

Inspection of Keswick School

Vicarage Hill, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 5QB

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Simon Jackson. This school is part of Keswick School Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Simon Jackson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Hammond.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2014.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They strive for excellence and their conduct is exemplary. Around school, pupils are polite, well-mannered and considerate towards others. They take pride in being ambassadors for their school. Pupils are happy.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well. Students in the sixth form flourish. They successfully move on to a variety of destinations, which include further education, apprenticeships and employment.

The school provides pupils with many opportunities that help them to develop their talents and interests. These include a 'philosophy café' and a range of clubs in sports, chess and 'globetrotting'.

Sixth-form students make a significant contribution to the lives of younger pupils at the school. For example, they willingly take on roles as reading buddies, subject mentors and school councillors. They organise societies that support pupils to achieve their academic aspirations, such as the pursuit of various careers. Pupils become confident and independent young people.

The trips that pupils enjoy help them to deepen their understanding of the subjects that they study. For instance, pupils visit places locally and further afield, nationally and internationally.

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

Trustees and the school have established a highly inspirational environment, where everyone is valued and included. Trustees have a precise understanding of the school's performance. They provide a high level of support and challenge to the school and carry out their statutory duties with expertise. The school is fully committed to helping pupils to succeed.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious and high-quality curriculum. The school has thought in precise detail about the important information that pupils should learn. Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects that foster their aspirations. Pupils in key stage 4, including those with SEND, can choose to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Staff have a deep knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They deliver subject content with clarity and precision. Staff are alert to misconceptions that pupils might develop. They routinely identify and address any gaps that pupils may have in their learning. Staff ensure that pupils accurately apply technical vocabulary in their work. They prepare pupils exceptionally well in how to tackle new learning. Pupils become resilient learners who build their knowledge and skills securely over time.

The school ensures that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified swiftly and accurately. These pupils study the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND excel. They benefit from full access to the wider opportunities that the school has to offer.

The school provides a comprehensive programme of literacy support for pupils. Staff ascertain pupils' reading needs as soon as they start in Year 7. They expertly address any gaps that pupils may have in their phonics knowledge. The books that pupils read from are well matched to their reading development. Pupils become confident and fluent readers. This helps them to learn successfully across the curriculum.

Pupils are attentive during lessons and they are highly motivated by their studies. They actively support each other's learning through the conversations that they have about their work. Most pupils attend school regularly. The school provides effective support for a small number of pupils who need to improve their conduct and attendance.

Pupils encounter an impressive range of experiences that support their personal development. They show respect for the many differences that exist between people. Pupils know the signs of a healthy relationship. They know how to look after their physical and mental health. The school's well-crafted approach to careers education encourages pupils to be the best that they can be. They receive the advice and guidance that they need to help them to realise their ambitions for the future.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the extensive programme of training that they receive. Staff carry out their roles with integrity. They welcome the care that the school offers for their well-being. For example, recent changes to assessment strategies have assisted in reducing staff's workload. Parents and carers value the information that they receive from the school about the achievements of their children. They hold the school in high regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	136902
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10294359
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1205
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	259
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hammond
CEO of trust	Simon Jackson
Headteacher	Simon Jackson
Website	www.keswick.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Keswick School Multi Academy Trust.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of 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-education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school has boarding provision that is managed by the local governing body. This provision was last inspected in January 2024.

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 inspection judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with staff, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector looked at samples of pupils' work from English lessons with leaders.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with other school leaders.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the trust board, including the chair of trustees. He met 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 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, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They 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 during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Yarwood	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Hammersley	Ofsted Inspector

Jenny Jones

His Majesty's Inspector

Phil Walmsley

Ofsted Inspector

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