

# Millom School

Salthouse Road, Millom, Cumbria LA18 5AB

## Inspection dates

17–18 October 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The standard of education provided at the school is variable. Where leaders fail to review the impact of their actions effectively, the improvement is slower and inconsistent.
- The implementation and impact of the key stage 3 curriculum is variable. As a result, pupils are not consistently provided with opportunities to learn with depth, detail and fluency.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good, especially in key stage 3 and in mathematics. As a result, pupils' attainment and progress are not good in these areas.
- Despite recent improvements, pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make variable progress.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information, including from the tests that pupils take at the end of primary school, to plan work that stretches pupils' thinking
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and that of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than that of others nationally.
- The standard of education provided by the sixth form is mixed. Sixth-form leaders are not consistently effective in providing a demonstrable impact for their actions.
- The teaching of academic courses is variable. As a result, too many students who follow these courses do not attain the grades of which they are capable.
- The curriculum that leaders provide for A-level students does not consistently provide opportunities to learn in depth and detail.

### The school has the following strengths

- Many pupils make progress in line with that of others nationally in a variety of subjects by the end of key stage 4. They benefit especially from consistently strong teaching in English.
- Pupils' conduct, attitudes to learning and personal development and welfare are good.
- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors demonstrate the capacity to improve the standard of education provided.
- Students who follow vocational subjects in the sixth form make good progress.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes, especially in mathematics, and in key stage 3, for those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - strengthening the implementation of the key stage 3 curriculum, so that pupils are consistently provided with opportunities to learn in depth and detail and with fluency
  - ensuring that leaders routinely and effectively review the impact of their actions, to improve pupils' attendance and progress further.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - reducing variation in the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics
  - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively by teachers to set work that stretches pupils' thinking, knowledge and skills.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities attend school regularly.
- Improve the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes by:
  - strengthening leadership so that leaders' plans and actions consistently have a demonstrable impact on improving the quality of the education that students receive
  - ensuring that leaders provide A-level students with an effective curriculum, so that they have opportunities to learn in depth and detail
  - ensuring that students benefit from consistently effective teaching on A-level courses so that they attain the grades of which they are capable.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Senior leaders understand where and how the school needs to improve. Since the last inspection, they have boosted the progress of pupils with low starting points and secured good management and teaching in English. These improvements demonstrate their capacity to overcome the current weaknesses and further improve the standard of education provided at the school.
- However, despite these strengths, the current effectiveness of leaders is variable. Some leaders do not routinely monitor, evaluate and refine their plans and actions to improve outcomes in their areas of responsibility. As a result, the impact of leadership is inconsistent and weaknesses, in some aspects of the school's provision, remain.
- For example, the management of the support provided for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not fully effective, including for those who have an education, health and care plan. When inspectors checked these plans, and leaders' plans for other pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, they found that the focus on the academic progress of these pupils was variable. As a result, they do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. By contrast, the pastoral and health aspects of these plans were typically set and reviewed effectively.
- The management of the systems used by the school to achieve good attendance requires improvement for it to be fully effective. Actions are funded and put into place to improve the attendance of those pupils who do not go to school regularly enough. This includes those who have SEN and/or disabilities or are disadvantaged. However, the impact of these actions has not been consistently evaluated. As a result, despite some improvements in the attendance of these pupils overall, the proportion of persistent absentees remains higher than that of others nationally.
- Leaders' use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not fully effective. Leaders are clear in identifying the barriers which prevent these pupils from making good progress and they take actions to overcome these. However, as is the case in other areas where improvement requires further strengthening, leadership lacks a coherent approach to monitoring, evaluating and refining the impact of the actions taken. As a result, although disadvantaged pupils make better progress overall than previously, stark inconsistencies remain among them.
- Senior leaders are fully aware that the curriculum they provide for pupils, especially those in key stage 3, has not consistently given them opportunities to learn in depth and detail and with fluency. The steps that leaders have recently taken to redefine and develop the key stage 3 curriculum have had some impact. There are early signs that the implementation and impact of the key stage 3 curriculum are improving, but these changes remain variable and are not yet embedded. As a result, pupils' experience of learning in key stage 3 is mixed. The current key stage 4 curriculum is principally designed to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and career, which it generally does. However, despite improvements, weaknesses in the current mathematics curriculum remain, so pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. In contrast, the English curriculum is a rich and rewarding experience for pupils and, as a result, many make strong progress.

