

# The Lakes School

Troutbeck Bridge, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1HW

## Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. At times work is not motivating and challenging. This does not allow some pupils to make good progress.
- School leaders have not yet fully developed systems to secure rapid improvement. Some are new and have not yet had time to show full impact.
- Both middle leaders and governors lack sufficient monitoring skills to support school improvement.
- Attendance is improving but is still below the national average.
- Pupils' progress is not improving quickly enough, including for boys and the most able pupils. Pupils are not yet achieving consistently well from their starting points.
- Current initiatives to improve the use of pupil premium funding require further development. The impact of initiatives on outcomes lacks precise monitoring. Disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress.
- The school's new assessment policy is not used consistently. Pupils do not always receive work which matches their ability.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher understands what the school needs to do to improve. His assessment of the school's performance is accurate and he has implemented appropriate initiatives to start moving the school forward.
- Funding provided for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities is used well. These pupils make good progress.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- The school has successfully created a caring and supportive community. Pupils feel safe. They behave well around the school and they are respectful and tolerant. There are few instances of inappropriate behaviour in lessons.
- The provision for the sixth form is good. Achievement is good and students are well supported.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. The fostering of British values is also well developed.

## Full report

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

- Improve outcomes and the quality of teaching for all pupils by:
  - making sure that the new assessment scheme is consistently used so that work is well matched to pupils' abilities and all pupils know how to move on in their learning
  - ensuring that work in lessons provides suitable challenge and motivation for all pupils, especially boys, middle-ability disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, to ensure that they make more rapid progress and behave well.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
  - continuing to develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle leaders and governors so they can be more supportive
  - embedding current school improvement strategies such as improving attendance and the quality of teaching
  - making certain that the impact of pupil premium funding is precisely monitored and evaluated so that all disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Continue to improve attendance for all groups of pupils so that it is at least line with the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have measured the school's performance accurately. They have devised appropriate strategies to address weaker aspects of the school's provision, including attendance, the quality of teaching and the use of the pupil premium funding. Leaders are committed to delivering these strategies with vigour. However, many of these strategies are new and are not yet fully embedded. As a result, pupil outcomes are not improving quickly enough.
- Middle leaders understand and endorse the school's vision of 'a caring, learning community'. They are aware of their responsibilities and are enthusiastic about delivering them. They have a role monitoring teaching and achievement but are not yet fully accurate in their judgements. Their skills in supporting whole-school improvement are not yet fully developed.
- Support for newly qualified teachers is well targeted and effective.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It offers mainly academic subjects but also includes a vocational element. Leaders have recognised weaknesses in the school's vocational provision and they have taken steps to rectify those weaknesses. This is having a positive impact on vocational outcomes and progress is improving. The curriculum is generally shaped to meet the needs of pupils. This is exemplified in key stage 3, where an enhanced English and mathematics element is included for some pupils. However, it does not currently successfully meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school is not making effective use of the pupil premium funding to improve outcomes. However, initiatives are in place to improve provision. External support has been commissioned. Leadership of this area has been evaluated and an appropriate policy is now in place. Consequently, there are already some notable improvements, especially in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. However, the impact of these initiatives is not yet being evaluated carefully enough against disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. This is especially the case for middle-ability disadvantaged pupils, who do not make rapid enough progress.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils who enter the school with below-average attainment. Useful support strategies are in place. Pupils who received support now read with confidence and fluency.
- The management of teaching, learning and assessment includes appropriate monitoring systems such as lesson observations and the evaluation of work in pupils' books. Staff receive guidance on how to improve their practice. However, the system is not fully effective and the quality of teaching remains variable. The new assessment policy is not consistently applied across the school and pupils do not always know how to improve their work. It does not always ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities.
- The system for measuring staff performance is clear. Staff targets are linked to school priorities, including improving pupil outcomes and teaching. The performance management system has proved effective in securing some targeted improvements, for

example clarifying expectations of good teaching over time.

