

Settlebeck School

Settlebeck School, Long Lane, Sedburgh, Cumbria, LA10 5AL

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Highly personalised learning programmes for all groups of students, including the most able, ensure they make good progress, reach above average standards and achieve well.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs and those in the specially resourced provision for students with autism make particularly good progress because they receive high quality support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teaching is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. Teachers match work carefully to the needs of their students, use a range of interesting resources and ask perceptive questions to check learning.
- Students' behaviour is excellent, both in classrooms, in the dining hall and around the academy. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and work very hard. Students say how very safe they feel in the academy.
- Resources are deployed very well to ensure students have a wide range of interesting courses to choose from which are well suited to their differing interests and abilities.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by governors, has ensured that since the school became an academy it has moved forward. Any weaknesses in teaching have been tackled and students' attainment continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good but not enough is outstanding and good practice is not yet fully shared. Students are not always given enough opportunities to work independently and teachers' marking does not explain clearly enough how work can be improved.
- The roles of some middle managers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and leading improvements in their subject areas are not fully developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons and part-lessons and listened to students read.
- Discussions were held with parents, students, staff and governors.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at students' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Thirty-six responses to the on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View', were considered as well as the views of individual parents who telephoned the academy during the inspection. Questionnaires from academy staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Wardle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Settlebeck School converted to become an academy school on 1st August 2011. When its predecessor school, Settlebeck High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- This academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in the care of the local authority, for students from service families and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- A well-below-average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The academy has specialist status in science and technology.
- The academy is a member of the South Lakes Federation, which is a group of schools providing shared vocational education, professional development and school improvement support. It is also part of a group of seven other small rural schools, known as the Rural Academy of Cumbria.
- The academy does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The academy has specially resourced provision for six students with autism but also caters for 14 more autistic students who attend the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring marking in all subjects gives students clear pointers on how to improve their work
 - giving students even more opportunities to learn independently, think for themselves and solve problems
 - giving teachers more opportunities to observe and share good and outstanding practice.
- Further develop the skills and understanding of all middle leaders so they are better able to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and lead improvements in their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All students achieve well over time from their different starting points because the curriculum, work set in lessons and the personal support the academy gives are all closely matched to their individual needs.
- Students' attainment on entry to the academy is broadly average. However, because the number of students in each year group is very small and the number of students with disabilities and special educational needs is well above average there is a wide difference in the abilities and needs of each cohort.
- From their starting points students make good progress as they move through the academy and reach above average standards. The number of students gaining five A*-C grades including English and mathematics has risen steadily for the last three years and in 2013 the proportion of students achieving this standard is approximately eight per cent above the national average.
- Data shows that overall students' progress slowed in 2012, partly because of the particular nature of the very small cohort. In 2013, progress accelerated rapidly and the proportion of students making expected progress is over 15% greater than that found nationally. Current students are on track to make similar progress this year and exceed the challenging targets the academy has set.
- Autistic students attending the specially resourced provision achieve well. They receive skilled support from well trained teachers and teaching assistants who have high expectations of what they can achieve. Disabled students and those with special educational needs and a very small number of students who speak English as an additional language achieve equally well because they receive the same sensitive, skilled support and benefit from courses and lessons which are suited to their needs.
- There are such very small numbers of students who are supported by pupil premium funding that national data relating to their progress is not statistically significant. However, the academy spends this extra funding wisely on providing small group and one-to-one tuition and as individuals most of these students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress in line with their peers.
- Teachers give good attention to reading and most students enjoy reading and read fluently. Extra Year 7 catch-up funding, skilled teaching in the Foundation Class and the academy's successful focus on further improving literacy have ensured that students who find reading more difficult get the extra help they need.
- Students have good opportunities to practise their mathematical skills across a range of subjects. GCSE results in mathematics improved markedly in 2013.
- Very creative curriculum arrangements mean that students are entered early for examinations in many subjects including English, mathematics and science. Academy tracking shows that these arrangements are enhancing students' choice of courses and are not limiting their chances of achieving the highest grades. The most-able students achieve well and in 2013 met and sometimes exceeded their targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- Discussions with students and work seen in their books confirm that teaching over time is good. In some lessons teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers know their students exceptionally well and are skilled at matching work to the needs of students of widely differing abilities in mixed-age classes. Expectations are high and very good support from teaching assistants ensures that all groups of students, particularly the most able, autistic students and disabled students and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and explain their subjects clearly. They use a range of interesting

resources and set tasks which challenge students to achieve their best. High quality teaching, for example in English, fires students' enthusiasm and in some lessons they make rapid progress. Teachers ask perceptive questions which both checks students' current understanding and allows them to develop their ideas further.