- Leaders plan a diverse range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for pupils. They say that these aspects of the curriculum support their vision for pupils by widening their experience and heightening their expectations. As a result, the extra-curricular programme caters for and develops pupils' wider academic, cultural, artistic and sporting interests. Leaders respond positively to the fact that many pupils do not live within walking distance of the school, so would find it difficult to attend activities after school. They organise clubs during the lunch break and ensure that all pupils benefit from additional curriculum opportunities by arranging activities in school time.
- Leaders have recently revised the training that teachers receive and, as a result, the strongest teaching in the school, such as that seen in English, is being shared systematically. As a result, those teachers who responded to the staff survey at the time of the inspection were typically positive about the training that they receive. They say that they can see the difference it is making to the effectiveness of teaching. Where teaching is not consistently good, such as in mathematics and in key stage 3, leaders have introduced systems to record weaknesses, plan training and monitor improvement.
- The careers guidance programme is effective. Pupils receive information which meets their requirements. This includes independent advice and guidance. As a result, a large majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, move on to further education or training. Some pupils' weak achievement in GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 11 means that they are required to retake this qualification.
- The school has become an increasingly popular choice with pupils and their parents and carers in recent years and, as a result, more pupils are joining at the start of Year 7 than previously. In addition, they are joining from a wider range of schools and from further afield. Leaders' plans to support the pastoral transition of pupils from primary school have been developed accordingly. Staff with responsibility for transition share and use information that they have been given by primary schools effectively. The Year 7 pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the school. However, teachers use the information that leaders share about pupils' academic performance at primary school inconsistently. As a result, pupils are not routinely set work at the correct level. Sometimes they needlessly repeat topics that they have mastered in primary school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. Governors clearly recognise the school's current strengths and weaknesses. They understand their responsibility to ensure that current areas of weakness are addressed and, through their impact to date, have demonstrated the capacity to make the improvements necessary.
- Governors set and promote the school's values clearly. They send a clear message to staff, pupils and parents that pupils deserve the widest and best educational experience and that it is the school's purpose to provide this. Governors are not satisfied that pupils meet their own expectations of education, work and life. They make it clear that the school's purpose is to broaden the pupils' experience and heighten their aspirations.

- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They are confident and capable when supporting and challenging senior leaders. Their experience of financial management enables them to support senior leaders' plans to strengthen the quality of education that the school provides.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks made by inspectors found that staff, including non-teaching staff, are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. They know pupils well and pupils say that they provide for their safety and well-being effectively.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. They have systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Checks were made by inspectors to test the security of the school sites. They found this aspect of safeguarding to be effective.
- School leaders work with external agencies and parents. They provided inspectors with examples of where they have acted swiftly when required to secure pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals are made to external agencies as appropriate.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including when online. They know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable. Senior leaders, including governors, are aware of those areas where teaching is consistently good, notably English, and the areas where it is often least effective, especially mathematics. They also accurately identify pockets of weaker teaching within subjects, although the number of these is decreasing.
- Despite recent improvements, teaching in key stage 3 remains typically less effective than that in key stage 4. As a result, pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable in this key stage. In addition, because of this variability, some teaching in key stage 4 focuses too heavily on filling gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, rather than extending and deepening their application and their understanding of prior learning.
- Teachers do not consistently pitch work at a level that enables pupils in Year 7 to make consistent gains in their learning. In some cases, pupils are set tasks that repeat topics which they have mastered in primary school, so these pupils fail to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding. In addition, teachers do not consistently use information from pupils' Year 6 test results to set work which provides them with opportunities to build effectively on their prior learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning effectively across a range of subjects, including science, geography and French, and especially in English and in key stage 4. In these cases, they provide pupils with an accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses and instil in them the confidence to improve their work and attempt more complex activities. As a result, in these areas, pupils enjoy learning and make the progress of

which they are capable. Indeed, in English many pupils make strong progress. However, despite some recent improvement, this is not consistently the case in mathematics.

- Teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable. Typically, these pupils are supported effectively in English and so they attain the grades of which they are capable. In key stage 4, those pupils who follow the certificate of personal effectiveness course are taught well. The system of 'plan-do-review' in this subject typically assists these pupils to assess and build on their learning effectively. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities routinely learn well in this subject. However, there is a mixed picture across other subjects. Leaders have not had a systematic focus on monitoring the progress of these pupils. This has perpetuated this inconsistency.
- Pupils and parents generally say that they are satisfied with the homework that pupils are set. It is set regularly and at the correct level.
- School leaders provided inspectors with reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain useful information about pupils' recent assessments, their academic strengths and next steps for development. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's 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 are typically confident and courteous. They learn well, think deeply and explore new ideas with curiosity and creativity when provided with the opportunities to do so.
- Pupils usually enjoy positive interactions with one another and adults. Most pupils with whom inspectors spoke, and most parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. Checks of bullying records made by inspectors showed that incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively.
- The pupils with whom inspectors spoke confirmed that staff are approachable and considerate of pupils' mental and physical well-being. Leaders take necessary steps to ensure that these aspects are promoted effectively through pupils' learning and the school's support services.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. The pupils who responded to the pupils' survey at the time of the inspection said that they understand and value people's differences, other faiths and cultures and fundamental British values.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons. They are keen to attain high academic

standards and they take pride in their work. On the rare occasions when pupils lose concentration or there is low-level disruption, it is generally because teachers have not set work at an appropriate level or are not meeting pupils' needs effectively.

