

# Cramlington Learning Village

Highburn, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 6BN

## Inspection dates

1–2 February 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**

16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked hard and systematically to successfully address the past weaknesses at the school. It is now good. Governors and leaders continue to be very ambitious and know that there is yet more to be done.
- Staff are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and skilled. They have high expectations and know their pupils well. They are increasingly skilled at targeting their teaching to ensure rapid and sustained progress for all pupils, including for those who are disadvantaged and the most able.
- Leaders use performance management effectively. They monitor the impact of teaching and the progress of pupils meticulously. They use the information they gather to help staff to further focus their teaching and support for pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved, aware of the needs of others and proud of their school. They are very keen to learn and improve. They feel safe.
- The curriculum is appropriate and interesting. It is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. However, there is still some variability in the depth and breadth of pupils' experience of learning, especially in humanities and modern foreign languages in key stage 3.
- The headteacher is unwavering in her commitment to making sure the school is successful. She has ensured that key systems and accountabilities are in place to accurately check its performance.
- Governors are skilled, knowledgeable and strategic in their leadership of the school. They hold the headteacher and her team rigorously to account and demand continued, sustained improvement.
- Middle leaders are increasingly playing an effective role in monitoring pupils' progress and ensuring that teaching continues to improve. They are well supported by governors and leaders in this work.
- Pupils and students receive very high-quality support, advice and guidance.
- The support for vulnerable pupils and those who need support is thorough and rooted in a school-wide commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The sixth form is very well led and students are happy, safe and make good progress. They receive very good-quality advice about next steps combined with focused work experience.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly, although it is still not as good as it should be. Leaders employ a range of effective strategies to try to ensure that it continues to improve.

## **Full report**

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils, by:
  - providing more focused teaching and support for disadvantaged pupils in lessons and in extra-curricular activities
  - building further on the recent and successful work to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of subject provision to ensure that:
  - pupils' experience of humanities teaching in key stage 3 gives them a clear understanding of the distinctive skills and knowledge associated with each key element of this area of the curriculum
  - consistently good teaching in modern foreign languages results in good progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management **Good**

- The headteacher has steered the school through challenging times. She leads with vigour and an unshakeable commitment to ensuring that all pupils, and particularly those who are vulnerable, receive a high-quality education that prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher, supported by governors and her senior team, has made decisive decisions and laid effective plans that have ensured that the school improves rapidly. She has addressed underachievement and poor behaviour rigorously through an insistence on high standards. She has been effectively supported by her senior team. Together, the senior team has put in place careful, rigorous and effective systems to check quality and identify areas of concern.
- Middle leaders in core subjects are making an increasingly strong contribution to the effectiveness of the school and its teaching through careful and increasingly sophisticated monitoring of the quality and impact of the teaching in their areas. They are contributing fully to focused and effective development of staff skills.
- The monitoring of staff performance is used well to focus on improving key aspects of the school's work. For example, all teachers have a target about improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This, along with other actions and rigorous systems, has ensured that these vulnerable pupils have a high profile in the school's discussions and actions.
- Leaders support and challenge staff effectively. For example, the school has appointed a number of newly qualified teachers. The induction, challenge and support for these colleagues is carefully shaped so that they quickly settle and contribute to the good teaching at the school. In addition, all staff receive regular, high-quality training and support to further develop their skills and effectiveness. Governors take a keen and detailed interest in this work through their careful and regular links to all aspects of the school. Staff morale is good. Staff reported that they had noticed and welcomed the significant improvements to the school since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have made changes to the timings of the school day since the previous inspection. This has resulted in more productive learning time and more effective tracking of pupils' work and attendance. This is because teachers see pupils more regularly and are able to follow up any issues about learning or attendance promptly and effectively. This is having a positive impact on both attendance and learning, especially for vulnerable pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to take their next steps with informed confidence. Leaders and governors are aware, however, that there is still some variability in parts of the curriculum. They have taken clear and decisive steps to address this.
- Leaders and governors have been effective in seeking appropriate support for the school from external partners. For example, Cragside Primary School provides imaginative and innovative support that has contributed to the recent and successful transition of local Year 6 pupils into Year 7. In addition, Whitley Bay School and Cardinal

Hume Catholic School have worked with the school to assure the accuracy of assessments in a wide range of subjects.

