

Inspection of Cumbric

Springwell Community Hub, Lanchester Avenue, Gateshead NE9 7AL

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Cumbric do not experience an acceptable quality of education. In too many areas, the curriculum is poorly developed and implemented. The work set for pupils lacks ambition and fails to meet their needs. Teachers lack information on the prior ability and needs of pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that teaching is not adapted to help pupils progress in their learning.

Pupils enjoy some aspects of the curriculum. They like playing instruments and singing songs in music lessons. The school enables pupils to become involved in musical performance in the local community. When pupils are set work that is well planned and taught, they learn well. However, this is too infrequent.

Pupils' behaviour is extremely variable. Where learning is purposeful, pupils can be attentive and engaged. However, too often teachers are unable to get pupils to follow instructions and school rules. Pupils talk over teachers and use their mobile phones in lessons to play videos and listen to music. Pupils are allowed to smoke on the school site against the rules in the school's own behaviour policy. Some pupils feel that teachers do not address poor behaviour or instances of bullying well enough.

Most pupils feel safe in school. Despite this, there are significant weaknesses in safeguarding procedures.

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

Pupils do not experience a curriculum that meets their needs. Leaders' overarching plans do not match what is taught on a daily basis. In too many areas, teachers lack the subject-specific knowledge to teach the curriculum well. Too often, the tasks set for pupils do not enable them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. In Year 11, activities such as toy brick building in construction and drawing desert animals in geography do not help pupils to show their understanding.

When pupils are taught in subjects where teachers have expertise, they learn well. In English, pupils had been taught the knowledge that helped them to analyse a poem in insightful ways. In hair and beauty, teachers had mapped out the steps pupils needed to complete before carrying out a pedicure. Such effective practice is too rare.

The use of assessment is not effective. When pupils arrive at Cumbric, teachers know little about their previous attainment. In some cases, information about pupils with SEND is not shared effectively. The use of assessment to identify gaps in pupils' understanding is limited. Pupils' reading needs and abilities are not identified on entry or subsequently.

Teachers do not establish clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. In lessons, too many pupils talk over teachers. They refuse to comply with requests to be quiet or put their mobile phones away. Teachers do not establish rules for discussion and debate. This can lead to heated arguments between pupils. Leaders do not support staff effectively in managing behaviour. Pupils smoke on the school site in view of their teachers. The school day is scheduled to start at 9.30am. However, on most days, leaders have been unable to secure pupils' arrival on site until 10.30am. This means that pupils are missing the equivalent of one day's learning per week.

There are some areas where teachers have secured improvements in behaviour. Pupils with previously low levels of attendance are now attending better. Some pupils have built positive relationships with staff and dine politely with them at lunchtimes. When learning is purposeful, pupils can behave well. Such positive behaviours are not consistently achieved.

Leaders' actions to enhance pupils' personal development are limited. Teachers do not teach pupils about the dangers of radicalisation and extremist views. Pupils do not access relationships and sex education. This means that pupils are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders do ensure that pupils have opportunities to work with artists and physical education instructors. Pupils also work with practitioners in work-related areas, including computing, and hair and beauty. This broadens their experience and gives them insight into the world of work. However, pupils do not benefit from a sufficiently wide set of experiences.

Leaders engage with pupils and their families. The headteacher has made home visits to introduce himself to all parents and carers. The proprietor transports many pupils to and from school each day. He uses this as an opportunity to get to know families.

Leaders have been unable to put many of their plans into action. Many of the independent school standards are unmet. The planned curriculum is not followed and expectations for behaviour are not realised. Uncertainty over the numbers of pupils attending on a long-term basis makes it difficult to plan securely for improvement. Teachers do not receive the necessary training and support to meet pupils' needs. Leaders do not have clear oversight of the quality of education. The governing body designate has not met to check the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Teachers do not receive appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders have not established secure systems to record possible concerns about pupil welfare or staff conduct. Risk assessments to support pupils are not sufficiently shared or followed. Leaders have not developed suitable risk assessments for the school site and for additional premises used for pupils' learning.

Staff do follow up concerns over pupils' welfare. They attend meetings with other agencies to discuss pupils' welfare. They do not record contributions and learning points from such meetings carefully enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and the proprietor)

- Leaders have not developed an effective culture of safeguarding. Staff are not adequately trained in identifying and helping pupils' safeguarding needs. The systems to record concerns over pupil welfare and staff conduct lack rigour. This means that pupils' safeguarding needs are insufficiently addressed. Leaders should improve staff training and put secure recording systems in place so that pupils' safeguarding needs are met.
- The curriculum is not mapped out or taught effectively. Teachers lack the expertise to teach some subjects. The work set for pupils does not consistently enable them to demonstrate their understanding. This means that pupils do not acquire sufficient knowledge or skills over time. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the expertise and resources to teach the curriculum so that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills that they need.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not effective. When pupils arrive at Cumbric, information on their prior attainment and needs is not passed on. This includes information about pupils with SEND. This means that teachers are not able to adapt the curriculum and teaching to meet pupils' needs. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used more effectively to help pupils to catch up.
- Leaders do not establish clear expectations for behaviour in lessons and at social times. Poor behaviour disrupts lessons. Smoking on the school site is not challenged. Leaders need to support staff in making sure that expectations for behaviour are consistently implemented. This will enable pupils to learn more effectively and become used to the rules and routines they will need to follow in adult life.
- Typically, pupils do not begin the school day until 10.30am. This means that pupils who have already lost much learning continue to lose out. Leaders should do all they can to ensure a more prompt arrival in school so that pupils can make up for the learning they have lost.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils follow a sufficiently developed programme to support their personal development. They do not learn about important issues, such as relationships and sex education and the dangers of radicalisation. Leaders should ensure that an appropriate programme is put in place so that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the school's work. Many independent school standards are unmet. Leaders should ensure that stronger systems are in place to check the quality of education, behaviour and personal development. This should help weaknesses in provision to be more promptly identified.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	148651
DfE registration number	390/6018
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10220889
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cumbric (NE) Ltd
Chair	Eric Baker and John Gibson
Headteacher	Eric Baker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,625 to £14,820
Telephone number	0191 4870169
Website	www.cumbric.co.uk
Email address	ericbaker172@btinternet.com

Information about this school

- The school opened in October 2021.
- The first pupil arrived in March 2022.
- The school is situated in the Springwell Community Hub premises, which it shares with a hair salon. There is a locked entrance separating the school and the salon. At the time of the inspection, pupils were also using a room in a community premises in Wrekenton.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

- Inspectors held several discussions with the headteacher and joint proprietor.
- The inspectors talked to teaching staff, support staff and the chair of the governing body designate.
- Inspectors talked to pupils to find out their views on behaviour, safety and the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked into the curriculum in art, citizenship, English, geography and mathematics. They talked to the headteacher and teachers about curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about their learning and what they knew and remembered in these subjects. They looked at pupils' work where this was possible.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements. They looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. They also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety were recorded and followed up. They also explored how leaders checked the suitability of adults working on site.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Moira Banks

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
 - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(d) following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection;
 - 32(1)(f) an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught is provided to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise;

- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(2)(a) the school’s address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher;
 - 32(2)(b) either–
 - 32(2)(b)(i) where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor’s full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted, or
 - 32(2)(b)(ii) where the proprietor is a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office;
 - 32(2)(c) where there is a governing body, the name and address for correspondence of its Chair; and
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
 - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2;
 - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13;
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year; and
 - 32(3)(g) a copy of the report of any inspection carried out under sections 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act or section 87(1) of the 1989 Act.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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