

# The Lakes School

Troutbeck Bridge, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 1HW

**Inspection dates** 20–21 May 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders and governors have not yet ensured that student achievement and the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Achievement requires improvement. Too few students, including those who are disadvantaged, have achieved as well as they should.
- In 2014 standards fell. Too few students are making expected progress in English, and too few are making more than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. As a result, the achievement of students across year groups and subjects is uneven.
- Written feedback to students in books does not always link to improving subject skills and understanding.
- Learning is sometimes hampered by low-level disruption in classes.
- Attendance is too low.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, ably supported by a strong governing body, has acted swiftly and decisively in order to improve provision. Standards of achievement and the quality of teaching are improving, but are currently inconsistent. The headteacher's leadership has been the key factor in moving the school forward.
- Parents rightly have confidence in the direction the school is moving in as there are clear signs of improvement in achievement.
- The quality of careers advice and guidance students receive is high.
- Students say they are safe in school and say they are well cared for. Staff and parents agree with this. Members of the school community talk about the 'school family', and this caring attitude pervades the school.
- Teaching over time is consistently good in history, science, design technology and physical education.
- There are clear improvements in students' achievement, both across the curriculum and in English and mathematics. Changes are having the most positive impact on achievement in Years 7 to 10.
- Sixth form provision is good. A strong pastoral programme, good curriculum and highly tailored support lead to good achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or parts of lessons. One observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in school. One inspector listened to students read.
- Inspectors reviewed students' work in lessons and analysed samples of students' books. They looked at sixth form students' files in detail.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, as well as teaching staff, including middle and senior leaders. Discussions were held with a representative from the local authority and from the South Lakes Federation, which is a group of schools that work together to help each other improve.
- Inspectors took into account the school's staff questionnaires and evaluated 56 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data about students' current progress. They also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance. They looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, and subject-specific plans.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of other evidence, including school displays, the school website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

## Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Hargreaves

Additional Inspector

Claire Hollister

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. There is sixth form provision.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Kendal College provides part-time courses for some students at Key Stage 4.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection and took up post on 1 January 2014. The governing body has been reconstituted since the previous inspection.
- The school has the UNICEF UK rights respecting schools award and is a global learning programme expert centre.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in all subjects in order to ensure good progress for all students, by:
  - ensuring that low-level disruption in lessons is eradicated
  - making sure that questioning is consistently skilful
  - making sure that marking provides consistently good advice for improvement
  - planning more effectively to encourage students to think deeply about concepts and make more rapid progress
  - ensuring that presentation in students' books improves, so that these can be used for revision more effectively
  - reducing a reliance on worksheets
  - sharing the pockets of excellent practice more widely across the school, and between subject areas.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
  - systems used to monitor achievement and the quality of teaching and learning continue to have a positive impact on achievement
  - more robust systems to track behaviour and attendance are put into place
  - the skills of the best leaders in the school, including those of the headteacher, are shared with other middle and senior leaders, in order that leadership as a whole has greater impact.
- Improve attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's overall effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection because work to raise standards has not been sufficiently rapid or effective. The school was unable to arrest a downturn in achievement in 2014.
- The headteacher provides strong and focused leadership to the school. His leadership has been the key factor in moving the school forward. Together with a newly formed governing body, changes have been made to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of students. These are bearing fruit, but are not yet fully embedded in order to lead to consistently good provision across the school.
- Both senior and middle leaders are making a contribution to school improvement. However, their impact is not consistent. The best leaders use information about how well the students are doing effectively to reshape policies and teaching. Systems to monitor the standards students are attaining, and how good teaching is across the school, are in place and beginning to have an impact. Systems and procedures to improve students' attendance and behaviour are in their infancy. Opportunities to share the skills of the best leaders with others in school are sometimes missed. Although inconsistent, there is capacity within the school leadership to continue to improve the school.
- The school understands its strengths and areas for development; self-evaluation is realistic. Leaders understand the need to accelerate improvement in student achievement. The monitoring of student progress and the quality of teaching is increasingly accurate. Improvement-planning is strong. Changes have been made to address inconsistencies, but some have not yet had an impact.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for the students. Extracurricular opportunities are good and most days after school there is a variety of clubs and activities for students. Many focus on outdoor education. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been reshaped to respond to weaker progress in English, and offers reading programmes and additional time to develop skills. Additional time has been given to mathematics also. The curriculum has been changed at Key Stage 4 in order to offer all students a range of high quality qualifications. Courses at Key Stage 5 lead to a good level of achievement.
- The care and support given to students at transition points is good. The school works well with partner primary schools to enhance their curriculum, particularly in relation to outdoor education. Transition into sixth form and onwards to university or employment is impressive. This is due to a very strong programme of careers information, advice and guidance. As a result, nearly all students who left the school in 2014 (either from Year 11 or Year 13) progressed into education, employment or training.
- Staff are held increasingly to account for their performance and their impact on student progress is linked increasingly closely to pay progression.
- The pastoral system in the school allows students of different ages to mix together effectively. This, combined with the development of social and personal skills, helps them develop understanding and tolerance to equip them as citizens in modern Britain.
- School leaders ensure that staff and students are treated equally, that discrimination is tackled and that positive relationships are in place. Equality of provision is taken seriously by the headteacher, as seen in how pupil premium funding is tracked. Leaders know that more needs to be done to ensure equality of opportunity by further reducing gaps in performance between different groups of students, in particular, those who are disadvantaged, those who are disabled, and those with special educational needs.
- Some students attend alternative provision. Leaders work closely with the provider and receive information about attendance, safety and teaching for these students.
- Procedures to keep students safe are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- The school has received support from the local authority in relation to the dip in performance in 2014. The school works well with the South Lakes Federation, a group of schools which help each other to improve. This group has been effective in helping with self-evaluation and improvement-planning for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has been restructured in order to support and challenge the school more effectively. Governors are aware of the strengths of the headteacher and support him in his drive to improve provision.
  - They are aware of the decline in results in 2014 and are holding senior and middle leaders to account more closely.
  - They have a good understanding of information about students' progress and the quality of teaching, and are increasingly confident about using this to decide teachers' salaries and tackle underperformance.

