

# Inspection of Kirby Moor School

Longtown Road, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 2AB

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Inspection dates: 21–23 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent  
school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and well cared for at this school. They have exceptionally strong and trusting relationships with staff. Pupils talked confidently to inspectors about always feeling safe. They said that on the rare occasions when bullying happens, adults deal with it swiftly.

Pupils attend school regularly. They are punctual to and prepared for lessons. Each pupil benefits from a broad curriculum. This stimulates their interests, matches their individual needs and engages them in learning.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This helps to ensure that pupils settle into work quickly and contributes to the calm and purposeful nature of the school.

Staff expect pupils to do well. Their high expectations support pupils' strong progress in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Pupils learn and remember new knowledge. Pupils develop personally and socially through the many experiences provided by staff. As such, pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next part of their journey after leaving school.

Pupils love outdoor activities. They enjoy geography fieldtrips, visiting castles and excursions to local attractions, such as Hadrian's Wall. Pupils like honing their business skills. They raise money for local charities through organising coffee mornings and making and selling cakes.

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and the proprietor body provide a high-quality education which is designed around a well-sequenced curriculum. They share a very strong vision for the school. Leaders and staff are at the forefront of developments in special education. Their work helps pupils to know more and remember more of what they learn. They are determined to help pupils to develop the personal, social, emotional and academic knowledge and skills needed to live happy and productive lives.

Most pupils start school with large gaps in their learning. All have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some pupils have been out of school for extended periods of time while others have not engaged in learning at their previous schools. Leaders have established highly effective procedures for assessing pupils' skills and abilities, including in reading, writing and mathematics. These early assessments help teachers to develop ambitious programmes of learning for each pupil.

Pupils learn more and remember more in a wide range of subjects. There is a strong focus on teaching reading and phonics. All pupils learn in these subjects every day. Across the school and in all subjects, pupils learn to read confidently. Those in the

nurture groups sound out and read unfamiliar words accurately. Teachers skilfully check that pupils understand what they are reading.

Subject leaders and staff use well-structured programmes of study which build on pupils' different skills and knowledge. For pupils who find it difficult to retain information, teachers devise new and interesting ways to help pupils to remember more of their previous learning. Different activities and regular practice in mathematics help to improve pupils' fluency in using addition, multiplication, subtraction and division and develop their problem-solving skills well.

Pupils' behaviour is admirable. Despite their challenges and learning difficulties, they do their very best to succeed. Teachers and teaching assistants have a deep knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and behave. This enables them to plan practical activities, such as experiments, with confidence. For example, investigations into the characteristics of light, the nature of our solar system and the functions of the blood are commonplace in science.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a deep sense of social justice. Pupils understand and appreciate the culturally diverse nature of British society and learn about different types of relationships and family structures. They understand the principles of democracy. Pupils elect school council members, set meeting agendas and post meeting resolutions on the school notice board. Pupils know that all people should be treated fairly, and that racism, sexism and homophobic bullying are wrong.

Pupils benefit from regular independent careers advice and guidance. In recent years, all pupils have gone on to further education after leaving the school. Historically, pupils have attained GCSEs in various subjects including biology, English and mathematics. A small group of key stage 4 pupils is currently studying these subjects.

Teachers recognise and accredit pupils' functional skills in English and mathematics. Pupils also study small units of learning through which they acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence needed for independent living. In addition, pupils study short courses, which help to develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects such as philosophy and geography.

Most parents and carers are very positive about the school. Those who completed the inspection survey were especially complimentary and commented on the school's 'tireless' approach to educating and caring for their children.

Staff enjoy working at the school and their morale is very high. Their specialist training equips them well to cater for pupils' special educational needs. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being and workload.

The curriculum meets the requirements of the independent school standards. The school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor body knows the school exceptionally well. Since the previous inspection, members of the proprietor body have worked closely with the headteacher to strengthen lines of communication and accountability. These arrangements help to ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards. The proprietor body's work to meet other requirements, such as the health, safety and welfare of pupils, is exemplary.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and the proprietor body do all they can to minimise any risks or harm to pupils. The school has a comprehensive and current safeguarding policy available to parents and published on its website. It takes account of the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education.

All members of staff are vigilant in adhering to the school's safeguarding procedures. They have a deep insight into pupils' vulnerabilities and are expert at spotting signs of neglect and abuse.

Pupils do not have access to electronic devices in school. Use of computers is supervised. A highly sensitive firewall ensures that pupils cannot access inappropriate content online.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135410
<b>DfE registration number</b>	909/6056
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10203830
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	49
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Chair</b>	Joanne August
<b>Proprietor</b>	North Lakes Children's Services
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Beard
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£41,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01697 742598
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nlcs.uk.com/our-school/">http://www.nlcs.uk.com/our-school/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@nlcs.uk.com">info@nlcs.uk.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–14 December 2017

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the proprietor body has been appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. This involved discussions with leaders and teachers, visits to classrooms, looking at examples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, a representative of the proprietor body, the operations manager and the managing director. They also spoke with members of the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator. A discussion was held with a representative from a local authority which is responsible for a high number of pupils placed at the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school self-evaluation and assessment information, and scrutinised documentary information to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered four written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, 24 responses to the survey for staff and nine responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff throughout the course of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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