

Kirby Moor School

Longtown Road, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 2AB

Inspection dates 14–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding school because

- The outstanding leadership of the school has ensured that there has been excellent improvement in all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. The proprietors, headteacher and senior staff work effectively together to create high expectations for what pupils can achieve in their academic learning and their personal development.
- Pupils make outstanding progress with their learning across a wide range of subjects and experiences. Those who remain at the school until the end of Key Stage 4 are well prepared to take up places on a variety of courses in further education. This is a major achievement, given the low starting points with which most enter the school.
- Pupils make remarkable progress with the management of their behaviour and their ability to engage successfully and productively with their learning. This progress has its roots in the trusting and respectful relationships developed with the staff in the school.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment where pupils are able to be themselves, to work through their complex emotional needs, and to achieve more than they ever thought possible.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because it enables pupils to enjoy being in school, to take their work seriously and to achieve outstanding results. Teachers and learning support staff work very effectively together. Their teamwork makes effective use of their complementary skills to ensure that each pupil makes the most of the activities and tasks provided.
- The school's senior leaders, under the exemplary guidance of the headteacher, demonstrate high aspirations for their pupils. These aspirations are shared widely across the staff team. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. The proprietors are effective in holding the school to account and continuously checking that it is fulfilling its vision.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed eight lessons taught by eight members of staff. All lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a proprietor who fulfils the role of Chair of Governors, and a number of staff.
- Discussions took place with two pupils, and informally with a number of others when samples of their work were discussed. In addition, a range of pupils' work was scrutinised together with a number of school policies and records, including extensive data about pupils' academic and personal development.
- Questionnaires, submitted by 21 members of staff and the carers of six pupils, were considered. Telephone conversations were conducted with the representatives of two placing local authorities.
- At the request of the Department for Education, a material change to increase the capacity of the school from 33 to 40 pupils was considered.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kirby Moor School is located on the site of a children's home at Brampton in Cumbria. The school is owned and managed by North Lakes Children's Services which also owns the children's homes where most of the pupils live.
- The school is registered to admit up to 33 boys and girls aged 10 to 18. There are currently 27 pupils on roll, aged 10 to 16 years. All but one of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school aims to 'provide a safe, secure, happy community which balances the principles of inclusive learning and the maintenance of clearly understood parameters. The staff work together as a team to develop each individual to their full potential, academically, emotionally and socially, therefore preparing each individual for their future independent lives'.
- The school was last inspected in December 2011.
- An inspection of the provision in the children's home took place at the same time as the inspection of education. This is the subject of a separate report.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - developing teachers' questioning skills, to ensure that pupils are encouraged to reflect on and extend the depth of their oral answers and to respond to the ideas presented by other pupils
 - ensuring that there is always sufficient challenge in the content and presentation of written work produced by pupils.
- Further develop the use and analysis of the pupils' social and emotional profiles, in order to help staff extend the approaches to improving pupils' behaviour.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding and has resulted in excellent improvements in teaching and pupils' progress since the time of the last inspection.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils to fulfil their potential and ensures that the staff work together effectively as a team. The performance of the staff is managed through robust systems for appraisal and supervision. Staff at each level of responsibility play an active part in these improvement procedures.
- The headteacher ensures that the school's documentation is written to an exemplary standard and that policies and procedures are up-to-date and in line with the latest government guidance. The implementation of agreed policies by the staff is consistent.
- Staff have a variety of responsibilities. They work together effectively to ensure that policies and procedures have a positive impact on all aspects of the school's provision and on the achievements of pupils. All those staff members who completed the inspection questionnaire agree that they are proud to be members of staff at the school. Similarly, there is strong agreement among the pupils' carers and placing authorities that the school is well led and managed.
- Senior leaders have introduced excellent arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress. Together with effective targets for individual pupils, these arrangements ensure that the school's high expectations are achieved. Similarly, the introduction of a profile to assess pupils' emotional and social development is beginning to provide robust information about the extent and rate of pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are enabled to make excellent progress with the management of their behaviour. The majority of pupils have had negative previous experiences of education; their emotional conditions are complex and often profound. While incidents do occur, the school's records demonstrate a continuous reduction over time in the negative behaviour of individual pupils. The high expectations shared by the staff ensure a consistent approach to the management of behaviour throughout the school. As a result, a calm working atmosphere is the norm in classrooms.
- The subjects and learning experiences provided for the pupils meet the requirements for a breadth of areas of learning in the experience of each pupil. Subject leaders ensure that pupils have access to appropriate external accreditation at levels suited to their capabilities. This approach makes a strong contribution to ensuring that pupils aspire to be successful in their education. In the last two years, all the pupils leaving school at the end of Year 11 have gone on to successful placements in further education courses.
- The proprietors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Working closely with the school's senior leaders, they have extended the premises and maintained them to a high standard. The information provided for parents, carers, placing authorities and others is comprehensive and there are suitable procedures in place to manage any complaints.
- Excellent oversight by the headteacher, working closely with the proprietors, ensures that the school provides a safe and secure environment. The school's leaders, working closely with the residential care staff, ensure that pupils are always supervised effectively and they are supported well to manage their complex emotional challenges. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are exemplary.
- The school's senior leaders, working closely with the proprietors, have ensured consistent improvement over the last three years and they have demonstrated the capacity to maintain this.
- **The governance of the school:**

