

Eskdale School

Stainsacre Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO22 4HS

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Actions taken by leaders since the previous inspection have secured improvements across the school's work. The headteacher's determined focus on improving the quality of teaching is ensuring that more teaching is consistently good. As a result, in most classes, year groups and subjects, pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Assessment systems to check pupils' learning have improved and teachers have a clearer understanding of pupils' current abilities. Most teachers use the outcomes of assessment to plan activities that move pupils on in their learning effectively. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not given challenging enough work.
- Leaders have navigated well through the turbulent times since the last inspection and have managed the transition from a middle to a secondary school effectively. Year 10 pupils speak positively about the changes and the courses they are studying. The recruitment of specialist staff and training of current staff is ensuring that the broadly based curriculum is usually taught well.
- Specific programmes in the curriculum are building pupils' confidence and self-esteem successfully. However, the quality of pupils' work across subjects is varied. Teachers do not challenge untidy presentation, common grammatical or spelling errors consistently.
- A wide range of before- and after-school activities, visits out of, and visitors to, school enrich the curriculum well. Such experiences add to pupils' enjoyment of school, broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.
- The insightful local authority review of the school in spring 2017 helped leaders to take action to secure more rapid improvement in the weaker areas identified. For example, improved work is ensuring that pupils develop the qualities they need to be thoughtful, respectful and active citizens in modern Britain today.
- Pupils report that they are safe and taught to understand, and then take action to minimise, risks to their safety. They behave well and speak highly of the support and care provided by staff. The vast majority of parents are also highly positive about the safety, care and education their children receive.
- Leaders have been relentless in their efforts to improve pupils' attendance rates but attendance remains below average. This is particularly the case for the small group of pupils who attend off-site provision in Whitby.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are increasingly effective in challenging, as well as supporting, leaders to ensure that all pupils can make the most of their time at Eskdale School.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors should iron out the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are challenged consistently so they do not spend time completing tasks that they already know and understand before moving onto the more complex work teachers have planned for them
 - teachers recognise and challenge pupils' untidy work, consistently
 - pupils are challenged to identify and then correct spelling and grammatical errors in their work
 - pupils in the off-site provision are supported to attend more regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, leaders have steered Eskdale School through turbulent times and the transition from a middle school to a secondary school successfully. At the same time, and at a more rapid pace since spring 2017, they have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and tackled, resolutely, weaker teaching where it existed. The quality of teaching has improved and this is resulting in the good progress pupils are now making in most subjects across the school.
- Middle leadership, identified as a weakness at the last inspection, is developing well. Articulate and increasingly confident middle leaders are working closely with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to monitor and evaluate the school's work regularly. As a result, the capacity for continued improvement is strong, as middle leaders build their skills and influence further.
- Senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further work. Priorities for improvement are clearly identified in plans and acted upon. For example, provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been a recent priority. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved provision and trained staff and teaching assistants to meet pupils' needs more effectively.
- Strong partnerships developed with a range of professionals from North Yorkshire local authority and health agencies, where required, have helped to secure timely, specialist support and expertise. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported to achieve well. Staff are increasingly adept at ensuring that pupils develop their independence skills by not intervening too early when pupils are working things out for themselves. The good impact of the additional funding these pupils receive is clear from assessment information, observations of learning and pupils' work. Improvements are currently being made to the information that governors receive so they can check its impact more formally.
- Arrangements to manage staff performance are effective. Reviews of learning, pupils' assessments and individual staff targets inform the next steps staff need to take to meet their pupils' needs and develop their skills further. Training of staff is regular and targeted to meet their professional needs and the school's current priorities. Teachers new to the profession value the support and advice provided. Staff are highly positive about the improvements made to the school, the more rigorous way they are held to account and the support they receive for their professional development.
- Assessment systems are developing effectively. Teachers usually use their regular assessments of pupils' work to identify their starting points and set activities that generally move pupils on well in their learning. Occasionally, most-able pupils are insufficiently challenged at the start of the lesson, slowing the pace of their learning.
- Senior and middle leaders' regular reviews of learning, pupils' work and tests identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Extra support is provided to help pupils catch up to where they should be. Occasionally, leaders do not check if work in pupils' books matches their test outcomes. Sometimes the rate of progress in books is not as strong as the test data suggests. Opportunities are then missed for teachers to tackle gaps in

pupils' understanding before moving on to the next programme of study. Leaders are aware of this and are taking action to improve matters.

