

Caldew Lea School

Ashley Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7BE

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Fractured relationships between staff, governors and the new senior leadership team have led to a significant deterioration in the standard of pupils' behaviour and slowed the rate of school improvement.
- Leadership at all levels is ineffective. Leaders' plans for improving the school lack specific criteria by which success can be measured.
- Governors do not provide sufficient support or challenge to the senior leadership team. Some middle leaders' impact on improving teaching and learning in their subjects is limited.
- Pupils' behaviour is not managed effectively, and poor behaviour is not consistently challenged. As a result, incidents of unacceptable behaviour are now far too common. Fixed-term exclusions from school are above the national average.
- Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is below the 2017 national average.
- Some parents and carers, as well as staff, have lost confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Some teachers do not match work well to pupils' different needs. As a result, pupils of similar abilities make better progress in some classes than others.
- Although the curriculum enables pupils to study a range of subjects, their achievement is inconsistent. The development of pupils' skills in geography and art is not as strong as it is in other subjects. Pupils do not apply their spelling skills in their writing.
- Leaders do not use funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively. These pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is typically lower than in writing and mathematics. There is more to be done to develop pupils' skills in reading comprehension. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Teaching in the early years is not consistently matched to children's needs. The quality of outdoor provision is in need of improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils leave the school with attainment in mathematics and English that is broadly in line with national averages.
- Staff plan engaging visits and trips to support pupils' learning.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - urgently mending relationships between staff, governors, leaders and parents so that the school improves at a fast pace
 - sharpening leaders' plans for improvement so that these enable leaders and governors to check accurately whether improvements are working
 - ensuring that governors have the necessary skills and understanding to hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching
 - addressing inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment, so that teaching across the school is effective
 - using the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively so that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable
 - developing the skills and knowledge of middle leaders so that they have greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils and reduce the frequency of fixed-term exclusions by ensuring that:
 - all staff understand and follow agreed whole-school approaches to managing pupils' behaviour, and that poor behaviour is challenged at all times
 - teaching is consistently effective in engaging pupils and encouraging them to do their best in lessons.
- Reduce the levels of pupils' absence, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make consistently good progress across different year groups and subjects by:
 - consistently providing pupils of different abilities, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, with work that matches their learning needs
 - ensuring that teachers develop pupils' reading comprehension skills more effectively, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged
 - ensuring that the work set for pupils in different subjects, including geography and art, effectively extends their subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding
 - enabling pupils to apply their skills in spelling when writing independently.
- Improve early years provision by:
 - making sure that planning and teaching in both Reception classes is matched carefully to children's abilities and interests, including for the most able children in

phonics

- ensuring that leaders in early years have the knowledge, skills and time needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- developing the outdoor area to better promote children’s learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how the school may improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since their appointment in September 2017, the new headteacher and assistant headteacher have set out their vision and ambition for the school with staff. However, neither of these has been realised due to fractured relationships between leaders and staff.
- The atmosphere of discord which has developed between staff, governors and the senior leadership team is hindering the improvement of the school. As a result, leaders' actions are not having the impact that they should. Leaders have not been successful in challenging and supporting staff to improve the quality of education offered at this school or in ensuring that staff consistently follow and implement school policies.
- This is most evident in the management of pupils' behaviour throughout the school. Leaders have taken steps to introduce a new behaviour policy this year. However, there remain widespread inconsistencies in how staff manage pupils' behaviour. Staff and leaders have little confidence in each other's ability to manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Leaders, staff, parents and pupils share inspectors' views that standards of pupils' behaviour are unacceptable. Fights and a range of misbehaviour on the playground and around the school are a regular occurrence. Inspectors saw examples of these issues during the inspection.
- Leaders have improved the system that teachers use to check pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, leaders have not used the information that they have about pupils' progress and attainment to full effect in their plans to improve the school. Measures of success in the school's development plans are too often vague and not linked sharply enough to pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders are unable to check with precision how well improvements are working.
- Leaders have used their monitoring of teaching to identify areas that need to improve. However, significant turbulence in staffing has led to a number of classes being taught by more than one teacher this year. This instability has contributed to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning which are very evident across classes and subjects.
- Leaders have succeeded in making some improvements to the teaching of mathematics and phonics. They have ensured that there is now more problem solving taking place in mathematics and this is beginning to raise standards of attainment in some classes. In phonics, training and support for staff have improved their subject knowledge. Leaders have enhanced resources, purchasing a wide range of new books which develop pupils' early reading skills. Standards in phonics are rising overall.
- Over time, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have made slow progress. The recently appointed SEN coordinator has wasted no time in working with parents and other agencies to improve provision for these pupils. However, recent changes are still at an early stage and so their impact to date is limited.
- Since the previous inspection, an external professional has undertaken the recommended pupil premium funding review. A detailed plan is now in place which