The proprietors share the headteacher's high expectations and hold the school to account for the quality of its work. They have a good understanding of the school's performance data and how this is used to set targets for pupils' continued progress. They work effectively with the headteacher to tackle any areas of underperformance.

The proprietors review the headteacher's evaluation of the school's successes and areas for further improvement and ensure that sufficient funding is available to support agreed priorities for development. Self-evaluation is based on a thorough analysis of pupils' achievements and improvements in their personal development.

The school's policy for equality of opportunity is implemented effectively. The proprietors review the school's analysis of the achievements and progress of different groups of pupils, including those related to ethnicity and gender.

The school's policies and procedures for all aspects of its work are regularly updated and kept under systematic review by a close working relationship with the proprietors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. All enter the school with complex emotional conditions and previous challenging behaviour. During their time in the school, they make excellent progress with the management of their behaviour and their ability to settle to productive work and to achieve.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are characterised by mutual respect. While many pupils take time to settle into the high expectations of the school, they are continually supported and encouraged by sensitive but firm expectations of classroom attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils demonstrate the ability to engage in serious and sustained productive work, for example when creating circuits in science or designing a roller-coaster to represent the ups and downs in the life experiences of a school-aged boy. They show a genuine enjoyment of their learning and take a pride in work which represents their best efforts and achievements. There is very little low level disruption or distraction in classrooms.
- Teachers and learning support assistants have a shared understanding of excellent team work. They understand the behaviour and learning styles of the individual pupils and know when to intervene, to encourage or to demand more. Pupils understand what is expected of them and demonstrate an increasing ability to manage their emotions and to focus on their work. Their willingness to volunteer to 'show off' their work is testament to the self-confidence and pride which the staff have enabled them to gain.
- Incidents of unacceptable behaviour do occur. All members of staff are skilled at anticipating the circumstances in which tension builds, or frustration distracts a pupil from the norm of excellent, settled, productive work. Agreed strategies are implemented consistently across the school as pupils are, for example, encouraged to take a little time out in order to compose themselves and to re-focus.
- Senior leaders have introduced a social and emotional profile which is an excellent tool for the identification and recording of changes over time in individual pupils' behavioural characteristics. Extensive records demonstrate improvements over time in pupils' behaviour and the consequent positive impact on their ability to succeed with their learning. This profile has the potential to assist with a precise identification of the barriers to learning which affect individual pupils. The headteacher plans to extend the analysis of data to support the further development of strategies to improve pupils' self-awareness and their ability to manage their individual emotional and social reactions.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent and, for many, represents a major improvement on their previous attitudes to learning. There are no concerns about punctuality to lessons as high levels of staff supervision ensure that pupils know where they are expected to be and when.
- Pupils recognise that there is a risk of bullying but they are adamant that the continuous supervision by adults, throughout the school and at all times of day, prevents any incidents from escalating. Excellent work is done, for example in personal, social and health education lessons, to help pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. The school's records demonstrate that there is a low incidence of bullying.
- Short-term exclusions are occasionally used as part of the school's effective management of pupils' behaviour. However, the majority of pupils would rather be in school and they develop a good understanding of the strategies required to manage individual frustration and anger. Permanent exclusions are not part of the school's disciplinary framework.
- Pupils' carers, members of staff and the proprietors recognise that the nature of the pupils placed at the school will always present behavioural challenges. However, they are unanimous in their belief that behaviour is well managed. Pupils' academic achievements provide outstanding evidence of the improvements in their behaviour over time.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on human reactions and feelings and there is a strong emphasis on the development of tolerance and cooperation within teaching groups. Pupils' work, in citizenship, history and geography, for example, enables them to develop an awareness and understanding of public institutions and services in the local and wider communities.
- A number of opportunities and experiences is provided for pupils to develop an understanding and respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultures in British society. A visit to the slavery museum in Liverpool, for example, enabled pupils from to reflect seriously on the impact of their own and others' cultural heritage.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The staff work tirelessly to create positive experiences and relationships both in and outside the classroom. Levels of supervision are high at all times and the quality of conversation between adults and pupils encourages reflection and

consideration for the needs of others. The staff demonstrate exemplary patience and resilience in helping pupils to make continuous small steps in the development of positive relationships and attitudes.

