

Inspection of Settlebeck School

Long Lane, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5AL

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy attending Settlebeck School. Leaders and teachers know the pupils well. This helps pupils feel part of a caring school community.

Leaders have set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand and follow the new behaviour systems that leaders have put into place. They are respectful to staff and to their peers. Bullying is taken seriously and dealt with effectively by leaders. Pupils feel confident in speaking to adults when they have any concerns. This means that they feel safe.

Leaders offer some opportunities for pupils to extend their talents and nurture their interests. Some pupils enjoy attending clubs, such as the model railway, strategic games and sports. Pupils also help with charitable projects, for instance cooking for the elderly and taking part in community events.

Despite leaders wanting the best for pupils, some do not achieve well. This is because the curriculum in some subjects is not well designed or ambitious enough to help them succeed.

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

Leaders and trustees have recently strengthened the leadership and governance of the school. This is beginning to make some difference to the quality of education that pupils currently receive. Even so, leaders are only at the start of their journey. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

Recent changes to the leadership of some subject curriculums mean that the design of what pupils will learn has improved. However, in other subjects, the curriculum does not meet the ambition of the national curriculum. Many pupils do not study the full suite of English Baccalaureate subjects.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to choose activities that develop pupils' vocabulary and understanding. Even so, in many subjects, the key content that pupils should learn, and when they should learn it, has not been identified. This prevents teachers from building on pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, pupils' learning is not secure over time.

Leaders have introduced opportunities to encourage pupils to read more often. For example, leaders have extended the range of books that are available for pupils to read. These new books are capturing pupils' interest, and they are enjoying reading more as a result. Teachers have begun to identify pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. That said, these pupils do not get the support that they need to help them catch up. This hinders some pupils from becoming fluent and confident readers.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, have access to the same curriculum as their peers. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Teachers adapt how the curriculum is delivered to ensure that pupils with SEND are supported. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils are motivated and keen to learn. As a result, very little learning is lost due to poor behaviour. Pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils learn about the importance of healthy eating, sleep routines and self-care. Nonetheless, there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils' understanding of democracy and the rule of law is limited. The quality of careers advice and guidance is also restricted. Pupils do not have enough information about the world of work. They have a narrow understanding of career pathways and technical qualifications. This means pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for their next steps.

The newly appointed trustees have the expertise needed to support school leaders. They have a strong insight into what needs to improve. Staff's workload and well-being are high priorities for leaders. Staff feel well supported. They are happy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have fostered a culture of care and support for pupils. They respond effectively to the risks that they could face in their local community. Teachers are well trained to identify and report concerns. Leaders take timely steps to respond to concerns about pupils' welfare.

Leaders liaise effectively with specialist professionals when needed. Leaders also forge positive relationships with the families of vulnerable pupils. This means that pupils receive the support that they need.

Pupils know about online safety and the signs of an unhealthy relationship. Pupils are well informed to help them keep safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In many subjects, leaders have not defined the knowledge they want pupils to learn and when this content should be taught. This prevents pupils from building on what they already know. Leaders should identify the key content that pupils should learn across different subjects.

- Pupils who find reading difficult do not receive the support that they need to overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. This hinders pupils from developing fluency and confidence in their reading. Leaders should equip teachers with the knowledge and skills that they need to support pupils to catch up quickly.
- Teachers do not offer pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. As a result, pupils have a limited understanding of what it means to be a British citizen. Leaders should improve the design of the curriculum so that the content better prepares pupils for life in modern society.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough of the necessary advice and support about their next steps. This limits pupils' ability to make informed choices about their future learning. Leaders need to develop teachers' knowledge and expertise to deliver meaningful information and guidance about careers.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137269
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10256052
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Irvine
Headteacher	Sarah Campbell
Website	http://settlebeck.org/
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Settlebeck single-academy trust.
- The school is linked to the South Lakes Federation.
- The current deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school hosts a local authority commissioned specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. There is provision for twelve pupils aged 11 to 16.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school does not meet the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leads. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board, as well as a representative of the local authority and of the South Lakes Federation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- In addition, inspectors met with other subject leaders and reviewed some other curriculum areas.
- The inspection team analysed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils, staff and leaders to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for personal development, pupil premium, specially resourced provision, early careers teachers and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Amina Modan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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