identifies barriers to pupils' learning. Leaders are using this plan to make sure that they spend additional funding for disadvantaged pupils on providing the right support. However, leaders' actions are at any early stage of development. They have not made enough difference. Disadvantaged pupils make slower progress than other pupils in some areas of the curriculum, including reading. Furthermore, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of other pupils in the school.

- Leaders make sure that pupils study a wide range of subjects, including religious education, music, design technology and science. They have enhanced learning in computing by investing in new resources. However, provision in some subjects, including geography and art, is less effective as it does not fully develop pupils' subject-specific skills and knowledge. This is because some middle leaders are new to their role and are at the early stages of influencing teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders plan a range of interesting trips and visits which enrich pupils' learning across the curriculum and develop their knowledge of the local area. Trips, such as to Carlisle Castle, promote pupils' understanding in history and geography. Older pupils relish the annual residential trip to Coniston, where they develop their confidence and resilience through activities such as rock climbing and canoeing.
- Staff develop pupils' skills in a range of sports, including tennis, football and dodge ball. The new leadership team has used the sport premium funding to develop the confidence and knowledge of staff when teaching physical education.
- There are some strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about their increased knowledge of Buddhism. Pupils have enjoyed activities such as visiting a professional symphony orchestra and taking part in a 'Macbeth' theatre workshop as part of their cultural learning. However, the poor standard of behaviour in school shows that pupils' social development is weak. Too many pupils have poor social skills and struggle to work and socialise appropriately with their peers.
- The majority of parents with whom inspectors spoke during the inspection, or who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, do not feel that the school is well led and managed. The poor behaviour of pupils, lack of communication, concerns about high staff turnover and low staff morale were typical concerns raised by parents. However, they welcomed some recent changes, particularly the more secure entry system to improve pupils' safety.