- In a minority of lessons progress is slower because teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to think more deeply and work on their own to find out things for themselves.
- Students' social and moral development is promoted well in lessons. They are encouraged to work together, to help each other and to develop good speaking and listening skills. In a business studies class students worked in groups and made good use of technology to prepare presentations which they then used to successfully teach their classmates about the meaning of terms such as 'overtime', 'commission', 'piece work' and 'fringe benefit'.
- Books are marked regularly and examples of high quality feedback to students were seen. However, in some subjects marking is less effective and does not always give students clear pointers on how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are extremely keen to learn and respond very well to the good teaching they receive. Across all subjects students want to find out things for themselves, answer questions readily and respond willingly to the challenges teachers set.
- Students' behaviour around the academy, in the dining rooms and corridors is exemplary. They show real respect and courtesy for each other and for all staff. Students who had recently joined the academy were keen to tell inspectors just how welcome they felt, how quickly they had settled in and how well they were doing.
- Students say they feel entirely safe in the academy and have complete confidence that bullying, although very rare, is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students are knowledgeable about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and have a very sensible attitude to risk taking. Meaningful assemblies, tutor time and personal, social and health education lessons all promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very successfully.
- Records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and exclusions are minimal. Students want to come to the academy and attendance is above average.
- Students relish the opportunities they are given to take responsibility. They are clearly very proud of their academy and act as ambassadors for it when working in the local community helping, for example, with 'meals on wheels' or at the local toy library.
- A very small minority of parents who filled in the on-line questionnaire expressed some concerns about behaviour and bullying. However, a far greater number phoned the academy and the lead inspector personally and were fulsome in their praise of how the academy had provided excellent education and personal support for their children.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership for the academy. She has ensured that any weaknesses in teaching are tackled, that resources are used well, staff are deployed effectively and that teachers' performance is managed successfully. Her knowledge and that of the academy staff, about individual students, their families and the community help to ensure that Settlebeck School provides a good education for its students which prepare them extremely well for later life.
- The academy's self-evaluation is accurate and clear priorities for further improvement have been identified, actions are well defined and shared by all staff. Consequently, the academy has strong capacity to improve further.
- Senior and more-experienced leaders play a full role in the careful monitoring of teaching. This

leads to good quality professional development to help teachers improve their skills. However, the good practice that exists within the academy has yet to be fully shared.

- All leaders make a good contribution to academy improvement. However, some middle leaders have yet to fully develop their roles in monitoring the work of and leading improvement in teaching and learning, in their areas of responsibility.
- Students' progress is tracked closely and supported provided where it is most needed. As a result, the academy is highly inclusive as demonstrated by the good progress made by, and the support given to, all groups of students. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and extra funding is used well to provide specialist help for those who need it.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of child protection and risk assessment procedures.
- Since the school became an academy it has no direct contact with the local authority. It works in close partnership with other schools through the South Lakes Federation. Through this very effective partnership schools share expertise and resources and provide mutual support for school improvement.
- The curriculum is extremely creative, is broad and balanced and caters particularly well for individual student's needs. It prepares them well for the next stages of their education and for later life. Mixed-age classes, early entry for examinations and creative use of skilled specialist staff all combine to give students in this very small academy an amazingly wide choice of courses so that all students, including the most able, thrive. A wide range of enrichment activities and practical courses add to students' enjoyment of learning. They spoke enthusiastically about varied activities such as kayaking on the local river, orienteering on the fells, performing in dramatic productions and cooking tasty food on their catering course.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and use their expertise well to provide support and challenge in equal measure. They give very close attention to information about performance and understand how the academy's performance compares to schools nationally. Through visits and close contact with staff governors are also well informed about the quality of teaching, how teachers are rewarded and how underperformance is tackled. Finances are managed astutely and governors ensure that pupil premium funds benefit these students.

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	137269
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	428920

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Wilberforce
Headteacher	Judith Greene
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
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