

Inspection of an outstanding school: Mayfield School

Campus Whitehaven, Red Lonning, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 8UG

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

Outcome

Mayfield School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where everyone is valued and included. Pupils enjoy highly positive and respectful relationships with staff. They receive a warm welcome when they arrive at school each morning. Pupils are polite and well mannered. Their conduct is exemplary.

Pupils and students, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well. As soon as they join the school, pupils are well supported so that they settle in quickly and achieve the very best outcomes. Pupils thrive at this school.

As classroom monitors and reading buddies, pupils learn the importance of taking on extra responsibilities. They benefit from opportunities to work as part of a team. For instance, they organise coffee mornings to raise money for charity and help to plan the school's summer festival. These rich experiences help pupils to become confident and resilient young people.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of trips that have strong links to the curriculum. For example, they strengthen their understanding of the local area through visits to the nearby park, the beach and places of interest, such as a castle.

Pupils take part in many sporting activities in the community. These include boccia, ten-pin bowling and a swimming gala. Older pupils gain sports leader awards and help during sports events in the local area.

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious. It is designed with care to ensure that it is highly personalised for each pupil. The knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and understand are set out in detail. All pupils, including students in the sixth form, access a broad range of subjects that make an impressive contribution to their development. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for each stage of their education.

Students in the sixth form gain an impressive suite of qualifications. Staff are highly skilled at helping them to connect what they learn with their work-experience placements.

The school ensures that children in early years, including those at the very early stages of their development, receive the support that they need to make a strong start to their education. There is a robust transition programme in place. Staff receive extensive training about the specific needs of the pupils whom they teach. As a result, pupils flourish.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are experts at using information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to design activities that help pupils to build their knowledge and skills over time.

The development of pupils' communication skills is a priority. The interactions that pupils have with staff make a significant contribution to their development. Staff provide highly nuanced support so that pupils learn how to communicate effectively with others. This includes the use of modern technology where appropriate. As a result, pupils are fully involved in their learning. They know how to share any concerns that they may have so that staff can care for them well.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive the support that they need to become confident and fluent readers. The school has a detailed understanding of the reading needs of all pupils. It ensures that pupils with gaps in their phonics knowledge catch up quickly. This helps pupils to be well prepared for the demands of the school's curriculum.

Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards their learning. Staff know the impact that stress and anxiety can have on pupils. They ensure that pupils who need support to manage these feelings learn well alongside their peers.

Pupils know how to care for their physical and mental health and how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They learn how to manage peer pressure. Pupils value the differences that exist between people. They know the signs of healthy relationships. Strong links with local colleges and businesses ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment with training. Students in the sixth form leave school fully equipped for the world of work and for independent living.

Governors carry out their duties effectively to ensure that pupils at the school make the best start in life. Staff are highly positive about the support that they receive. This helps them to carry out their roles effectively. They are proud to work at such a welcoming school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2012.

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

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| Unique reference number | 112464 |
| Local authority | Cumberland |
| Inspection number | 10268833 |
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 234 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 30 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Ged McGrath |
| Headteacher | Sophie McCabe |
| Website | www.mayfield.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- The school provides for pupils with a broad range of SEND, including complex needs. These include severe learning difficulties, autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional and mental health needs, and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils have physical disabilities.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading and communication, mathematics and physical education, including physical development. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair of governors. He also met with the local authority lead for SEND and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted 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 evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break- and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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