

Inspection of a good school: Yewdale School

Yewdale Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7SD

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Yewdale School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Gemma Brierley. 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, Lorraine Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by George Beveridge.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are kind and caring. They are polite and respectful, and they extend a warm welcome to new pupils who join the school. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, settle in quickly and are happy.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their achievement. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Children in the early years are supported well to make a strong start to their education.

Pupils behave well. They take pride in receiving rewards for their positive behaviour.

Pupils benefit from the work that the trust and the school have undertaken to provide pupils with access to an extensive range of sporting events. Trips to Carlisle Castle and Beamish Open-Air Museum help pupils to develop their understanding of the subjects that they study.

Pupils relish the opportunities that they have to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. They are encouraged to take on leadership roles at the school that make a significant contribution to the development of their resilience and sense of responsibility. These roles include being house captains, library leaders and school council members.

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

The school and the trust have worked closely together to develop an ambitious suite of subject curriculums. In most subjects, the order in which pupils learn new ideas and

concepts is well organised. As a result, most pupils build their understanding of these subjects securely over time.

In a small number of curriculum areas, the school has not finalised its thinking about the key knowledge that pupils should learn. At times, in these subjects, the misconceptions that some pupils have in their learning are not addressed as effectively as they could be. When this happens, some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready to do so, and do not achieve as well as they should.

The school ensures that most pupils complete learning activities that help them to build their depth of knowledge securely over time. It accurately identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. The school uses this information effectively so that these pupils learn well alongside their peers. In the early years, pupils benefit from the inspiring range of activities that the school has designed. Most pupils are well prepared for each stage of their education.

The school makes regular checks on what pupils know and remember in most subjects. This information is usually used in a timely manner to provide pupils with the support that they need to address any gaps that they may have in their learning.

Reading is prioritised at the school. Pupils are well supported to develop their phonic knowledge. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they learn. Some pupils struggle to sound and blend accurately. These pupils benefit from the extra help that they receive. This helps them to keep up with their peers. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

The books that pupils read make a strong contribution to their understanding of the world. For example, pupils consider the rights of animals in the treatment of humans with medical conditions.

Pupils make a strong contribution to the calm atmosphere that exists in lessons. Any rare instances of low-level disruption are dealt with effectively by the school. A small number of pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour. These pupils benefit from the skilled support that they receive. This support helps them to quickly improve their behaviour.

The school ensures that pupils know how to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils value the differences that exist between people. They respect opinions and beliefs that may be different to their own. The school provides pupils with a wide range of activities that make a strong contribution to their wider development.

The school provides parents and carers with helpful information about how they can best support their child's learning at home. Parents welcome the positive relationship that they have with the school.

Staff value the training opportunities provided by the trust because they help them to carry out their roles effectively. The trust and the school have carefully considered staff's workload and well-being. Specifically, this is with regard to the design of the curriculums in some subjects. Staff are proud to work at the school.

The trust ensures that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively. The local advisory board provides an appropriate level of challenge and support to the school. This ensures that the school continues to be ambitious for all pupils.

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 school has not set out the key knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that teachers are not as clear as they should be about how to address the misconceptions that some pupils have in their learning. The school should finalise its thinking in these subjects so that it can provide the support that pupils need to achieve well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

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

Unique reference number	141995
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10291436
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	282
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	George Beveridge
CEO of trust	Lorrayne Hughes
Headteacher	Gemma Brierley (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.yewdale.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Cumbria Education Trust.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and leaders of SEND, behaviour, attendance and pupil welfare. He also met with representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer, the school's link director, the director of learning provision, the director of primary improvement and the safeguarding lead.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. He considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. He also held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding leads.
- The inspector held a meeting with the local advisory board, including the chair. He also spoke to the local authority lead for SEND and inclusion.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He took account of the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. He observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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