

# Inspection of Kirby Moor School

Longtown Road, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 2AB

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Inspection dates: 8 to 10 October 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils learn and thrive at this happy, welcoming school. Most pupils join the school having experienced considerable barriers and disruption to their education. The school provides them with a fresh start. This helps pupils to re-engage in learning. Pupils feel safe and secure because of the strong relationships that they build with staff.

All pupils who attend the school have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils embrace the challenges that the curriculum offers. They take pride in the work that they produce. Pupils typically achieve well from their individual starting points.

Pupils learn to reflect on the impact of their conduct on others. This helps them to make sensible choices about how to behave. Pupils generally show respect for staff and to each other. Their behaviour typically improves over time.

Pupils benefit from a suitably wide range of activities beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they undertake voluntary work at the local community food bank. They enjoy trips and visits to museums and places of interest. Pupils especially enjoy their outdoor learning. These activities support pupils' personal development.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a number of changes to its leadership and to staffing. The range of pupils' additional needs that the school admits has widened during this time. This has necessitated some changes to the curriculum. However, throughout this period of change, the proprietor has ensured that pupils continue to receive a broad and ambitious curriculum. All pupils access this strong curriculum.

The curriculum lays out the most important knowledge that the school wants pupils to learn by the time that they leave the school. Pupils learn these key concepts in a logical order. In most subjects, the curriculum sets out clearly the smaller steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn towards longer term goals. In a few subjects, some of these smaller steps are not defined clearly. Where this happens, it makes it more difficult for staff to ensure that pupils learn everything that they need to know in readiness for the next stage in their learning.

Staff check regularly in lessons to ensure that pupils understand the lesson content. This helps to ensure that pupils' learning is secure before moving on to new content. The school carries out a range of checks to ensure that the lessons that pupils receive are helping them to learn well. In a small number of subjects, these checks are at an early stage. This makes it difficult for the school to know what is working well and what needs improving.

Reading has been given a high priority. The school provides pupils with a wide variety of books and texts to read. These texts introduce pupils to new vocabulary that enriches their communication, language and writing. Staff ensure that pupils receive prompt help if they need to catch up on any missing phonics knowledge. Over time, pupils grow to enjoy reading, even where they have found it challenging in the past. Pupils' competence in reading contributes well to their achievement in subjects, and to their success in examinations such as functional skills and GCSEs.

Any additional needs that pupils may have, beyond those written in individual educational, health and care plans, are quickly identified once pupils are in school. The school is successful in meeting these needs. Staff adapt their delivery of the curriculum well. This ensures that pupils learn successfully. The school communicates regularly and effectively with parents and with professionals. This partnership work ensures that pupils receive the additional support that they need. This contributes well to pupils' achievement.

Many pupils have suffered from poor school attendance in earlier education. Once they join the school, they begin to enjoy learning and their attendance improves. The school makes effective use of information about pupils' attendance to check that pupils are safe, and to provide pupils with support to improve their attendance if this is necessary.

The proprietor has put in place a policy that sets clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils usually follow the rules and routines well. Disruptions to learning are infrequent. Where they do occur, they are addressed quickly and successfully, so that learning can continue.

Pupils benefit from appropriate careers advice and guidance. Pupils have opportunities to engage in work experience, for example working in a restaurant or garden centre. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about difference and diversity in the wider world. They learn to recognise and challenge stereotypical thinking. Pupils receive relationships, health and sex education that is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The proprietor ensures that the learning environment is well-maintained and adequately resourced. For example, classrooms at both school sites are bright and welcoming. Pupils have ample space in which to exercise and play outdoors. Staff are deployed effectively, for example in classrooms and at breaktimes. This has a positive impact on pupils' welfare and safety and on the quality of education that they receive.

The proprietor holds leaders effectively to account for their work. Leaders, including the proprietor, consider the impact of their decisions on staff's workload and well-being. The majority of staff feel well supported by leaders and enjoy working at the school.

The proprietor has ensured that there is a suitable accessibility plan that meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In a few subjects, the curriculum does not set out the smaller components of knowledge that pupils need to learn. This makes it difficult for staff to ensure that pupils learn everything that they need to know. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, there is clarity for staff about the smaller steps of knowledge that should be taught, so that pupils build a secure body of knowledge over time.
- In a small number of subjects, the school is at an early stage of checking that the curriculum is implemented consistently well. This prevents it from making any necessary adjustments to the teaching of the curriculum should they be necessary. In each subject, the school should ensure that the delivery of the curriculum is implemented as intended.

### **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135410
<b>DfE registration number</b>	942/6056
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10342062
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Proprietor</b>	Jo August
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Blaylock
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£57,616
<b>Telephone number</b>	01697 742598
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northlakes.org.uk/our-school">www.northlakes.org.uk/our-school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:schooladmin@nlcs.uk.com">schooladmin@nlcs.uk.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 23 September 2021

## Information about this school

- Since the previous standard inspection in September 2021, the school received a material change inspection on 6 October 2022, and an emergency inspection on 8 March 2023.
- Since the school's previous standard inspection, a new headteacher and a number of new staff have been appointed.
- The proprietor listed on the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Get Information about Schools' is Jo August. However, the proprietor changed to Polaris Limited on 1 September 2023. The chair of the new proprietor body is Joanne August. This is the same person as Jo August. The school has notified the DfE of this change.
- The school operates on two sites. The main school site is located at Longtown Road, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 2AB. The second site is at Herdley Bank Annexe, Coanwood, Northumberland NE49 0QT.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also have autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There were very few pupils in the school's sixth-form provision at the time of the inspection.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, the director for quality and learning and with other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body. She spoke on the telephone with a representative from a local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English including early reading, mathematics, and humanities (history and geography). For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their

learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school and reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to health and safety, in order to check the school's compliance with the standards.

### **Inspection team**

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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