



# Appleby Grammar School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112434  
**LEA** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 278931  
**Inspection dates** 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Gill Salter-Smith

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Battlebarrow
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Appleby-in-Westmorland
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19		Cumbria, CA16 6XU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01768 351580
<b>Number on roll</b>	563	<b>Fax number</b>	01768 52412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Michael Saint
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr T Hobson

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278931
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average rural comprehensive school in east Cumbria. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average but pupils come from the full range of social and economic circumstances. They are mainly from white British backgrounds and no pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low. The school gained Specialist College Status for Technology in September 2004. It is part of The Rural Academy of Cumbria. The school works in partnership with Appleby Training and Heritage Centre and Kirkby Stephen Grammar School.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well. Very positive relationships between staff and pupils help in providing good care and support. Outstanding partnerships, such as those with the Appleby Heritage Centre, and through the Rural Academy of Cumbria, have helped to provide a broad range of courses that meet individual pupils' needs well. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil, whatever their background or circumstances, achieves well. Large numbers of pupils benefit from a wide range of additional activities that include sport, music and exchanges to destinations across the world. Good leadership and management identify the correct priorities and have ensured that the school maintains good standards. The governing body has undergone considerable recent changes. Though supportive of the work of the school, until recently it had limited direct involvement with the work of the school. Improvement has been made since the last inspection. There is good capacity to improve further, because the school has a realistic view of its performance and provision. The school provides good value for money.

not applicable

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the sixth form is good. Students reach above average standards and achieve well. Students' personal development is good. They have a mature approach to their studies and appreciate the good teaching, support and guidance they receive. Leadership and management are good. Students benefit from a wide range of relevant courses often through successful partnerships with other providers. Facilities for study and access to computers are currently inadequate but there are imminent plans for improvement. Almost all students complete the course and gain an accreditation in the subjects they choose to study. Overall, the sixth form provides good value for money.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve teaching and learning further by ensuring that teachers match activities in lessons to individuals so that all pupils are fully challenged.
- Improve the use of information from test results to ensure that pupils know what level or grade they are aiming to achieve in every subject, how well they are doing in relation to their target and that they understand what they need to do to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards and achievement are good. The inspectors consider the school's judgement that they are satisfactory to be modest. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress and reach above average standards by Year 9. Results in national tests taken by Year 9 pupils in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average and in 2005 the school exceeded its challenging targets. The 2004 results indicated that girls' achievement is better than boys and the gap is narrowing.

In Key Stage 4, pupils continue to make good progress and maintain above average standards. Results in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) have generally been above average. However, in 2005, GCSE results dipped and the school did not meet its very ambitious targets which did not take enough account of the pupils' prior achievement. Pupils' achievement in science throughout the school is outstanding. There are no significant differences between the achievement of girls, boys or pupils of different abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Students enter the sixth form with average standards. They achieve well and consistently reach above average standards. Particularly successful subjects are statistics, general studies, science, English and business studies. Most students choose courses that interest them, persist in their studies and are successful.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils show respect for other cultures through exchanges with countries across the world and through work across subjects. They have a very good awareness of moral and social issues resulting from frequent opportunities for debate in lessons on issues such as the misuse of drugs. Their participation in charity work and an extensive range of enrichment activities are impressive. They have influenced change through the school forum. However, the lack of a daily collective act of worship and limited time for religious education in Key Stage 4 limits opportunities for further personal development.

Pupils enjoy being at school and learning. There is a family atmosphere of mutual trust, support and care. Pupils behave well and exclusions are low. Attendance is above the national average and pupils are punctual to lessons.

Pupils feel safe in school and appreciate the support of staff and sixth form students. Pupils maintain healthy lifestyles through regular involvement in physical education lessons and extra activities and they enjoy healthy school lunches. Pupils are well prepared for their futures. They have good communication and other basic skills. They experience a good range of work related activities and receive good guidance to help them plan the next stage of their education.

Sixth form students have a mature approach to their studies. They take a full part in the life of the school and provide good role models and support for younger pupils.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. School leadership has accurately identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and is in the process of making improvements. Notable strengths in the good teaching include teachers' command of their subjects; the effective way they capture and hold pupils' attention; well structured lessons with a clear purpose; and enthusiasm and very positive relationships that encourage pupils to want to learn are well to the fore. On the other hand, in many lessons, teachers are not using the information on pupils' test results to set work that challenges and stretches the different groups in the class, particularly pupils of high ability. Although the school has set targets for pupils, for example, in GCSE subjects, they do not all know them, nor do they know how well they are doing in relation to their target. The quality of marking is generally good, but it is inconsistent. In some classes pupils do not get sufficient written guidance and advice on what exactly it is they have to do to improve their work and achieve a higher standard. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well taught and supported helping them to achieve well.

Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students value their lessons and benefit from their teachers' considerable expertise both in their subjects and in the methods they use to help them learn.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

#### Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum provides for individual needs well. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form benefit from a wide variety of courses that provides good progression from age 14 to 19 and includes a good range of vocational courses. The provision at Appleby Heritage Centre is excellent and much appreciated by the pupils and students involved, some of whom were at risk of losing interest in their education. Pupils and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Technology College status has helped to fund a broader range of courses and provide extra facilities especially in design and technology, science and mathematics. An excellent variety of enrichment activities and events extend the experience of many pupils and students. The school considers that the curriculum is good whereas the inspection finds it satisfactory. This is because, despite its strengths, the school does not meet statutory requirements for providing religious education and information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 and the effectiveness of the planned work in work-related learning and citizenship is not checked.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school provides good guidance, advice and support. Staff know the pupils very well. Parents appreciate how well the school takes care of pupils and encourages them to do well. All staff know procedures for child protection, first aid and safety in school and on visits. Pupils appreciate the support and advice they receive from staff and a school nurse supplements this with health advice, providing a well-used weekly drop-in service. Though academic progress is tracked by subject staff, there is no overview of individual pupils' progress across all subjects to help identify potential underachievement quickly and provide early intervention. The school has imminent plans to introduce electronic systems to aid this process.

Sixth form students appreciate the ongoing support of their academic progress and personal development provided by subject staff and sixth form tutors. The progress they make is checked frequently and sensitive support and encouragement helps them to achieve well.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The welfare and development of each pupil are central to the headteacher's clear and well communicated vision for the school. Parents value and support this approach. The headteacher is supported by an effective leadership team which has helped the school maintain good standards since the previous inspection.

The school knows itself well and regular consultation with parents and pupils helps the school to identify its priorities. Senior leaders have correctly identified an improvement in teaching and learning as the key to raising standards further. Heads of subjects manage their departments well. Senior leaders and heads of subjects know what has to be done, but the systems for ensuring that what they expect to be happening in classrooms is actually taking place are not yet robust enough. For example, heads of subjects do not check often enough on how pupils are benefiting from the way their work is assessed and marked.

The governing body has recently undergone considerable change and a number of them bring invaluable expertise to their role. Governors are well informed of the school's performance by senior leaders. However, few governors have direct experience of the work of the school which limits their role as critical friends.

Except for limited access to computers and places to study in the sixth form, staffing, accommodation and other resources are well used to help pupils do well. The school's deficit budget is being managed effectively. Capacity to improve further is good.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The focus is on students achieving the highest possible standards. Students expressed full confidence in their teachers and leaders and clearly enjoy this stage of their education.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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11 November 2005

Dear pupils and students

We should like to thank you all for the welcome we received and for your politeness and courtesy. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your experiences of school life and sharing some of your lessons, extra activities and an assembly. We appreciate the hard work of your teachers and the extra time they gave to us to help us to find out about your school.

It is important that you know what we think of your school. We consider that Appleby Grammar School, including the sixth form, is a good school where you will do well and achieve good standards because you are taught well. You benefit from a wide choice of courses that you can follow from aged 14 to 19. Your school has worked hard to forge useful partnerships with local providers to help ensure that there are courses for you to take that interest you. The work going on at the Appleby Heritage Centre is outstanding. Teachers know you well and you have very good relationships with them. The school has your best interests at its heart and makes sure that you are safe and secure when in the care of the school. You benefit a great deal from an excellent range of additional activities to help develop your interests and awareness of the world.

There are a number of things we have asked the school to do to help you to do even better than you are doing now.

Teachers can improve the way they use the information on your test results and progress to ensure that all your work challenges you.

Make sure that you all know what target level or grade you are aiming to achieve in all your subjects.

Make sure that you know how well you are doing in relation to that target and that you know exactly what you need to do to improve.

We hope that you continue to benefit from your time at Appleby Grammar School.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith, Jo Clark and Betty Colley

Annex B