- Leaders have prioritised the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Actions being taken are having the desired effect on pupils' learning and in ensuring the additional funding for these pupils is used effectively. While differences between their achievements and those of other pupils exist in a few subjects, the differences are diminishing successfully and are insignificant in subjects like mathematics, science and art for the current Year 8.
- The additional Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is also used effectively. Reviews of activities provided to pupils who enter school with skills that are below average show most make good progress over the time they attend the activities.
- The curriculum is broadly based. It provides a good balance of subjects and experiences to meet pupils' needs and interests and to enable them to follow a suitable range of qualifications in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum ensures pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities with something on offer for everyone: sports, the arts, cultural experiences and extra literacy or numeracy activities to help pupils practise skills that they have found difficult to acquire. Independent careers advice and guidance is provided to all year groups and is helping to raise aspirations and guide pupils towards their next steps.
- Leaders have improved the effectiveness of their work in teaching the qualities pupils need to be thoughtful and active citizens in modern Britain. Work is embedded across the curriculum, assemblies and registration periods. Pupils learn about values such as respect, trust, democracy and to understand and respect the diversity of religions and cultures beyond their local and regional communities.
- The very small number of pupils who attend the off-site provision access a safe learning space. Regular communication between school and staff in the provision ensure that pupils' whereabouts is known. The curriculum is broad and pupils' workbooks show they are making progress across the curriculum when they attend. Attendance rates are far too low and this limits pupils' ability to make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders have welcomed the re-established, and now productive, relationship with the local authority. The school improvement adviser has provided effective training and challenge to senior leaders, middle leaders and governors. This has helped them to develop their leadership skills in monitoring and evaluating the school's work further. Support from specialist English, mathematics and science advisers from the local authority is contributing to improvements being made in these subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Current governors have been fastidious in conducting regular audits to ensure that they recruit governors with the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience. They have been active in seeking training to fulfil their duties, for example in safeguarding. Governors are committed to self-improvement to ensure that they are effective in supporting and challenging leaders in their work to move the school forward. They have looked outward and

secured a national leader of governance to review and evaluate their work. Despite the reviewer providing only oral feedback, the governing body is taking action to ensure that recommendations are acted on. Governors visit school regularly and meet with senior and middle leaders to check what is working well and what needs further improvement. Minutes of governing body meetings show the increasing challenge they are bringing to bear in holding leaders to account for the impact of their work. They make themselves known and available to parents and pupils, attending events and parents' evenings. This means they hear first-hand how pupils and parents feel about the work of leaders.

- The governing body is reflective and honest in its understanding of the school's work. For example, governors now receive regular information on the progress of pupils and groups of pupils across the school. They accept their understanding of this information is developing rather than being fully secure. Governors also are aware that they have limited understanding of leaders' use of the off-site provision for the very small group of pupils who use it. They are taking actions to remedy this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pastoral care is a strength and pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for by all staff. Leaders have ensured that child protection and safeguarding training for all staff is up to date and in line with statutory requirements. They make sure staff receive regular updates and understand how, and to whom, they must report should they have any concerns. Leaders also make sure that all staff working with pupils are suitable to do so. Checks on potential employees are stringent, which contributes to the protection of pupils.
- Referrals to local authority safeguarding teams are timely. Leaders have developed productive relationships with a range of professionals and agencies. They enlist their support promptly to help families and pupils in times of great need or crises in order to keep pupils safe. The school's website provides parents and pupils with a range of accessible information on risks to pupils' safety online and in everyday life.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Typical of virtually all lessons are the strong and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are polite and friendly; they come to lessons promptly and are ready to learn. They work equally well when working independently or when they work in group activities. Pupils report, and workbooks show, that in the majority of lessons they apply themselves diligently to their studies and make generally good progress in their learning.
- Leaders' focus on developing teachers' skills and competencies through training, coaching and taking strident action when teaching is not up to scratch has seen improvement in its quality since the last inspection. On the few occasions where teaching requires further improvement, middle and senior leaders are fully aware. They are taking action through time-limited action plans and support strategies to build teachers' skills and capabilities.
- Assessment systems have been developed as a result of changes nationally but also to

