encourage positive behaviour and learning are highly effective. Students appreciate the rewards offered and understand the need for, and fairness of, sanctions.
- Very few students are excluded from learning. A number of case studies demonstrate the school's effectiveness in supporting individuals, helping them to overcome behavioural difficulties and achieve well.
- Attendance is typically above average and students are punctual to school and lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by senior leaders and governors, provides clear direction, ambition and a drive for improvement. Within a strong ethos of care and respect for all, students' good achievement is being maintained and teaching is improving. Staff morale is very high and they work well as a team towards common goals.
- Improved systems to identify underachievement and the provision of support and mentoring across year groups and subjects are mostly effective in helping students at risk of underachieving to catch up. These involve greater involvement of parents in supporting their children's learning. The school is aware that, despite its best efforts to support individuals, some current Year 11 students are not on track to achieve the challenging targets the school expects of them.
- Teaching is improving because of well-focused training that meets individual needs and

promotes the school's priorities. For example, following training for all staff, more effective focus on improving students' literacy skills across all subjects is having a positive impact on progress.

- Rigorous checks on teaching, alongside close checks on the impact of teaching on students' progress, ensure that effective performance is suitably rewarded. Weaker teaching is well supported.
- Self-evaluation is largely accurate and school improvement planning focuses on the right priorities helping to drive forward improvements.
- The curriculum is carefully managed to ensure that students can move on to meaningful opportunities within the local community, such as in catering and science. An extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities, including in sport and music, and a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education support students' personal development exceptionally well. Excellent partnerships with local schools help the school to offer a broad curriculum that is well matched to students' needs and interests. Courses followed away from the school site by a small number of students are effective. They are closely checked for their impact on students' attitudes, attendance and achievement and to ensure students are kept safe.
- The Cartmel Priory C of E School Trust provides light-touch support for this successful school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge to leaders. Governors bring a good range of expertise to their role and take part in training regularly.
 - Governors review data and understand how well students are performing in relation to the national picture, and are fully aware of the school's strengths and priorities.
 - The governing body is kept well informed about the quality of teaching and a number of its members visit the school regularly to meet staff and see the work of the school directly. They support the headteacher's recommendations on salary progression and check that they are based on good performance.
 - Governors understand how pupil premium funding is spent and are kept informed of the progress of disadvantaged students. They do a sterling job in keeping a balanced budget within the restraints they face.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137338
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	411966

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Chambers
Principal	Paul Williams
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01539 536202
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