

Caldew School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112440
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	310893
Inspection dates	17–18 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Cox

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	950
6th form	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jennie Wilkinson
Headteacher	Mr Geoffrey Toogood
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2004
School address	Dalston Carlisle Cumbria CA5 7NN
Telephone number	01228 710044
Fax number	01228 710390

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector on secondment to Ofsted and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Caldew School is situated in the village of Dalston, five miles south of Carlisle. The school is of average size. Most pupils travel to the school from the surrounding rural areas, some of which are isolated. A large proportion of pupils travel from the city of Carlisle. Almost all pupils are of White British background and live in areas of mixed social advantage, although a number are affected by rural isolation and/or disadvantage. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is very small. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is broadly average. In 2003, the school gained specialist status as a Business and Enterprise College. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People award. The school is run jointly by an executive headteacher who spends time working with another Carlisle school and a substantive headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Caldew School provides a satisfactory education. The executive headteacher and headteacher, with the support of a committed senior and middle leadership team, have brought about improvements in the quality and monitoring of teaching and learning, and the tracking of pupils' performance. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved this school year and there is convincing evidence that the decline in standards seen in the 2007 results has been reversed.

In the main school achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with the national averages at Year 11. Monitoring of pupils' progress, together with externally validated teacher assessments, tell of improving achievement and standards this year, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are good and are supporting this rise in standards confirmed by results in external examinations. The school has done much during the academic year to accelerate the progress of pupils in lessons and this is evident in the good lessons seen by inspectors. The school's system of monitoring the effectiveness of departments is good and holds subject leaders to account for pupils' performance. This improved system, including the analysis and evaluation of assessment data, is in its early stages and, whilst having impact in some subjects and departments, it is not yet fully effective across all subjects.

The school is committed to providing learning opportunities tailored to the needs of its pupils. There are well established links with external providers in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Vocational courses are available at a local college to meet the needs of some pupils.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Pupils say they enjoy the school and are appreciative of the improved facilities that the business and enterprise specialism has brought. However, many are not clear about what business and enterprise means nor how the specialism influences their lessons across subjects. The recently introduced mixed aged registration groups are proving successful. They enable integration of pupils across year groups and allow for discussions and advice between pupils. A small minority of parents expressed some concern about not being fully consulted about the process and reasons for this change.

Care and support are strengths of the school. Support staff are deployed well, helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who progress in line with others. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress against challenging targets is developing and is satisfactory. The school recognises that there is more to do to ensure work meets the capabilities of all pupils.

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. The difficulty in recruitment of some subject leaders and specialist teachers, particularly in mathematics, has limited the school's ability to improve its overall performance. However, new appointments have been made and responsibilities have been established across an extended management team. The school recognises the need to stabilise leadership and management at all levels to secure the emerging improvements.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is satisfactory. Recent changes in its leadership are yet to have a sustained impact on students' achievement, which is satisfactory, and standards that are overall average. Students' personal development is good. The broad curriculum provides students with a good

range of opportunities in preparation for further vocational and academic education. Inspectors saw good teaching in most lessons which allowed students to progress well. However, the improvements in teaching and learning seen across the school have yet to have a sustained impact on the achievement and standards in the sixth form. Care, guidance and support is good and effective changes are being made to provide additional and structured support to students when studying at the partnership schools and university. Sixth form students say that they enjoy life at the school and they are keen to take on additional responsibility.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure sustained improvement in achievement and standards across the school and particularly in the core subjects.
- Improve the analysis and use of assessment data and ensure its consistent application across the school to raise achievement and standards in all subjects.
- Stabilise leadership and management at all levels to ensure accountability and secure improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Sixth form: 3

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils come to the school with broadly average standards overall. The standards reached at the end of Year 11 in 2007 were average overall and nearly all pupils left with at least one pass at GCSE or equivalent. Those leaving with five A* to C grades including English and mathematics was slightly above average in 2007 but not as high as in previous years. Pupils are now doing better and the school's assessments show the current Year 11 are on course to reach higher standards.