- They are aware of the financial position of the school and are working to ensure that the school's spending is well planned. This includes how pupil premium funding is used.
- Governors make sure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- On occasions, lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour or low-level disruption. Most teachers tackle inappropriate behaviour and attitudes well, but this is inconsistent. Consequently, disruption sometimes affects students' progress.
- Many students take pride in their work; however, this positive quality is not consistent across the school.
- Attendance is below the national average.
- Students are polite and well-mannered and are welcoming to visitors. They are courteous to each other and to other adults. At breaks and lunchtimes, in the dining room and when moving between lessons, students conduct themselves in a sensible manner. They are generally punctual to school and to lessons.
- Members of the sixth form and other student leaders encourage good behaviour by being good role models.
- When teaching really inspires students, they become engrossed in their learning and this level of commitment helps them make excellent progress.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students are aware about how to keep themselves and others safe. This includes when using new technology. They are confident in the use of the Internet and conscious of potential risks from emails from unknown sources, using social media, or by surfing extreme websites.
- Students consider bullying in its various forms to be uncommon. They mix well and social interaction between students of different races, genders and cultures is good. The majority of students display a tolerance of others' sexuality, background and religious beliefs. The 'vertical' tutor group system allows students of different ages to mix well.
- Adults are well trained in child protection and safeguarding matters. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students, including checks on the recruitment of staff, are rigorous and monitored regularly and closely. All staff, including those recently appointed, have received statutory safeguarding training, and are knowledgeable about the procedures to be followed if any concerns arise.
- Students say that they are well looked after. They appreciate the 'family feel' of the school, and know that their views are listened to carefully by members of staff.
- The school ensures that students attending courses at Kendal College are safe and secure.
- Inspection evidence supports the view of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey that their sons and daughters feel safe and well cared for by the school.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, has not been good enough to ensure consistently good progress across the school.
- In some classrooms, low-level disruption hampers the speed of learning. Students' attitudes are sometimes not good enough, as shown through a lack of commitment to learning, passivity, weak presentation in exercise books and an absence of real participation.
- Sometimes opportunities are missed to deepen learning. Not enough teaching encourages students to think deeply about concepts, and not enough questioning is skilful enough to capture the exact level of understanding and push students on. Sometimes there is an overreliance on simple tasks, as exemplified in the number of repetitive worksheets or tasks that do not require students to think hard. Marking does not always help students move forward in their learning.
- The promotion of writing, reading and mathematical skills across different subjects in all years is improving.
- Although the quality of teaching is inconsistent, there are examples of outstanding practice in school. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson nearing the end of the course, the teacher inspired students by