- All aspects of the safeguarding of pupils are excellent. These include the arrangements for recruiting staff, the training provided in child protection and first aid, and the secure regular routines to ensure fire safety that characterise the daily life of the school. Any controversial social and political issues within the curriculum are approached in a balanced and non-partisan manner. Pupils learn to respect differences between people and to show respect for each other and for the adults with whom they come into contact. Safe working is evident in the supervision of pupils' access to the internet.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding and enables pupils to make excellent progress with their learning and personal development. All members of staff are aware of the behavioural characteristics of their pupils and they plan and organise learning in a way that interests and motivates pupils to achieve. The quality of teaching is never less than good and demonstrates a number of outstanding features in the quality of the activities and tasks provided to encourage effective learning.
- Pupils enter the school with a range of emotional and social difficulties which have previously restricted their ability to gain the maximum from their learning. Despite this, they have a variety of abilities and respond well to the high expectations communicated in the classroom. All members of staff make clear to pupils that they know how well they can do and they maintain high aspirations for the success of each individual.
- The quality of teaching in the nurture group, and pupils' engagement with their learning, are outstanding. This provision enables pupils with complex emotional difficulties to settle into the expectations of the school in a safe and sheltered environment. Expectations of what they can achieve are high and they are keen to show and talk about what they have achieved.
- Teachers place a clear emphasis on the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' work across a wide range of subjects provides them with excellent opportunities to apply their skills to new situations. There is a common understanding among the staff that this is a shared responsibility. Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and an exemplary understanding of how pupils learn.
- Those with significant learning difficulties are supported by patient and sensitive staff who focus on positive feedback about each small step in their progress. As a result, they are willing to read aloud in class, to contribute their ideas in discussion and to ask relevant questions. The staff understand that some pupils work well on their own and find social interaction challenging and that others have the ability to help each other overcome challenges in their understanding of tasks and activities.
- More-able pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to work towards external accreditation in a range of subjects. They are helped to manage the presentation and organisation of their work and to understand the demands of assessment at the level to which they aspire. Occasionally, there is insufficient challenge in the quantity and presentation of the written work required.
- The quality of teachers' questioning encourages pupils to organise their ideas, to develop their oral answers and to think more deeply about the ideas they commit to paper. Teachers provide excellent opportunities for pupils to interact positively with others, to share ideas and to summarise their individual understanding. Occasionally, this questioning does not fully exploit opportunities to encourage pupils to reflect sufficiently on the answers of others and to respond with their alternative ideas.
- Teachers and learning support staff are skilled at understanding the varying moods and characteristics of their pupils. They are very successful in providing alternative or extended learning opportunities, to ensure that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate intellectual level.
- Pupils' work is marked and assessed rigorously and pupils are aware of their individual targets for improvement. Excellent use is made of external accreditation at a variety of levels. As a result, each pupil is enabled to achieve success at an appropriate level. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education. This is a result of the continuous assessment of their achievements and the careful targeting of each next step in their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. The majority of pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are low or very low compared with other pupils of their age. The outstanding quality of teaching and care enables them gradually to make up ground and move towards improved standards.
- Pupils make substantial progress once they have settled into the expectations of the school. Those who

remain at the school for significant periods of time sustain these excellent rates of progress. The majority exceed nationally expected rates of progress and achieve outstanding results from a low starting point.

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is excellent. They enjoy reading and many demonstrate excellent success in extended writing. In an English lesson, pupils in Year 9 were able to give an excellent oral account of the events in the novel they were reading, supporting each other to fill in gaps in the narrative and demonstrating an understanding of the feelings and attitudes of the characters.
- Pupils progress rapidly in mathematics and science, and learn to apply a range of skills from their information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Their success is evident across a full range of areas of learning, including humanities, physical and creative subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as others. All pupils who remain at the school until the end of Key Stage 4 achieve excellent results in a range of subjects. Pupils who had previously failed to engage seriously in education achieve entry level 3 certificates, functional skills certificates at levels 1 and 2, and GCSE passes also at levels 1 and 2. Pupils succeed at levels suited to their individual abilities.
- Pupils are prepared well for the transition to further education on leaving school. All those pupils who left at the end of Key Stage 4 in the last two years have taken up places on a variety of vocational courses in colleges of further education. This represents outstanding progress in their learning and personal development since joining the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	135410
Inspection number	446284
DfE registration number	909/6056

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10–18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	North Lakes Children's Services
Chair	Antony Middleton
Headteacher	Catherine Garton
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,000
Telephone number	01697 742598
Email address	Catherine.garton@nlcs.uk.com

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