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 Standards at Key Stage 3 in 2007 in English were broadly average but those of mathematics and science were below average. Standards in the sixth form were average overall. The progress that pupils made across the school in 2007 was satisfactory overall. However, evidence from the inspection shows that pupils are now making better progress. This includes pupils' work seen in lessons, including the sixth form, and the school's accurate and reliable data for monitoring pupils' progress against challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Sixth form: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. They are courteous and respectful with each other and their teachers. Pupils speak positively about the school and attendance is

above average. They enjoy being actively involved in their lessons and in the range of activities available after school including sports activities and a variety of clubs. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to turn to should they feel uncomfortable or need to report any poor behaviour. They respond well to the school's active encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle, including making healthy food choices at break and lunchtime. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are well supervised by staff and they behave thoughtfully and sensibly. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and adopt it well. For example the school allows mobile phones and digital music players for use at lunchtime but not in lessons. Pupils respect this and are aware of the consequences should they break the rules. The school has worked hard to establish consistent methods of dealing with unacceptable behaviour and has provided a range of strategies that pupils understand. On the very few occasions when a pupil does not meet the high standards expected of them they are quick to respond to teachers' requests to correct their behaviour.

A small minority of pupils at risk of disengagement in lessons receive good support in the Learning to Learn Centre where staff help these pupils focus on their learning in a positive environment that promotes self-esteem and well-being.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils gain awareness of multicultural societies through educational visits, pupil exchanges and exploring issues of third world conflict during lessons. The newly introduced mixed-age registration groups are yet to provide time for personal reflection and consideration of wider spiritual issues. Pupils make a positive contribution to their local community through such activities as visiting older people who live nearby and taking part in annual school performances. The school council, actively supported by the governing body, is a positive feature. Recommendations for school improvements are made to the school's leadership, for example the proposed change to the uniform. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being; in particular, their awareness of skills for future employment are raised through the school's specialist subjects and through the vocational and work related courses available to them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and some of the lessons seen were outstanding. Improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' progress are due to the very effective and ongoing professional development of teachers established over the last 18 months. This includes a robust and regular cycle of subject reviews undertaken by the school which include scheduled meetings to review progress. Most teachers prepare lessons that interest and motivate their pupils to reach challenging targets. Teachers often use a rich and varied range of activities that help pupils improve their learning. Teachers demonstrate good working relationships with pupils, a high proportion of who display a keenness to learn and enjoyment of the good progress they make. Most teachers have high expectations and the work set is well matched to the levels of capability and need in teaching groups. Pupils in the more successful lessons develop their learning by evaluating their own work and that of others in the class. Pupils say they enjoy this because it allows them to learn from each other.

Learning is less effective when preparation is weak and teaching methods are mundane. Not all teachers plan lessons sufficiently well to challenge pupils who are most able. This leads to their progress being slower than expected. Learning support in the classroom is very effective because it is well focused on the needs of the pupils. There is too much inconsistency in the setting of purposeful homework which extends learning. The quality of marking across subjects is variable and some pupils find this confusing. The more effective marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. Teachers use their extensive subject knowledge effectively which leads to increased student confidence, self-motivation and progress. Most students develop independent study skills that equip them well for the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. It is reviewed regularly to ensure its continued effectiveness in meeting the changing needs of pupils. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, especially in the provision for learning through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils achieve well when studying alternative courses to GCSE in numeracy and literacy. Through its specialist status in business and enterprise, the school has established a good personal, health and social education (PHSE) programme that includes aspects of financial awareness and citizenship education. The increasing number of pupils attending a local college to follow vocational courses, such as construction or hair and beauty, is a further positive feature of the good curriculum. Agricultural education is evident which, given the school's location, allows pupils an appreciation of rural working practices and economics. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to consider how they can develop healthy lifestyles and stay safe. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, extra-curricular activities and additional classes which are generally well attended. The curriculum in the sixth form, in partnership with a Consortium of Carlisle Schools and the University of Cumbria, offers a good variety of academic and vocational courses. This contributes well to good retention rates and successful transfer to further and higher education providers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. There is a high level of commitment to inclusion and to pupils' welfare. The procedures for child protection meet requirements and the school's systems for ensuring health and safety are established and well managed. Strong partnerships with outside agencies provide appropriate support and care for vulnerable pupils. The school provides good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through the use of adults with specialist skills in the classrooms. Partnerships with parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are strong. The majority of these parents are pleased with the school and their children acknowledge the good care provided. The recently introduced

