

Inspection of Caldew Lea School

Ashley Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7BE

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Ayesha Weston. This school is part of the Cumbria Education 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), Lorraine Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by George Beveridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school. They speak kindly to each other and to the adults in school who care for them well. Pupils contribute significantly to the school's calm and welcoming atmosphere. They care deeply for each other. They take great pride in behaving well. Pupils are happy.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their achievement. In the early years, staff skilfully help children to develop confidence in their abilities and to settle in quickly. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils access a rich range of activities that make an impressive contribution to their wider development. For example, they develop their talents and interests through clubs in sport, music and the arts. Trips and visits are linked closely to the subjects that pupils study. For example, pupils visit a nearby museum to learn about the Stone Age and a local cathedral to build their knowledge of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. Older pupils enjoy many leadership opportunities, for example as reading buddies, playground leaders and school councillors. Pupils become independent young people.

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

The published data does not reflect the strengths of the educational offer at this school. In 2023, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 was significantly below the national average. A high proportion of pupils in this year group joined the school at various stages throughout key stage 2. In addition, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that these pupils did not have time to benefit from the school's well-designed curriculum. Most current pupils achieve well.

Trustees and the school have taken the necessary steps to establish a culture of high aspirations for pupils. Everyone is valued and included at this school. Trustees have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They use this information diligently to assure themselves that pupils are well prepared for each stage of their education. They carry out their statutory duties effectively.

The school has created an ambitious curriculum. It has set out in detail the important information that pupils should learn. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is new. This means that some pupils have not had the time that they need to develop sufficient depth of understanding in these subjects. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should. In the early years, children receive the support that they need to make a strong start to their education. Typically, this equips them well for the demands of Year 1.

Staff use their subject knowledge expertly to identify and address any gaps or misconceptions that pupils may have in their learning. Pupils benefit from the tailored support that they receive.

The activities that staff design help pupils to learn the curriculum well. The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, receive the support that they need to access the full curriculum alongside their peers.

The school has a precise understanding of the reading needs of each pupil. Children in the Nursery class build their vocabulary through listening to and joining in with stories, rhymes and songs. Staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. This begins from the start of the Reception Year. Pupils with gaps in their phonics knowledge receive the help that they need to learn all that they should. The books that pupils read from match the sounds that they already know. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils accurately recall themes from the books that they have read which make a valuable contribution to their understanding of the world. For example, they learn about the importance of teamwork, friendships and the many differences that exist between people.

Pupils display a high degree of motivation towards their learning. They work extremely well together during lessons. Pupils respect each other's views and opinions. The school provides a small number of pupils with highly intelligent support to improve their behaviour. Staff are quick to respond to pupils who are absent from school. They build positive relationships with parents and carers and provide the necessary support to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

The school makes sure that pupils benefit from a varied personal development programme that is full of powerful experiences. Pupils know how to care for their physical and mental health. They know the signs of a healthy relationship and how their body changes as they grow. The development of pupils' resilience is a priority. Pupils carry this through into all areas of their school life which helps them to succeed. They have a secure understanding of fundamental British Values. Pupils feel empowered to make a positive contribution to their community. For example, they raise money for local charities and make donations to people who are less fortunate than themselves.

The trust and the school provide staff with a comprehensive suite of training. This helps them to carry out their roles effectively. Staff value the consideration that the school has for their well-being. For example, they welcome opportunities to work closely with each other when they design learning activities. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. Parents hold the school in high regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculums have recently been implemented. Some pupils have not developed the depth of knowledge that they could. The school should ensure that the curriculums in these few subjects are fully embedded so that pupils are well prepared for each stage of their education.

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

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| Unique reference number | 147114 |
| Local authority | Cumberland |
| Inspection number | 10294411 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 301 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | George Beveridge |
| CEO of trust | Lorrayne Hughes |
| Headteacher | Ayesha Weston |
| Website | www.caldewlea.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Cumbria Education Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers for pupils.

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 the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that in to account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal, the headteacher and leaders of SEND, behaviour, attendance and pupil welfare. They also met with

representatives of the trust, including the CEO, the school's link director and the safeguarding lead.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with the deputy chair of the trust and met with members of the local advisory board, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They took account of the responses from staff to Ofsted's online survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. They 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

Kathryn Pym Ofsted Inspector

Sue Eastwood His Majesty's Inspector

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