Governance of the school

- The previous inspection identified a need to strengthen governance. Some positive steps have been taken, such as the appointment of experienced, co-opted governors. Governors have also attended training to strengthen their understanding of the school's areas for development. For example, they now have an accurate view of the improvements that leaders have made to the teaching of phonics.
- Despite these improvements, the minutes of governors' meetings confirm that governors are not fully effective in providing appropriate challenge to school leaders. A level of mistrust between school leaders and some governors is hindering the school from moving forward.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough.
- Leaders make sure that staff and governors receive appropriate and regular training to identify any possible signs of danger and potential abuse.
- Leaders' records of any concerns are of good quality. Documentation shows that the staff are proactive in working in partnership with other professionals and agencies for the protection of pupils.
- Governors have made sure that the school's online filtering system is secure, keeping pupils safe from dangerous content on websites. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider community, including road safety and cycling safety.
- Leaders have developed a culture in which the importance of safeguarding is recognised by all staff. For example, staff give visitors to the school a useful leaflet outlining details about safeguarding procedures and expectations in the school.
- Although the standard of pupils' behaviour is poor overall, staff ensure that pupils are kept safe in school. The large majority of pupils confirm that although they are concerned when they see poor behaviour, they do still feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable between classes and subjects. This is partly because a number of classes have had more than one teacher this year because of instability in staffing. As a result, pupils make strong progress in some classes, whereas other pupils make weaker gains in their learning. Some teachers do not use assessment information well to match work to pupils' abilities.
- The teaching of phonics has improved since the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants have improved their subject knowledge, and pupils develop fluency in reading. However, these improvements have not made enough difference to the teaching of reading overall. Teachers do not do enough to ensure that pupils develop strong reading comprehension skills and a broad vocabulary. This particularly affects the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Staff plan English lessons which develop pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils learn to plan, write and edit their work. They write at length and for a range of different purposes. However, pupils' work shows that they do not consistently apply their spelling knowledge when writing independently.
- In mathematics, most teachers extend pupils' thinking by giving them challenging activities which require problem solving and reasoning. Staff give pupils opportunities to work collaboratively, discussing their thinking and developing their confidence.
- The impact of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics is not consistently good. Pupils' skills and knowledge in subjects such as geography and art are not developed systematically over time and so progression from year to year is irregular.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not receive the strong and effective teaching that they need. As a result, too many do not make the progress of which they are capable. This group make greater gains in their learning when staff use a range of resources and practical equipment to good effect. However, not all benefit from this stronger practice. Some teachers do not match work well to the learning needs of these pupils.
- Teachers do not do enough to ensure positive attitudes to learning. In some classes, teachers do not notice or address frequent low-level misbehaviour. Some pupils become distracted from their learning. This is sometimes due to work being too easy or too hard, resulting in pupils losing interest and concentration.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils show respect for each other and adults. They appreciate and celebrate differences, including in religion and belief, appearance and ethnic background. However, some pupils do not allow others to learn unhindered. Their poor behaviour in classrooms and around the school indicates their weak attitudes to learning and points to a lack of respect for others.
- Teachers help pupils to be thoughtful citizens. During the inspection, pupils showed empathy and concentration when listening to a well-presented assembly about the experiences of refugees.
- Leaders have planned opportunities to develop pupils' well-being. In the school's nurture classroom, staff give pupils opportunities to talk about their feelings and emotions. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to learn life skills. In a 'castles and shields' project, a group of pupils were excited to be planning, designing and making pieces of work from wood.
- Through assemblies and lessons, teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and how to make healthy-eating choices.
- A number of Parent View responses raised concerns about bullying. Leaders' logs of bullying show that incidents are rare. Pupils who spoke with inspectors during the inspection were confident that staff would deal appropriately with any bullying-related issues that might arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- In class, low-level misbehaviour slows pupils' learning. Turbulence in staffing this year has contributed to a lack of consistency in managing pupils' behaviour. Staff do not apply the school's new behaviour policy consistently.

- During the inspection, pupils were observed calling out and not listening attentively to teachers or other pupils. Some pupils do not take enough care to present their work tidily or with enough attention to accuracy. Pupils in classes which have had high staff turnover this year described how learning time is lost due to frequent misbehaviour.
- The standard of pupils' behaviour around school and during breaktimes and lunchtime is poor. The school's behaviour log records frequent incidents of kicking, hitting and punching. Inspectors observed pupils running in the school, pushing and arguing.
- Pupils with whom inspectors spoke said that they feel safe in school. They also said that they would like staff to deal more effectively with poor behaviour in class, around school and outside. While this boisterous behaviour does not threaten pupils' safety, it does get in the way of learning.
- Throughout the inspection, staff raised concerns about leaders' consistency and effectiveness in applying the school's new behaviour policy. They repeatedly told inspectors that pupils' behaviour has declined rapidly this year. Leaders raised concerns about the staff's willingness to take a shared responsibility for pupils' behaviour and their alertness on the playground. This lack of a unified approach to managing pupils' behaviour is holding the school back from improving.
- Weaknesses in pupils' behaviour have led to a considerable rise in fixed-term exclusions this year. In response to declining standards of behaviour, leaders have started to monitor behaviour and have introduced a new system for staff to record incidents. This has helped leaders to identify the reasons for misbehaviour. Leaders are also working with other professionals for support. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils have welcomed the school's playground 'buddy' scheme. Older pupils in the playground engage younger pupils in play. However, during the inspection, pupils had few activities or games to occupy them constructively when playing outdoors.
- Pupils' attendance at school is below the national average and has fallen further this year, including that of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recently taken steps to address this, but it is too early to see the impact.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils' achievement also varies across the school. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and turbulence in staffing.
- By the end of Year 2 in 2017, pupils' attainment at the expected level was close to the national average for reading and mathematics, although lower in writing. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in these subjects was broadly in line with national averages. Current pupils' work indicates that pupils make adequate progress in English and mathematics in key stage 1.
- Pupils typically make at least average progress in English and mathematics at key stage 2. Attainment in reading has recently been below national average, although it has been in line with the national average in mathematics and writing. The proportions of pupils attaining higher standards in these subjects are below those seen nationally.