- Pupils conduct around the school is typically good. They move around the school in an orderly manner at breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons. They arrive punctually at lessons. Pupils value the efforts that leaders have taken to improve the school environment. As a result, they treat it with respect and most do not leave litter lying around.
- Many pupils attend school regularly. However, levels of absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have been too high in recent years. Systems to secure the good attendance of these pupils have been introduced recently and are beginning to have a positive impact.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' performance in external examinations is mixed. In recent years, many pupils have attained grades in line with others nationally with similar starting points over a range of subjects, including geography, history and science. Pupils' examination grades in English are good. However, their examination results in mathematics have typically been half a grade lower than those of others with similar starting points nationally. The examination results of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have been too variable. Despite some improvements seen in provisional results for 2018, these pupils do not consistently attain the grades of which they are capable.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that the strengths seen in English are sustained. Pupils from a range of starting points and year groups make good progress in English because leaders have developed a curriculum that supports and challenges their thinking consistently well. Pupils typically make good progress in science and the arts. In mathematics, pupils' progress is showing some signs of improvement, especially in key stage 4. In this subject, more pupils than previously are making the progress of which they are capable, but leaders are the first to recognise that this is not consistently the case.
- Pupils' progress varies between key stages. Typically, they make weaker progress in key stage 3 than in key stage 4. Leaders have recognised this inequality. However, the steps that they have taken to strengthen the implementation and impact of the key stage 3 curriculum are not yet fully embedded. As a result, pupils' progress in this key stage is mixed. Some pupils, including those with average and high starting points and those in Year 7, do not make the progress that they are capable of because tasks needlessly repeat what they have learned in primary school or do not provide them with opportunities to think deeply enough and extend their learning.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is varied. Recent examination results and the work of current pupils indicate that the differences in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing overall. However, too many of these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable across a range of subjects.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make consistently good progress. Leaders lack a consistent and sufficiently sharp focus on the academic outcomes of

these pupils. As a result, despite some strengths in the curriculum and pastoral provision for many of these pupils, their progress is not effectively monitored and evaluated. Consequently, some fall behind and do not attain the grades of which they are capable.

- Almost all pupils progress to further education, employment or training. Many attain grades that provide them with opportunities to follow the courses or next steps in training that they wish to pursue after Year 11, despite weaknesses in their grades in mathematics. Other pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities, are supported effectively and remain in education or training. However, weaknesses in their achievement sometimes limit the range of opportunities that are available to them.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- The standard of education that students receive in the sixth form is not consistently good. Most students follow academic courses. Too many of these students have not attained the examination grades of which they are capable over recent years. The smaller, but increasing, proportion of students who follow vocational courses typically attain grades that match those of students with similar starting points nationally.
- Inspectors found that disadvantaged pupils generally make similar progress to others with similar starting points.
- Students who resit GCSE English or mathematics make better progress than others nationally in improving their grades and/or attaining a pass grade in these subjects.
- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. Leaders do not consistently assess, monitor and evaluate students' learning effectively. Where students make slower progress than they should, notably on A-level courses, leaders do not act decisively to secure improvements to teaching and the curriculum.
- Leaders' actions to ensure that students follow suitable courses are not consistently effective. The vocational curriculum is effective in building on students' previous knowledge, learning and skills. Leaders routinely spot and take opportunities to broaden and deepen students' learning in these courses. However, the academic curriculum does not match these strengths. Too often, students, especially those who progress to follow A-level courses in Year 13, are not provided with the opportunity to learn at the same level of depth and detail seen in vocational courses. As a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders have been too slow to improve this aspect of the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is variable. It is typically strongest in vocational courses. Leaders take effective steps, including using modern technology, to extend the range of subjects that students are offered and provide good-quality teaching. Teachers in these areas have a clear understanding of their students' progress and take the necessary steps to support and extend their learning. Despite some strengths, teaching is typically weaker in academic subjects and teachers' assessments of students' progress lack accuracy.
- Students benefit from the range of good-quality activities which leaders provide to broaden their study programmes. Leaders ensure that opportunities for students'



personal development and work-related learning form an integral part of their curriculum experience. These aspects of the curriculum meet the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes and make a strong contribution to students' wider development. For example, students participate in Duke of Edinburgh Award courses and charity work and attend governors' meetings.

- Sixth-form leaders are effective in providing information and support for students' next steps in education and employment. Students think about and typically apply successfully for their chosen destinations, including those who move on at the end of Year 12. They typically move on to university courses and apprenticeships, including those provided by locally based industries.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. Students are well prepared for adulthood. Their behaviour and attendance are good. They are supported well in managing risk and looking after their own welfare.

## School details

Unique reference number	112388
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10037797

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	519
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Newell
Headteacher	Matthew Savidge
Telephone number	01229 772300
Website	<a href="http://www.millom.cumbria.sch.uk">www.millom.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:genenquiries@millom.cumbria.sch.uk">genenquiries@millom.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2014

## Information about this school

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The school is a smaller-than-average secondary school. There has been an increase in pupils numbers recently.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 25 staff survey responses, 49 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 38 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility. They also considered 37 pupils' survey responses.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

## Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Canning	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Ofsted Inspector

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