

Inspection of North Lakes School

Huntley Avenue, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 8NU

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 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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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to North Lakes School. They feel cared for and know that staff will look after them should they have any worries. They appreciate the support that staff give them. Pupils also care for each other. They embrace the school's belief that everyone should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. This helps pupils to be happy and to develop empathy and understanding for others. They are considerate and respectful of one another.

The school has high expectations for all pupils' achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, understand what the school expects of them. They try their best to work hard and concentrate in their lessons. They mainly achieve well.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities that help them to be active and healthy. They enjoy making full use of the extensive school grounds, including the running track and multi-use games area. All pupils in the school take part in swimming lessons. These experiences help pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

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

The school has designed a well-ordered curriculum. It has considered the important knowledge that pupils learned when they were at infant school and will go on to learn in secondary school. This has helped the school to develop a curriculum that enables pupils to build knowledge in a logical way.

However, in a few subjects, the school has not ensured that there are regular enough opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning. This means that pupils' learning in these subjects is sometimes not as secure as it should be.

The school has ensured that most staff have the knowledge and expertise to lead subjects well and to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers benefit from subject-specific support and training and have strong subject knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not ensured that subject leaders have been supported sufficiently well to lead their subject as well as they should across the school.

Pupils' additional needs are identified quickly. Staff are particularly skilled at supporting individual learning and behavioural needs. Pupils in the specially resourced provision learn the same ambitious curriculum as pupils in the mainstream classes. Teaching is adapted well to make sure that these pupils can access the curriculum.

The school has ensured that reading is prioritised across all year groups. Pupils read widely and often. Most are fluent and confident readers. The school recognises that

some pupils are still in the early stages of reading. It has established an effective phonics curriculum to help those pupils to catch up quickly.

Most pupils behave well in their lessons and at playtimes. At times, a few pupils struggle to control their feelings and behaviour and may disrupt their own learning. Staff manage this well. For example, there are safe spaces in the school for these pupils to spend time until they are ready to learn again. The school has taken significant action to improve the attendance of pupils. Most pupils attend well.

The school has developed a curriculum that supports pupils' personal development well. It has provided a number of opportunities for pupils to meet members of the wider community. For example, pupils have been inspired by visits from authors, sports teams and celebrities. These experiences have helped pupils to understand how to be ambitious and successful in their future lives.

The school is well led and managed. Governors understand what the school needs to do to improve further the quality of education that pupils receive. They hold leaders to account effectively for the actions that they take. Staff appreciate the steps that the school has taken to consider their workload. Most staff say that they are able to prioritise their teaching and are not burdened by unnecessary tasks.

The school engages well with parents and carers. It offers a wealth of help and support where these are needed most. The school also ensures that parents have the information that they need to support their children's education at home. For example, the school invites parents to a number of events so that they can learn more about the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not ensured that pupils have sufficient opportunities to revisit prior learning. This means that occasionally, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. The school should ensure that pupils retain their previous learning in these subjects so that they have firm foundations for any new learning.
- In a small number of subjects, the school has not provided sufficient training for subject leaders. As a result, a few subject leaders do not have the knowledge and expertise to lead their subject as effectively as they should. The school should ensure that these subject leaders are given further support so that they can lead their subject well across the school.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112118
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10294279
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Duke
Headteacher	Nicole Spibey
Website	www.northlakes.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school hosts a local authority commissioned specially resourced provision for pupils with autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is provision for nine pupils. There are currently eight pupils on roll.
- Leaders make use of one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.

- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders in school. They also spoke with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in lessons and around the school. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects. They looked at examples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachael Alarcon

Ofsted Inspector

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