

Inspection of Cairn Education CIC

The Tavern, 63 Main Street, Staveley, Cumbria LA8 9LN

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for the learning and behaviour of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils live up to leaders' aspirations. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils follow the school rules. Staff help pupils to manage their own behaviour effectively. If any bullying should occur, leaders and staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy attending school. They are happy and safe.

Pupils are responsible and active citizens. They contribute well to their local community through their voluntary work, including helping in a local charity shop. Recently, pupils made soaps and sushi. They sold these home-made products to raise funds for trips and visits, including to a football museum in Liverpool.

Pupils enjoy outdoor activities such as walking and climbing. They take full advantage of the school's rural location to learn bushcraft skills, such as setting up shelters and camp cooking. Leaders provide pupils with a range of experiences to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils have enjoyed visits to a planetarium, an aquarium, a Roman army museum and a wildlife centre.

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

Leaders have carefully crafted a logically ordered curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. By the end of key stage 4, pupils achieve well in their GCSE examinations. These pupils move on successfully to courses at further education colleges.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. Typically, teachers check how well pupils remember the important knowledge that they have been taught. This helps teachers to identify where pupils are learning well and where their learning is less secure. However, this is not the case in a small number of subjects where leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. In these subjects, leaders have not identified what they want pupils to know and understand. This means that teachers are not certain what pupils have been taught previously and what they need to learn next. Some pupils do not learn as well as they should in these subjects.

Leaders have not ensured that reading is a high priority across the curriculum. Leaders have recently introduced weekly sessions to develop pupils' reading skills. However, pupils have few opportunities to read for pleasure and to practise their reading knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not develop their reading fluency, accuracy and understanding as well as they should.

Leaders identify pupils' individual needs quickly, using the information from the education, health and care (EHC) plans effectively. Teachers are skilled in adapting

their learning activities to make sure that they meet pupils' needs. When necessary, leaders work closely with other professionals, and parents and carers, to make sure that pupils get the support that they need.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are polite and respectful to staff and each other. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is calm and orderly. This helps to ensure that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders' approach to promoting pupils' personal development is well thought out. They encourage pupils to pursue their interests in sports such as golf, rock climbing and skiing. Some pupils learn to play musical instruments and others take up photography. Staff help pupils prepare for living independently. For example, staff teach pupils how to prepare meals. Leaders encourage pupils' enterprise skills. Pupils recently visited a chocolatier. This visit helped pupils to understand more about setting up and running a business.

Leaders have developed an effective careers programme. They ensure that pupils have the information that they need about the different education, employment or training options. This helps pupils make well-informed decisions about their qualification choices and next steps.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They told inspectors that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload.

The proprietor body and leaders have ensured that the school complies with the independent school standards ('the standards'). The school also complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have fully implemented the statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education.

The proprietor body has ensured that leaders have developed a curriculum which engages pupils and promotes pupils' academic and personal development. Governors hold leaders to account for the school's performance. For example, they check information on pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant to any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that staff are familiar with the government's latest guidance on keeping pupils safe.

Leaders have an up-to-date safeguarding policy in place which takes account of statutory guidance. They have published this on the school's website.

Staff are familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and practices. They know how to spot potential signs of neglect or abuse. Staff record and report any concerns that they have about pupils' safety and welfare promptly.

Leaders work effectively with different external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the help and support that they need.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about potential dangers and risks both online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In one or two subjects, leaders have not identified what they want pupils to know and understand. This hinders teachers from designing learning that builds pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects so that teachers have the guidance that they need to help pupils know and remember more.
- Leaders do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their reading knowledge. This means that some pupils do not improve their reading fluency, accuracy and understanding as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that there are systematic and frequent opportunities for pupils to read so that they become confident readers.

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	148796
DfE registration number	909/6033
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10254698
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Cairn Education CIC
Chair	Shirley Harrison
Headteacher	Lucie Kelly
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,000 to £58,080
Telephone number	01539 822304
Website	www.cairneducation.co.uk
Email address	info@cairneducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school's pre-registration inspection took place on 16 November 2021.
- This is the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered by the Department of Education on 7 January 2022.
- The school currently caters for six pupils aged 15 to 19 years. Leaders provide education for pupils with SEND, including autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs. All the pupils have an EHC plan.
- The proprietor makes use of two registered alternative providers.

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

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors discussed the provision for pupils with SEND. They also held discussions about attendance and behaviour and the opportunities available for pupils' wider personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, history and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from a local authority responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors visited pupils at one of the alternative provisions used by the school. Inspectors talked to these pupils about their learning and personal development. They also asked these pupils about their views on behaviour and their safety at the school. Inspectors also spoke with an online service provider to gain additional information about the curriculum offered to pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments from parents. He also held telephone conversations with parents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. They scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school’s safeguarding policy. Inspectors examined a range of policies and documents. They spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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