

Inspection of Millom School

Salthouse Road, Millom, Cumbria LA18 5AB

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy attending this school. Staff know pupils and students well. This helps pupils and students to feel safe. Pupils have adults in school who they can talk to, and most feel well supported by staff.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders prepare pupils and students well for their next steps, be that in higher education, further education or the world of work.

Pupils move around school in a sensible manner and conduct themselves well in lessons. They told inspectors that while most pupils behave appropriately, there is some poor behaviour in some of their lessons. Pupils said that leaders and staff deal with this behaviour well so they can continue with their learning. They also told inspectors that when bullying occurs, leaders address these incidents and deal with them effectively most of the time.

Pupils value the opportunities that leaders and staff provide to visit different places. For example, pupils enjoyed recent trips to Wales and Austria. They told inspectors that these trips help them to build trust and independence. Pupils and students in the sixth form are keen to have further opportunities to develop their talents and interests.

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

Leaders have acted quickly to address the weaknesses in the quality of education at the time of the previous inspection. They have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum and have identified the essential knowledge that pupils and students need to learn from Year 7 to Year 13.

Subject curriculums are coherently planned. This helps pupils and students to build their knowledge over time and they achieve well. Students in the sixth form study subjects that are relevant for their next steps, despite the low numbers in some classes. Students benefit from bespoke and appropriate support from their teachers.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, access the same ambitious curriculum. Leaders identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND and provide support to help them. That said, staff lack some of the information and guidance that they need to support some pupils with SEND as well.

Some pupils study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects at key stage 4. Leaders have made efforts to develop further the modern foreign languages curriculum in key stage 3 to make it more relevant to pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils following the EBacc suite of subjects is beginning to rise.

Teachers have a detailed knowledge of their subjects. They use their expertise to help pupils with their learning and identify forgotten learning and misconceptions. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, can talk about their learning in detail and make links to what they already know. Teachers use assessment strategies well to check that pupils learn and remember the intended curriculum.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have taken action to encourage more pupils to read widely and often. However, this work is in the early stages and leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to engage pupils in reading for pleasure. Students in the sixth form value the work they do to support younger pupils with their reading. Leaders identify those pupils who are still in the early stages of reading. Staff provide support for this group of pupils to help them to catch up. However, some reading interventions are not effective in helping some pupils to catch up as quickly as they should.

Most pupils understand the high expectations that leaders have of their conduct and they behave well. However, a small proportion of staff, parents and carers have some concerns about how well some negative behaviour is dealt with in school.

Leaders have adapted the curriculum to support pupils' wider development in response to the needs of pupils and the local context. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs. They are also taught about the importance of treating people equally and with respect. They learn about healthy relationships and risky behaviour. Leaders plan opportunities for pupils to find out about local industries and the global market.

Leaders and governors know the school and local community well. They have a strong understanding of those aspects that require further refinement. Most staff feel that they are supported well by leaders and said that their workload and well-being are taken into account. However, some staff feel impacted by recent staffing and curriculum changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have appropriate training so they can identify those pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report safeguarding concerns. Leaders act on these swiftly. They work closely with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families can access appropriate additional help.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the personal development curriculum and assemblies. For example, they learn about the risks and dangers when they are online. Leaders respond thoughtfully and appropriately to local safeguarding concerns when they arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have sufficient information about the needs of some pupils with SEND. This hinders some teachers in providing the best possible support for this group of pupils. Leaders should further develop their existing systems to share information for this group of pupils so that teachers can better support them to access the curriculum.
- Leaders are still in the process of refining their strategy to support those pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. Consequently, some pupils are not catching up with their reading as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that the support and interventions provided for these pupils help them to catch up quickly.
- Some staff do not feel that they are supported well by leaders to use the systems to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, from time to time, some pupils misbehave in lessons. Leaders should ensure that, where required, teachers are supported to manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	112388
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10212295
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	515
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elsa Mason
Headteacher	Matthew Savidge
Website	www.millom.cumbria.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2018

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 chair of the governing body, other governors and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors also met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They also spoke with a range of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in design technology, science, mathematics and modern foreign languages. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' and students' work and held discussions with teachers, students and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' records of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. They met with the leader who has overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff, students and pupils about leaders' work to keep pupils and students safe.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered responses from the staff, students and pupils to Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

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