sharing the best creative pieces produced by each student. This, combined with lively and expert questioning by the teacher on the poem 'the fat lady sings', created a wonderful atmosphere where students were very keen to learn. In a Year 10 geography lesson looking at the development gap using Uganda as an example, again, expert questioning really pushed the students to develop their understanding on a range of issues, and probed high level concepts.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The focus of school leadership on improving the quality of teaching and learning is leading to rapid improvement in students' progress. However, these improvements have yet to be sustained over time. In the 2014 examinations at the end of Year 11, not enough students achieved as well as they could. In English too few students made the progress expected of them and too few made more than expected progress. In mathematics too few made more than expected progress. As a result, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, fell.
- Current progress information, endorsed by inspection evidence from work scrutiny and observing teaching and learning, confirms that rates of progress are improving, although the progress of current Year 11 students in English and mathematics still requires improvement. However, rates of progress in Years 7 through to Year 10 are much stronger.
- The school has focused on developing writing and speaking skills across the curriculum and, as a result, standards in English are improving. This, combined with specific reading programmes and alterations in the amount of time students study English and mathematics, are supporting these improvements.
- Progress is good in design technology, history, science and physical education. This is because teaching in these subjects has been consistently good over time. The picture of achievement across year groups and in other subjects is one of inconsistency, however.
- The most able students make the strongest progress. Inspection evidence indicates that this is because these students are more committed to their learning. Teachers challenge these students well, and low-level disruption rarely occurs. Opportunities to really stretch these students and deepen their understanding are sometimes missed, however.
- Students with disabilities and those with special educational needs make broadly similar progress to their classmates; their progress requires improvement. Their progress is accelerating as interventions and support are focused more accurately on meeting their precise needs.
- The progress of disadvantaged students requires improvement, although the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is closing. In 2014 the attainment of disadvantaged students in Year 11 was one GCSE grade behind their peers nationally in English, and two thirds of a GCSE grade behind their peers nationally in mathematics. In comparison to other pupils in the school, the attainment of disadvantaged students was half a GCSE grade lower in English and one third of a grade lower in mathematics.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is having a positive impact on developing basic skills, such as developing a love of reading.
- A small number of students are educated in off-site, alternative provision. Senior leaders' monitoring indicates that these students are currently on track to be successful in securing qualifications as a result of their alternative pathways.
- The school does not make use of early entry for mathematics at GCSE; however, the school is entering some students early for some courses in science. Progress, attainment and teaching in science are good over time.

### The sixth form provision

### is good

- The effectiveness of sixth form provision is good.
- The relatively small sixth form provides a safe environment in which expectations are high. Arrangements for academic tracking and personal tutoring are strong. Students say that there is always support for them when needed. The sixth form tailors its structure and curriculum to students' needs and abilities. Students say that the sixth form is harmonious and hardworking. They feel safe and are taught well in tutorial groups about safeguarding and welfare matters.
- Those responsible for the sixth form provide good leadership and ensure that students do well.
- Effective teaching and personalised support in small teaching groups challenge students to learn quickly. Students interact well with their teachers and their peers in class to support their learning. The curriculum

includes a range of vocational courses, as well as a well-considered selection of academic subjects.

- Students show positive attitudes to learning, take private study time seriously, and are good role models for younger students. They plan fund-raising events, mentor younger students and support staff in lessons.
- Programmes for students entering Year 12 without good qualifications in English and/or mathematics are well devised. An increasingly high proportion leaves the sixth form with at least a GCSE 'C' grade.
- The advice and support given to students on entry to the sixth form are strong, as is the advice that students receive in preparation for applying to university, further training or employment. Students are encouraged to 'aim high'. The school has an excellent record of success in this regard, and very few students are not in education, training or employment after their time in the sixth form.
- Students attain in line with national averages in the majority of subjects. Their rate of progress is improving, and current students are making good progress. The school is inclusive in its approach; it accepts students mid year and students who return to the school having started courses elsewhere. They too make good progress from their starting points.
- Overall sixth-form outcomes meet the national 16 to 19 interim minimum standards.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112379
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	461771

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	543
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Bagnall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Cunningham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 440810
<b>Fax number</b>	01539 462473
<b>Email address</b>	admin@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