mixed-age registration groups are seen by most pupils as successful. They allow friendships to be developed with older pupils who can offer advice and guidance on subject options and examination preparation. However, some parents expressed concern that the school had not sought their views on this change. Pupils receive good support when making decisions about subject choices and career pathways in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Transfer to the next stages of education, at ages 16 and 18, is well supported by advisory organisations as well as teachers at the school. There are good links with feeder primary schools. Arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition on entry to the school at age 11. They include the opportunity to attend summer school. Parents are kept informed of their children's academic progress by regular subject reports and consultation evenings. There are some good examples in the school of assessment and tracking that provides academic guidance and support for pupils, although these systems are not consistently applied across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The executive headteacher and the headteacher are very clear that important lessons have been learned following the lower than anticipated national test results in 2007. There is an improved clarity of vision and direction focused on raising standards and achievement. Early indications, based on modular test results and externally validated teacher assessments, point to improved standards for the school in 2008, although those in the sixth form are likely to show only modest gains. A number of staffing issues have had an impact on the progress made by pupils in some subjects such as mathematics. These are gradually being overcome and additional changes to the roles of senior and middle leaders are leading to an increase in the accountability of subject departments for pupils' achievement. The process of monitoring teaching and learning has recently been strengthened. The information collected is used more effectively in driving up standards. There are a number of departments with significant strengths and the sharing of the best practice in the school is beginning to aid improvement across subjects. The issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The systems to set targets for pupils and track their progress have improved and are being developed further. There is evidence that pupils have increasing knowledge of what they need to do to improve, although this is not consistently the case across the whole school.

Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have an awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide effective support to the senior leadership team who are regularly held to account. The school's financial management is thorough and is well prioritised to impact on pupils' personal development and achievement. The school gives satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2008

Dear pupils and students

Inspection of Caldew School, Cumbria, CA5 7NN

As you know, a team of inspectors and I recently inspected your school. This letter is to tell you the results of the inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing your views. Many of your parents gave us their views via the questionnaires and these were most useful. We judged Caldew School to be satisfactory in the main school and the sixth form, where standards are similar to those seen in most other schools. You are beginning to make better progress in your work because of the good quality of teaching you now receive. We were impressed by your good behaviour, the way you cooperate in lessons and your positive attitudes to learning. You benefit from good levels of pastoral support which help you to feel safe in school and you enjoy your time there. You take full advantage of the range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer. To make Caldew an even better school, we have asked the headteacher, the governors and staff to:

- Ensure sustained improvement in achievement and standards across the school and particularly in the core subjects. The school is working hard so that you achieve the best results possible. You can help by continuing with your high levels of attendance and ensuring you do your very best in lessons.
- Improve the analysis and use of assessment data and ensure its consistent application across the school to raise achievement and standards in all subjects. This means that the information collected by the school on your performance in each subject, is used by all the teachers to help them plan your lessons to best meet your needs and capabilities.
- Stabilise leadership and management at all levels to ensure accountability and secure improvement. The executive headteacher and headteacher have in some cases a relatively new team of people helping them run the school. They are to be given the authority and the time to help improve your school.

You can help to keep your school improving by continuing to work hard to reach targets set for you. You must talk with your teachers when you find work too easy or too difficult. I hope that you will strive to achieve the very best qualifications that you can and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Cox

Lead Inspector