

# Inspection of a good school: Sandside Lodge School

Springfield Road, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0DZ

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 June 2024

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Sandside Lodge School. They benefit from expert staff who have a strong understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school places a clear focus on developing the independence of pupils. Alongside this, there is a relentless determination to ensure that pupils are suitably prepared for adulthood. All pupils are nurtured as individuals. Pupils are happy at school.

The school has high expectations for pupils, and it constantly strives for pupils to achieve more. This is particularly evident in the development of pupils' communication and language skills, where pupils make considerable progress.

Staff know pupils incredibly well and they tailor learning opportunities to meet their individual needs. Pupils make considerable progress from their starting points.

Pupils are taught to respect each other and to value the differences between people. They contribute well to their local community, through providing clubs for younger pupils, listening to pupils read in local primary schools and visiting care homes. These extensive opportunities support pupils to practise their communication, safety and resilience skills.

Pupils prosper from the wide range of trips and visits on offer to enhance their curriculum learning. Pupils delighted in telling inspectors about how much they enjoyed representing the school in a range of county sports competitions, and more recently, at the sports championships in Athens.

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

The school has fully redesigned the curriculum since the last inspection. This has ensured that pupils experience an ambitious curriculum that offers a broad range of subjects while remaining bespoke to their needs. The school has thought carefully about the order that pupils need to build their learning from their personal starting points. Teachers deliver the curriculum with considerable expertise. They are highly adept at using assessment strategies to check for gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers use this information judiciously to adapt learning activities to meet pupils' needs.

The school works closely with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that it can respond quickly to any changes in pupils' SEND. The school ensures that staff are fully updated about any additional needs that pupils may have. A wealth of external specialists support teaching staff to provide appropriate therapy to meet pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils continue to learn well.

Developing pupils' communication skills is a top priority for the school. Opportunities for pupils to interact with others in meaningful ways, using the techniques that are most appropriate to them, are embedded across the curriculum. Regular visits into the community enable pupils to practise their communication skills in readiness for adulthood. Staff model language effectively, including use of signs and symbols, from the early years through to sixth form.

Staff read to pupils regularly. Pupils revel in the rhymes and sensory stories that staff share with them. For those pupils who are in the earliest stages of reading, there is a well-considered approach to teaching phonics. Staff are skilled at delivering the phonics programme to support pupils to learn to read accurately. Older pupils, who read fluently, are encouraged to read a diverse range of texts for pleasure.

The school has created clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are kind and they enjoy celebrating each other's success. Highly skilled staff use appropriate and effective strategies to support those pupils who find it more difficult to regulate their behaviour. Pupils learn to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others.

Opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are exceptional. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Bespoke opportunities for pupils to develop their own talents are skilfully interwoven into all aspects of the school day.

The work to foster and support pupils' future aspirations and careers starts in the early years. Throughout their time in the school, pupils benefit from many meaningful opportunities to experience the world of work, which supports pupils to achieve their goals. Sixth-form students achieve a range of qualifications which are appropriate to their future interests and ambitions. This ensures that all pupils, including students in the sixth form, move on to positive, aspirational destinations.

Governors, together with the school, have fully considered staff workload when implementing the improvements to the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff

appreciate the school's consideration of their well-being. Staff and governors are very proud to be part of the school. They are passionate about supporting pupils to achieve success.

Parents and carers were very positive about the experiences that the school provides for their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in April 2013.

## **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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112466
<b>Local authority</b>	Westmorland and Furness
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242003
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	91
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jennifer Marshall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Grice
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sandsidelodge.cumbria.sch.uk">www.sandsidelodge.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- Members of the senior leadership team, including the headteacher, have been appointed to their roles since the last inspection. The chair of governors has also been appointed since the last inspection.
- All pupils at this school have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of complex needs, including severe learning difficulties, autism, physical difficulties, hearing impairment and visual impairment.
- 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.

## 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 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. They met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, communication and language; physical education; and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 scrutinised a range of documentation, including attendance and behaviour records, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development documents.
- Inspectors met with some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views of parents through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke to staff to discuss the school's support for their well-being and workload. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about behaviour, bullying and personal development. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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