

Inspection of Ullswater Community College

Wetheriggs Lane, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 8NG

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils make a strong contribution to the warm and welcoming environment at the school. Everyone's unique talents are valued here. Most pupils respond well to the high expectations that leaders have of their achievement and behaviour. The school is calm, and pupils enjoy positive and respectful relationships with staff.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including pupils who benefit from the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, are fully included in the life of the school. These pupils flourish, and they are well supported to become confident and independent young people.

Pupils know who to go to if they need help. Staff care for pupils well. Leaders deal effectively with any rare incidents of bullying that occur. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils relish the impressive range of opportunities that leaders make available for them to develop their talents and interests. They enjoy representing the school in numerous competitions, including equestrianism. The pupil-led equality, diversity and inclusion group takes an active role in developing the school's inclusive culture.

Sixth-form students aspire to the many leadership roles available to them. These include reading buddies, sports leaders and providing support for a small number of younger pupils to improve their behaviour through the school's 'Reset programme'.

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

Leaders have established an ambitious suite of subject curriculums, including in the sixth form. They have thought deeply about the order in which pupils should learn key knowledge. Most pupils experience well-organised curriculums, which helps them to build up their knowledge effectively over time. As a result, most pupils, including those in the sixth form, achieve well.

In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum with clarity. In these subjects, teachers design activities that help most pupils, including those in the sixth form, to learn the key information they need so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, in a small number of subjects, some of the activities that teachers design do not help pupils to develop the depth of understanding that they should.

Teachers often use their strong subject knowledge to make frequent checks on what pupils know and remember. They use this information effectively to address any gaps or misconceptions that pupils have about their learning.

Leaders identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND effectively. They ensure that these pupils, including pupils in the specially resourced provision, receive the

support they need so they can access the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. They accurately identify the needs of less accomplished readers as soon as they join the school. Leaders use this information effectively to ensure that these pupils receive the support they need so that they quickly become confident, fluent readers.

Most pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers deal effectively with any rare instances of low-level disruption that occur in lessons. Leaders provide effective support for a very small number of pupils who need help to improve their behaviour. The absence rates of a small number of pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, are too high. Consequently, these pupils do not benefit as much as they should from the ambitious curriculums that leaders have designed.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development to ensure they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Through the well-designed personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn about the signs of respectful relationships. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from a comprehensive programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. As a result, pupils are aspirational, and they are well informed about the opportunities available to them in the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Governors hold leaders to account effectively for all aspects of the school. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school, and they value the consideration that leaders give to their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. They ensure that staff receive the training they need to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders take effective action to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to keep them safe. This includes working with other agencies when necessary.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. Leaders have established an experienced and well-qualified team of staff to ensure that pupils who need help can access the timely and effective support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some of the activities that teachers design do not

help pupils to develop a sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers receive the support they need to deliver the curriculum well so that pupils develop a greater depth of understanding.

- Some pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school as regularly as they should. These pupils miss out on important learning, and some develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that they support these pupils to improve their rates of attendance.

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.

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	112393
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10244616
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	1,519
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Carter
Headteacher	Stephen Gilby
Website	www.ullswatercc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2019

Information about this school

- The school provides specially resourced based provision for 25 pupils with SEND aged between 11 and 18. The specially resourced provision supports pupils with the following needs: profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were 25 pupils on roll in the specially resourced provision.
- Leaders make use of three unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, geography and physical education. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the school advisers, the school improvement partner and with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text comments. They took account of the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils. They checked a sample of leaders' safeguarding records and reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alexia Gargrave	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Gibbs	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Sexton	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Pomeroy	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Hammersley	Ofsted Inspector

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