- By the end of Year 6 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils made above-average progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in some classes, the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others is not diminishing quickly enough. School information shows that disadvantaged pupils' current attainment in reading is below that of other pupils in the school.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have typically been below the national average in recent years. Evidence indicates that more current pupils are working at the expected standard than has previously been the case. This is because the teaching of phonics has become more systematic and effective.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make the progress of which they are capable as teachers do not plan precisely or consistently enough to meet their needs.
- In pupils' current work in other subjects, there is evidence of pupils achieving well in some subjects and classes. However, this is not consistent across the curriculum. For example, in geography, pupils' work shows limited progression of mapping skills across different year groups.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development fluctuates from year to year, but in 2017 it was in line with the national average. This represents good progress for some children, in some areas of learning. However, progress between classes and other areas of learning remains too variable. Consequently, some children do not achieve as well as they should.
- In the Nursery, staff plan engaging and interesting activities which develop children's skills. During the inspection, children were busy and industrious. Staff provide a calm and nurturing environment for children.
- Across Reception, there is inconsistency in how well teachers plan for children to play and explore, learn creatively and develop their communication and language. As a result, some children do not make the progress of which they are capable in these areas of learning. The outdoor learning areas require further development. This is because they provide too few opportunities for children to develop their skills.
- Children in the early years enjoy coming to school. Relationships between adults and children are positive in each of the early years classrooms, and most children enjoy the activities provided. However, some children are easily distracted and not engaged in their learning. Some teachers do not plan activities which meet children's needs and interests. As a result, children find the tasks too easy or too difficult.
- Children are safe and well looked after. Most children behave well, although they sometimes play boisterously without showing sufficient care for those around them.
- Leadership of early years is not securing consistently good provision across all early years classes. Leaders' knowledge and skills require further development so that they are completely confident in leading improvement.
- Staff teach phonics daily, using a range of resources to ensure that children practise and develop their skills. However, staff do not check children's level of learning enough

when planning activities. In their phonics teaching, staff do not challenge the most able children to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

- Staff work well with other professionals to ensure that children who have SEN and/or disabilities receive the right additional support and get off to a good start. Parents appreciate the way that they are invited into class on a regular basis, for example for reading sessions and to help their children design and make a scarecrow puppet.

School details

Unique reference number	112237
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10048570

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Graham
Headteacher	Claire Little
Telephone number	01228 526611
Website	www.caldewlea.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	office@caldewlea.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- There have been a number of changes in staffing. A new headteacher and new assistant headteacher took up post in September 2017. A number of classes have had more than one teacher this year because of staff absence.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils in key stage 2.
- An associate adviser is supporting the senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning.
- Inspectors observed teaching in each year group and in a range of subjects. In some classrooms, they conducted joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with eight pupils from key stage 2 and talked with pupils in classes and around the school. Pupils took an inspector on a tour of the school.
- Inspectors heard four pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors checked a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and took into account 64 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including free-text responses.
- Inspectors took into account 39 responses to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, behaviour and bullying logs, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies and procedures and the school's own assessment information. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Ofsted Inspector

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