- The outcomes and attendance of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are carefully monitored by senior staff.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and the funding is used effectively to support learning. Pupils' needs are defined accurately and effective support is implemented. Secure systems are in place both to manage transition from primary schools and to commission external expertise. This results in these pupils making good progress.
- The local authority and the South Lakes Federation have provided extensive support to the school. This includes assistance in subject areas, support with the effective use of the pupil premium funding and help to improve attendance. They also periodically monitor and evaluate the school's work. Both groups realise that continued assistance is required to secure improvement.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through external visitors to the school, everyday lessons and assemblies. The police and the fire service provide information on potential dangers in the community. Topics, for example the dangers of alcohol abuse, the safe use of the internet and the importance of healthy eating, are part of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme. A range of sports clubs and the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons encourage pupils to engage in physical fitness activities.
- A range of opportunities is in place for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This includes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Cultural understanding is developed by participation in a range of activities, for example the school musical, the orchestra and theatre visits. Other cultures are explored by visits to Iceland and Spain. A visit to Liverpool enables pupils to gain experience of wider British society. The election of the school council and class officers foster democracy. The school's ethos successfully imparts a strong sense of tolerance and mutual respect. This is supported by the annual Holocaust event which commemorates the arrival of Jewish children to Cumbria in 1945. It enables pupils to understand the need for tolerance. Pupils also learn to appreciate the effect of the Second World War on the local community.
- Leaders engage effectively with parents. The parent forum works closely with senior leaders to both define and measure strengths and areas for development. Parent consultation evenings are well attended and include opportunities for parents to express their views. Reports to parents are clear and comprehensive. Parents appreciate the approachable and welcoming nature of the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body contains several new members. The chair, vice-chair and safeguarding governor are new to their roles. As a result, they are still developing their monitoring skills. They do know the school's strengths and development areas, but sometimes lack deeper clarity and detail. However, they fully appreciate that the school's improvement journey is not yet complete.
- Governors are aware how funding provided by the pupil premium is used and

understand its impact in broad terms. However, they need to check its impact more carefully. Governors are much more precise on the use and impact of the Year 7 catch-up programme.

- Governors are aware of how the evaluation of staff performance is linked to pupil outcomes but are less knowledgeable about the process. The governing body signs off all pay awards.
- Governors support the school's safeguarding process and have had relevant training in child protection and the 'Prevent' duty. However, greater diligence is required in, for example, checking risk assessments, and some have not yet received safer recruitment training.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures for monitoring staff recruitment meet statutory requirements. Recently revised safeguarding documentation is comprehensive and processes are understood by staff. Staff have had relevant training.
- School leaders and governors have recognised the vulnerability of the school site. This has resulted in ample funding being secured and extensive plans put in place to rectify this. Improvement work is imminent.
- Pupils are well supported in how to keep safe. They are made aware of potential dangers and ways to avoid them. Examples include inappropriate use of the internet, social media and alcohol. Parents receive support in keeping their children safe, including the appropriate use of information technology. They also receive information about how to help pupils cope with the demands of their school work. Parents believe that the school looks after their children well.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable and does not always enable pupils to make good or better progress. Inconsistencies exist across subjects, including in English and mathematics, and in both key stages 3 and 4.
- The new school assessment policy has not yet fully embedded and its use is variable across the school. Work in lessons is not suitably tailored to meet the learning needs of some pupils. Pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing and what they need to improve.
- Teachers' use of questioning and secure subject knowledge is a strong feature of pupils' learning. In Year 7, increasingly probing questions were used to develop pupils' knowledge of the reasons and events of the crusades.
- Pupils value the opportunities teachers provide for them to discuss and compare their views. For example, inspectors observed how pupils could respond and evaluate each other's answers to questions on parts of speech. They displayed support and tolerance when a wrong answer was given.
- Efforts are being made to improve the teaching of boys. 'Boy-friendly' books and more

practical learning tasks are being employed to increase their motivation and enthusiasm. However, these strategies have not had sufficient current impact to enable boys to make good progress.