enable accurate assessment of pupils' learning in the GCSE subjects they now undertake in Year 10. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly. They usually use this information to set work that moves pupils on from what they already know and understand effectively. For example, learning for older pupils in mathematics and science lessons is brisk. Pupils are set challenges appropriate to their current abilities. Insightful questioning by teachers teases out what pupils understand and challenges them to think further about their work. In practical subjects such as drama and art, teachers' high expectations and strong subject knowledge ensure that pupils are engrossed in their learning, enjoy their work and make strong progress.

- Improvements in the way that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are identified and then supported have resulted in these pupils making equally good progress as their peers. The SENCo keeps a close eye on how well pupils are doing and makes sure teachers are responding to their needs effectively.
- The assessment system provides colour-coded 'flight paths' for pupils from their entry into Year 7 across all subject areas and ranges of ability. Pupils understand the 'amber', 'green' and 'purple' challenges, which represent increasing complexity of work set for them. However, on occasions, 'purple' work set for the most able pupils is not challenging enough. For example, sometimes lower-ability and most-able pupils successfully complete the same purple challenge which means it is too easy for the most able. Occasionally, most-able pupils are required to complete the amber or green challenge before they complete the purple. This slows the pace of their learning so they make steady rather than strong progress.
- While teachers generally assess pupils' work in line with the school's policy, a few do not check or challenge when pupils' presentation of their work is untidy, or when they make simple spelling errors or grammatical mistakes. This hinders pupils' mastery of grammar and spelling.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and the positive relationships they develop with staff and each other. They speak highly of the way that teachers 'really pay attention' when they seek out advice and the way staff help to create a 'nice atmosphere'. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school and wear their uniform with pride.
- Pupils, across the now two key stages in school, adopt positive attitudes to their learning and develop into mature and respectful members of the school community. Programmes such as 'creating confidence' and other specific initiatives across the curriculum develop pupils' confidence, self-belief and emotional well-being successfully.
- Pupils are very clear that they are well-taught about how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider community. The school website also provides parents and pupils with a wide range of information and links to national organisations to help them understand risks and how to stay safe. Safety tips such as 'Yell and Tell' and work with the police on issues such as domestic violence and extremism contribute to pupils'

understanding of unsafe situations and how to respond to them.

- Pupils report that they are well-taught about different types of bullying, including prejudicial and homophobic bullying, but are adamant that such behaviour is very rare in their school. One pupil's comment echoed many when they reported, 'teachers would get on to anything like that straight away but it would not happen because we are encouraged to respect each other and we know what is right or wrong'.
- Pupils live in a tight-knit community on the coastal strip of North Yorkshire. Although most pupils are of White British heritage, a wide range of work is undertaken to ensure that they have a good understanding of faiths and cultures in the wider community of Britain. A wealth of visits out of school, visitors to school, and before- and after-school clubs enrich pupils' experiences. Together with the regular independent careers advice and guidance, such work raises pupils' aspirations for their futures and adds to their stated enjoyment of school.
- Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, or pupils who experience challenges in their lives, are well supported by the strong partnerships which leaders have established with agencies in the local authority and across North Yorkshire. Leaders harness support in a timely way when crises or concerns arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves in a mature and friendly manner in lessons and as they move around the school at break and lunchtimes. They are curious about and respectful of visitors and adults. Pupils report that behaviour is good and lessons are rarely disrupted by low-level misbehaviour. On a very few occasions, pupils admit that they do not always behave quite as well when taught by supply teachers. Leaders are tackling this anomaly.
- Despite leaders' relentless work to improve pupils' attendance rates, they remain slightly below average. Leaders have strong evidence that work with, and support for, pupils and their families whose rates are concerning has led to these pupils attending more regularly. This helped to reduce persistent absence rates which were slightly below average last year. Current attendance rates this term have been hit by parents taking their children out of school for holidays. This is despite leaders not authorising or agreeing such events.
- Multi-agency work between school staff and local authority professionals supports the emotional well-being and learning of the very small number of pupils who attend the Whitby off-site provision. However, attendance rates of these pupils are far too low, which means they do not make the most of the broad curriculum and support on offer.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school made the transition from a middle school to a secondary school in September 2016. The first key stage 4 pupils began their studies in September 2017. Consequently, there is no published end-of-key-stage-4 data against which the achievements of pupils in Eskdale School and pupils nationally can be compared.
- Nevertheless, the school has developed an assessment system that tracks the progress of all pupils, year groups and groups of pupils across all subjects. Senior and middle

