

Inspection of The Lakes School

Troutbeck Bridge, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1HW

Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and teachers make The Lakes School a welcoming and happy place to be. Pupils feel safe. Pupils sometimes misbehave but teachers deal with this well. The rare cases of bullying are quickly sorted.

Pupils work hard for their teachers. They help each other to do their best. Most pupils produce work that is of a high standard. However, some pupils do not take as much care with their work. When this happens, pupils sometimes have difficulty using their books to help them remember what they have learned.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Teachers help pupils to build on what they already know as they move to new learning. Occasionally, some teachers spend too much time on previous learning. When this happens, pupils do not learn enough new knowledge.

Pupils enjoy the many different sporting clubs available. There are lots of opportunities for them to explore their local area. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award. Many are particularly enjoying the opportunity to participate in a local archaeological dig. They are finding out about the life of children who spent time here after being freed from concentration camps during the Second World War.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors have worked together to bring about improvement across the school. They have provided high-quality training to strengthen leadership, the curriculum and teaching across all subjects. Teachers feel that leaders take their well-being into consideration when changes are introduced.

Leaders and teachers have raised their expectations of pupils since the last inspection. The curriculum reflects the ambition that teachers now have for all pupils.

In all subjects, leaders have identified the important learning that pupils need. They have ordered curriculum content across key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form. Pupils build their knowledge in a logical order. Pupils and students say that they like the way that teachers remind them of prior knowledge before moving on to new learning. The well-planned curriculum has led to an improvement in pupils' achievement at the end of Year 11, especially for disadvantaged pupils. More pupils now move on to their first-choice courses at the end of Year 11 than in the past.

In the sixth form, students have also benefited from the improvements in the curriculum. The sixth-form curriculum builds on students' prior knowledge from key stage 4. Students make links between their new learning and what they already know. They can engage more effectively in their learning. Students' achievement in

their final examinations has improved as a result. At the end of Year 13, students move on to high-quality placements in further education and employment.

Leaders and teachers try to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to reach the high expectations of the planned curriculum. Occasionally, some teachers start learning at too low a level. Too much time is spent on work pupils already know. This particularly impacts on pupils with SEND in Year 7. Leaders have plans to offer extra training to these teachers.

Most pupils come to school wanting to learn. They move briskly to lessons so that they are on time for their learning. They listen to their teachers and work hard. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. However, occasionally their presentation of work is not of a high standard. When this is the case, pupils do not understand their own work. They are unable to look back at previous work in their books. This hinders their ability to build on prior learning. Some teachers do not help pupils to improve the presentation of their work.

Leaders have ensured that pupils' personal development is supported well. Drama groups are used to help pupils to understand some issues, such as drug abuse. They are taught how to keep themselves healthy, both mentally and physically. Across all key stages, including the sixth form, pupils and students learn about healthy relationships. They are encouraged to respect people that are different to themselves.

Teachers use the behaviour policy well. When pupils misbehave, teachers' response is prompt and proportionate. Behaviour has improved as a result. Teachers feel that leaders support them well when dealing with poor behaviour. Although there has been a spike in temporary exclusions, leaders use this as a last resort. Few pupils require a second exclusion.

Attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now close to the national average. Nevertheless, there remains a small cohort of pupils that are regularly absent from school. Leaders have many strategies in place to help these pupils to attend. However, improvement in this area remains stubbornly slow.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in their safeguarding duties. They know how to identify a pupil or student who may be at risk. They move promptly to report any concerns. Leaders have made links with support agencies outside of the school so that they can quickly provide help to pupils when needed.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the risks of social media. Pupils trust their teachers and say that there is always someone to talk to if they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils with SEND. When this is the case, pupils spend too much time on things that they already know and do not move on to new learning quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that they implement their plans to provide training for these teachers so that they can help pupils with SEND to learn and make progress in line with the expectations of the planned curriculum.
- The work in pupils' books is sometimes disorganised and untidy. Pupils cannot use this work to help them to remember things that they have already learned. Leaders should ensure that teachers help pupils to improve the presentation of their work where necessary.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. However, there remains a small proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school. This stops these pupils from learning as well as they should. Leaders should continue to support these pupils and their families so that their attendance improves.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	112379
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10110896
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Smith
Headteacher	Andy Cunningham
Website	http://thelakesschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school currently uses alternative provision from the Wing Hospital School to contribute to the education of a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We held meetings with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and the school development plan. We scrutinised information about attendance and behaviour.
- We considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 55 responses to

Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We considered the 141 responses to a questionnaire for pupils and the 67 responses to a questionnaire for staff.

- We reviewed a range of documentation about the school. This included information about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and support for pupils. We also spoke to representatives of the alternative provision used by the school.
- We looked closely at mathematics, English, art and history during the inspection. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

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