- Homework is a developing feature of lessons and used to extend learning. In the sixth form, independent research information had been comprehensively gathered and applied to improve coursework tasks. However, the school is currently revising its homework policy to make sure that all staff consistently follow it.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning, especially for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities. In many lessons, the learning needs of pupils being supported were clearly understood by teaching assistants. As a result, support was carefully structured to make sure that difficulties were overcome and good progress was made.
- With improved strategies and clearer expectations in place, there are more occasions when teachers monitor pupils' progress and provide help to improve. In Year 9, individual support was well tailored to help pupils of all abilities to reflect on and improve their artwork. It was delivered in an engaging and constructive way which allowed all pupils to make good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They particularly value the support they receive from staff. Visits from the police and the fire service help keep pupils safe in the local community. Parents strongly support the view that the school keeps their children safe. They commented that 'it is a great school that cares for pupils and looks after them well'.
- The school's ethos of a caring community is well embedded. Pupils display mutual respect and are very tolerant of each other's views. Relationships are strong and pupils work well to support each other. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Careers education is effective and pupils receive a range of useful support. Activities such as the careers fair strengthen links with local employers. Year 10 pupils value their work experience and work placement visits. These opportunities give pupils a taste of the world of work. Year 9 option evenings contain careers guidance and enable parents to be fully involved. Useful careers lessons are included in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The success of the provision is evidenced by the fact that all pupils take up either employment or further education. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education and employment.
- Pupils are aware of what constitutes bullying and the various forms it takes. They are supported by 'anti-bullying day' and information about the safe use of social media. Pupils relate that incidents of bullying are very rare and are quickly resolved by staff when they occur.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Older pupils support younger ones to improve their learning or behaviour. The elected school council and form captains play a role in supporting the development of the school. Global leaders

work with primary schools to support transition.

- The PSHE education programme includes lessons in healthy eating, healthy lifestyles and the dangers of cyber bullying. A range of sporting activities provide opportunities for physical fitness.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils behave well during social times and relationships are supportive and respectful. They contribute well to the calm and friendly atmosphere within the school. Pupils generally display pride in their work and are keen to display and explain it. Parents and staff believe that behaviour is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is inconsistent. Pupils engage in their work well when it challenges and interests them. However, when it does not, pupils lose interest and make less progress.
- Since the last inspection, fixed-term exclusions have reduced and the number of permanent exclusions is very low.
- New and more robust systems have been introduced to improve attendance. These include the introduction of a new policy, the appointment of an attendance officer and efforts to reduce term-time holidays. Leaders' initiatives now show some impact. This is especially so in reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent and improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and boys. However, these systems are developing and have not yet had full impact on raising attendance. Currently attendance remains below the national average.
- Leaders have taken steps to strengthen their management of behaviour. The behaviour policy has been recently revised to ensure clarity and consistency. The policy contains an appropriate balance of rewards and sanctions and pupils are aware of its expectations. Good behaviour is celebrated and rewards are popular with pupils. Senior leaders carefully monitor incidents of poor behaviour and parents are fully involved in their resolution.
- The school carefully monitors the behaviour of pupils attending alternative provision and it is consistently good.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good progress from their broadly average starting points. In 2016, results of national assessments indicated that progress for all pupils was below average. This was also true for English and mathematics, and there was variation between other subjects in the curriculum. Recently, more robust intervention strategies have been put in place and these are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Current school assessment information indicates that progress is now broadly average. However, inspection evidence indicates that progress is not yet consistently good in all subjects and variations remain in both key stage 3 and 4.
- Funding provided by the pupil premium is having some limited effect on improving the

progress of disadvantaged pupils. The impact is variable across different ability groups. Disadvantaged pupils with above-average starting points made good progress in 2016 and school information indicates this is being sustained. The progress for disadvantaged pupils with below-average and average-ability starting points was well below the national average in 2016. Recently revised processes have secured some improvements, especially for below-average pupils and in key stage 3. However, close monitoring of the effectiveness of interventions is underdeveloped and outcomes remain too variable.

