

Caldew School

Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA5 7NN

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection: This inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	Good	2	
Achievement of pupils	Good	2	
Quality of teaching	Good	2	
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2	
Leadership and management	Good	2	

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is improving rapidly because of the success of the headteacher, leaders and the governing body in raising the aspirations of students, staff and parents and in improving teaching.
- Attainment across subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, is rising and students make good progress from their starting points, including disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Relationships between staff and students are positive and supportive. Most teaching is well planned and helps students to get the most out of lessons.
- Checks on students' progress are frequent and help to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding, and those students who need extra help to catch up with others. Most students enjoy school and are committed to doing well in their work. They enjoy the wide range of other opportunities the school offers, for example in sport and music. Students are orderly and respect the building. Behaviour in lessons is good.
- The sixth form is good and most students make good progress from their starting points. Students are good role models for younger students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. There are inconsistencies in the usefulness of teachers' marking, challenge for the most able students, opportunities for students to discuss their ideas and the use of homework.
- Checks on whether day-to-day work in classrooms is helping those students who have fallen behind to catch up are not embedded across all subjects and for all classrooms.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 43 lessons. Two observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Students' work in their books and folders was analysed during lessons and separately for key subjects.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff, governors, and groups of students from each year group.
- Documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation summary, school improvement plans and those relating to safeguarding. Information on students' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour were analysed.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 72 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted online survey), the school's most recent survey of parents' views and an email communication forwarded to the lead inspector.
- The views of staff were taken into account through the 50 questionnaires received.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Catherine Laing	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Caldew School converted to become an academy school from August 2011. The school is managed by a stand-alone governing body and has charity status. It is a company limited by guarantee. The school is not part of a managing chain, federation or other group.
- When its predecessor, also known as Caldew School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Two deputy headteachers were new in post in September 2010 just prior to conversion to academy status. Subsequently, one was appointed as headteacher in September 2012 along with a new deputy.
- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds.
- An average proportion of students are eligible for pupil premium funding. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. An average proportion of students are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- Alternative courses are provided for some students at Carlisle College and the Gilford Pupil Referral Unit in Carlisle.
- Specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, specifically autistic spectrum disorder, is provided for up to 16 students aged 11 to 16 years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that students make even more rapid progress. Ensure consistently good practice in:
 - teachers' marking so that it is more helpful to students in making improvements to their work
 - the tasks provided for more-able students so that they move quickly on to harder tasks and no time in lessons is wasted on tasks that are too easy
 - the setting of homework so that it is frequent and challenging enough and helps improve students' progress
 - the opportunities provided for students to discuss their work with each other so that all students have the chance to think through their ideas and develop confidence in their ability to communicate.
- Make sure that leaders check closely in all subjects and classes on how day-to-day work in classrooms is helping those students who have fallen behind to catch up.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' achievement is improving quickly. Students currently in school are making good progress in relation to their starting points. They are on track to exceed national averages in attainment and progress, including in English and mathematics. Achievement in mathematics has not been as strong as in English, but with improved teaching and effective leadership of the subject students are rapidly catching up. Better timing of entries for the GCSE examination is helping to improve the number of students who reach their full potential in mathematics and other subjects. The proportion of students gaining the highest A* to A grades and making better than expected progress is improving across most subjects.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional adult support for eligible students with weaker academic performance and attendance. As a result, students known to be eligible for free school meals are catching up on other students. In 2012 this group of students was around a GCSE grade behind other students in mathematics. In English they performed almost as well as other students in the school and their results were better than those for similar students in other schools.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Staff are fully aware of students' needs and work well with a range of agencies to provide good support. Students who receive the resourced provision for autistic spectrum disorder make good progress, similarly to other students with special educational needs.
- Students develop secure basic skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education or training. Reading is actively encouraged across the school and good teaching increasingly expects and encourages good writing, spelling and punctuation. Weaker readers receive good support that helps them to catch up. Some students in Year 7 benefit from the additional expert support provided through the government catch-up funding, and their confidence in using basic skills of literacy and numeracy is growing.
- The small number of students following courses away from the school site achieve well and they maintain an interest in their future education and training. Almost all students move on to further education, training or employment at age 16.
- The school pays good attention to the progress of individual students and different groups so that it promotes equality of opportunity and is in a position to be able to tackle discrimination.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Achievement is strongest in AS courses. A greater number of students than in most sixth forms stay on to take A2 courses. There has been variation in achievement between courses. The school is tackling these effectively and making improvements. Almost all sixth-form students move on to higher education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching, including in the sixth form, is helping to improve students' achievement quickly so that students are making good progress over time.
- In most lessons tasks are challenging and students rise to teachers' high expectations of purposeful activity and good progress.
- Positive relationships between staff and students mean that students are not afraid to make mistakes and then be challenged to work out where they went wrong. Teachers question students astutely and succeed in developing their understanding and knowledge. Accurate on-going assessment makes sure that teachers pick up on where there are gaps in learning and plan activities to make sure these are filled. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- In many lessons, especially in English, students work on their own initiative, frequently reviewing their own and each other's work using clear guidance on how to succeed so that they can plan how they can improve.