leaders work with schools across the region to moderate and check the accuracy of their regular assessments, particularly the regular tests which pupils complete. As a result, leaders have a good understanding of pupils' current skills and abilities and any differences in pupils', and groups of pupils' achievements. At the time of the last inspection, the achievement of boys was a concern. Leaders' focus on improving the quality of teaching, behaviour and the curriculum is ensuring that pupils' progress has hastened across the school since the last inspection.

- Observations of learning and reviews of pupils' work, alongside the school's assessment information, show that progress is at least steady and often good from their below-average starting points. For example, achievement in mathematics and drama is strong for the current Year 8 pupils. Progress of key stage 3 pupils in history is lagging behind that in key stage 4. This relative weakness was recognised by the subject leader. She has already identified the steps needed to support improvement at this key stage. Past differences between the achievements of boys and girls are being addressed effectively in most subjects and are negligible in art and science.
- Leaders have prioritised the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Actions being taken are having the desired effect and ensuring that the additional funding to support these pupils is used effectively. Staff know these pupils well and the majority make sure pupils are fully involved in their learning. Pupils are usually challenged or supported in lessons as necessary, although the most-able occasionally have purple challenges that are too easy. Information which leaders gather about disadvantaged pupils, together with inspection evidence, shows that overall, while differences between their progress and other pupils exist in some subjects, the differences are not significant. This is particularly the case in mathematics, drama, technology, science and art. Middle leaders are working with staff to diminish further the differences in subjects such as geography and history.
- Progress rates for the very small number of pupils who attend the off-site provision in Whitby are not good enough. This is because their attendance rates are far too low. Leaders and governors are working with the local authority to tackle this concern.

School details

Unique reference number	121668
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10036569

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Teanby
Headteacher	Sue Whelan
Telephone number	01947 602856
Website	eskdale-school.co.uk
Email address	admin@eskdale.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 November 2015

Information about this school

- Eskdale is a much smaller than average-sized secondary school. It became a secondary school in September 2016, having previously been a middle school. Numbers of pupils on roll have increased significantly since that time, as has the number of staff. There are no Year 11 pupils on roll.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below that found nationally.
- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities that are provided with additional in-school support is slightly above average, as is the proportion that are supported by an education, health and care plan.
- A small number of pupils who are at risk of exclusion or who are anxious about attending school, attend off-site provision in Whitby. Caedmon College is the lead provider for this provision and pupils from both schools attend.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the school. Inspectors visited a number of lessons jointly with senior leaders. They reviewed pupils' workbooks during lessons. Middle leaders also spent time with inspectors reviewing pupils' workbooks across a range of subjects. An inspector visited the Whitby off-site provision with a member of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives from the governing body and a group of staff. Inspectors also met a representative from the local authority's school improvement service.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school over the two days of the inspection. They also spoke formally to two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by 180 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the written text comments made by 136 parents. They took account of the views of 26 staff who completed the staff questionnaire and the six pupils who responded to the pupil survey.
- A range of documents was reviewed. These included safeguarding documents, the school's written evaluation of its work, and its improvement plan. In addition, reports to the governing body and assessment information about the progress of all groups of pupils across the school were scrutinised

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Manuel	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Garrett	Ofsted Inspector

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