- Outcomes for boys requires improvement. In 2016, boys' progress was below average. It was also consistently below that of girls. Useful interventions including mentoring and more boy-oriented learning tasks have resulted in some improvement, but not enough to eliminate the disparity between boys and girls across the school.
- The progress made by the most able pupils is inconsistent and is not yet good. This is because work lacks challenge.
- Outcomes of pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities are good. Funding is used successfully to identify and support their needs. Staff are well trained to assess and monitor their good progress.
- In 2016, achievement was strong in chemistry, hospitality and catering, resistant materials and core science. Pupils did less well in French, English and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They are given ample opportunities to read aloud in lessons and pupils of all abilities do it with accuracy and confidence. Readers are encouraged to challenge themselves by choosing more difficult books and they read them with expression.
- Outcomes for pupils who attend alternative provision are carefully monitored and they make good progress.

## **16 to 19 study programmes**

**Good**

- The leadership and management of the sixth form is good. The sixth-form director provides clear vision and direction and evaluates performance accurately. Retention in the sixth form is 96%.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are good. In 2016, progress in academic subjects was above the national average and current outcomes information indicates that this is continuing. Disadvantaged students also make good progress in the sixth form. Strategies such as the close monitoring of students and appropriate curriculum adjustments have improved students' progress in vocational subjects. Current evidence indicates that progress in vocational subjects is now good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff have high expectations and work is designed to meet all learning needs. In a Year 12, carefully designed learning tasks allowed students to enhance their Spanish language skills using a challenging text and an interesting translation exercise.
- The results of resits in GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics continue to improve, especially in mathematics. Interventions, including more rigorous ongoing assessments, have secured improvement, as seen in current students' work.



- Personal development and welfare are good. Students enjoy being part of the sixth form and are positive about the facilities that leaders provide. They appreciate the frequent opportunities to evaluate their work and the support that they receive. Students engage in a range of leadership roles such as helping younger pupils with their work or behaviour, taking assemblies and organising sports festivals for primary schools. Attendance is good and well monitored.
- Students' behaviour is good and they are aware of how to keep safe.
- Careers guidance is effective. Visits to universities, work experience and visiting speakers provide useful preparation for students' next steps in education or employment. All students move into higher education, training or employment, with a high proportion going on to university. All students following vocational programmes go on to either apprenticeships or employment.

## School details

Unique reference number	112379
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10032203

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	497
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Smith
Headteacher	Andy Cunningham
Telephone number	01539 440810
Website	<a href="http://thelakesschool.com/">http://thelakesschool.com/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk">admin@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Most pupils are of white British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which are the minimum expectations

for attainment and progress at the end of Year 11 in 2016.

- The school receives support from the local authority and the South Lakes Federation, a grouping of neighbouring schools which provides mutual assistance.
- A small number of pupils in key stage 4 attend alternative provision on a part-time basis at Kendal College and some disadvantaged pupils receive hospital home tuition.
- The current headteacher has been in post since 2014. Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a wide range of staff changes. Currently a vacancy exists for the head of English.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons. One was carried out jointly with the headteacher. They also observed the start and end of school, lunchtime, two assemblies, two school clubs and registration sessions.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and three representatives of the governing body. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the South Lakes Federation.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors examined school documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, the school's development planning and information about pupils' outcomes. They also scrutinised governing body minutes and monitoring reports by the local authority and the South Lakes Federation. Inspectors also scrutinised information on attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 47 responses to Ofsted's on line survey, Parent View, and 37 comments received through its free-text facility. Inspectors also examined 76 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Mike Merva, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Ofsted Inspector

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