- In many lessons, especially in English, there are plenty of opportunities for students to think through and discuss their ideas with each other, helping to deepen their knowledge and understanding and develop confident communication skills. This good practice is not yet consistently well structured across all subjects.
- In most lessons learning moves on at a good pace because students are practically involved in activities that interest them and demand much of them.
- Most students know their academic targets and whether they are on track to reach them. However, teachers' marking of students' work does not always give useful guidance as to what they should do to improve; nor do students get the chance often enough to make the improvements to their work.
- In many lessons tasks are well planned so that students of different abilities make good progress. On some occasions more-able students do not move on to harder tasks early on in the lessons so that time is wasted on tasks that are too easy.
- Homework is not always helpful in promoting students' progress. Some homework demands much of students and they are able to follow their own interests, particularly in Key Stage 4. However, it is not always clear what is expected of homework, especially in Key stage 3.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well taught. Teachers are fully informed of students' individual needs and work out carefully how best they can make progress. Additional staff provide good support that is tailored to meet individual needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students enjoy learning and want to do well. They appreciate the support of staff in helping them to achieve well. They cooperate well with each other in lessons, often sharing ideas and reflecting on each other's performance.
- They feel safe in school and say that there is little bullying. They are aware of the different ways in which students can be bullied. They are confident that staff in school will help them to deal with any problems that arise quickly and effectively.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and disruptions to learning are uncommon. Behaviour around the school is orderly and most students respect the building. A few students are unhappy that older students leave too much litter that has to be cleared up by other adults.
- Attendance has improved and, based on most recent figures, is above average. The school works very effectively to gain the support of parents of students who are reluctant to learn or attend school, helping to improve the attendance and achievement of these students.
- The school council is active in making improvements to school life. They attend meetings of the governing body regularly and put forward students' viewpoints.
- Sixth-form students are very good role models for younger students. They act as leaders of younger students, for example in sport and supporting reading.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the academy opened the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have pursued improvements with great determination. They set high expectations of staff, students, parents and themselves. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and it informs school improvement planning. As a result, leaders keep a tight and successful focus on improving achievement and the quality of teaching. Staff morale is good.
- Improvements have been brought about within the context of a school that provides a welcoming and caring environment and works very hard to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for every student.
- Students' academic progress is checked frequently against challenging targets. Underperformance is identified quickly and much additional support helps students to catch up. All levels of leadership and class teachers are held accountable for the progress of students.

These systems of accountability are not fully embedded across all subjects and classes to ensure that day-to-day work in classrooms is helping every student who has fallen behind to catch up.

- Teaching is improving because training for staff is closely linked to school priorities and individual staff needs. Increasingly, good practice in teaching is shared between colleagues within the school. Good partnerships with local schools bring even more opportunities to benefit from good practice. The performance of staff is managed well so that good performance is rewarded appropriately and underperformance is tackled quickly.
- The range of subjects and courses is well planned to provide for students' individual needs and needs within the local community. Off-site provision is checked carefully for safety and relevance to individuals. Students whose literacy and numeracy skills are weaker have well-designed additional support. Students appreciate the many additional opportunities provided in music, sport and a wide range of other activities, helping to support their good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors bring a good range of skills and experience to their roles. They receive appropriate training to keep up to date. They understand how well the students are performing in relation to all schools. They hold leaders closely to account. They keep a close check on how well the school is improving and a number visit the school regularly. They are fully aware of and supportive of the school's arrangements for appraisal and the management of staff performance. They manage the budget well, keeping checks on spending, including the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137254
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	406666

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Non maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	997
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennie Wilkinson
Headteacher	Chris McAree
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01228 710044
Fax number	01228 710390
Email address	office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk

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