- The Year 7 'catch up' funding is used well and effectively. It is carefully targeted for maximum impact. Leaders use detailed, pupil by pupil, analysis of key stage 2 external test results and teacher assessments to forensically target support for pupils who need extra help to catch up. The support of these pupils is a priority for the school. The headteacher is one of the team that, every day, listens to the reading of Year 7 pupils who need support with this skill.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governance of the school is strong and very well led. Governors know the school well. They gather their information about how well the school is doing from a wide range of sources. They check on the accuracy of the information on which they base their decisions rigorously. They have supported and rigorously challenged the headteacher. As a result, the school has improved very significantly under the strategic guidance of the governing body.
- Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is well deployed. As a result, the progress of pupils eligible for this funding is increasingly matching and often exceeding that of their peers in the school. In addition, this funding is used to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Inspection evidence shows that this is having a positive impact. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of safeguarding suffuses the school and is rooted in a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. The school's systems for keeping pupils safe are strong and regularly reviewed. All staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training to ensure that pupils and students are safe and enjoy their life and learning. Governors and leaders see this as one of their paramount responsibilities.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**    **Good**

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. This is because of effective leadership at all levels and generally much higher expectations by staff of what all pupils can and should achieve.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is now good, although there is still some variability. Teachers know their pupils well and have, generally, very high expectations. They all demonstrate high levels of knowledge and skill in their subjects. Teachers demand high levels of engagement and enthusiasm from their pupils. Where there is this challenge, pupils rise enthusiastically to it and make good and sometimes better progress.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a priority for all staff and teachers. These pupils

and their needs, in particular, are well known to staff. Teachers use the very detailed information that leaders provide to help them plan their teaching so that it addresses these needs and extends pupils' learning. As a result, these more vulnerable pupils are increasingly making progress that is in line with their peers.

- There is clear evidence in, for example, English, mathematics and science books, of high expectations leading to assured and sustained progress for both disadvantaged pupils and their peers. All pupils, including the most able, welcome the range of ways in which teachers help them improve their work through written and oral comments.
- The school tracks pupils' progress regularly, effectively and in detail. This information is used to improve the quality and impact of teaching by helping teachers and leaders to see where there are 'gaps' in individual pupils' and groups' learning and skills. Parents are kept regularly informed of how well their children are doing. This tracking also ensures that pupils know how they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.
- Staff questioning of pupils is a strength in many areas of the school. Teachers use focused and 'open' questions well to develop and deepen pupils' thinking and confidence in their subject. In English, for example, a teacher questioned pupils on how and why a writer used a range of written forms and structures to produce an effect. Pupils rose to this challenge and used their prior knowledge and skill to respond to the teacher's questions enthusiastically and develop both their thinking and delight in the subject.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and, where the provision is at its best, the impact of teaching assistants is indistinguishable from that of their teacher colleagues. In a French lesson, for example, the support staff spoke confidently in French to support and model good practice for pupils. This was much appreciated. Teaching assistants monitor individual and groups of pupils' progress carefully and feed back effectively to teachers. This feedback helps teachers focus and further improve their planning.
- Pupils' experience in the classroom is increasingly being supported by online 'virtual learning', especially in science. This online subject presence gives pupils a sense of the next steps in their learning programme. It also means that teachers can add preparation and additional follow-up material online to support learning. This approach adds to pupils' control and growing autonomy and gives extra focus to the concept of 'homework'. Pupils in science said that they welcomed this approach because it helped them know what is going to be studied next.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from well-organised, carefully targeted and effective teaching that enables them to make good progress. Good teaching supported, as appropriate, by classroom assistants is instrumental in ensuring that this group of pupils make good progress. The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that staff are fully informed and well trained and supported to meet the needs of these pupils so that they make good and better progress.
- The school has risen very positively to the challenge set out in September 2016's monitoring inspection report to give pupils more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English especially in key stage 3. There is clear evidence in Year 7 science, for example, of pupils using and extending their understanding of scientific

method through writing 'scientifically' and at greater length thus describing, interpreting and setting out conclusions. In other areas of the curriculum, such as design technology, these opportunities to explore the particular language and nature of the subject through writing at length are not so apparent.

- While the quality of teaching across the school is good, there are some areas, notably in modern foreign languages and key stage 3 humanities, where further improvements need to continue to be made to ensure consistently good and better teaching and learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** Good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of and speak warmly of their school. They wear their uniforms smartly. There is no litter on the site. This pleasure and pride in their learning and school also shows itself in the quality of pupils' work in their books and folders. This is generally neat and well presented. Pupils rise to the expectations of the school-wide 'gold standard' for presentation.
- Pupils show real concern for each other and are aware of their responsibilities. Their understanding of the nature of their role as citizens of Britain and the wider world is fostered by opportunities to explore issues provided by the school. For example, the well-structured, regular 'well-being' days give pupils time and space to explore challenging and current issues. Pupils reported that they welcomed these days because they gave them insights into other ways of living and helped them develop tolerance and a sense of fair play. They also said that these days and other opportunities at the school helped them explore their own next steps, career and education choices.
- Pupils were particularly positive about the support that they receive from staff at the school. Many spoke about the extra effort that staff put in to help and encourage them both in lessons and through extra-curricular activities. Pupils were very appreciative of the interest that staff have in them and their welfare. They said that if they ever had a problem, it would be sorted out by staff. 'There's always someone to turn to,' one pupil said.
- Pupils understand the forms that bullying can take, including that which is homophobic and racial. They said that bullying is very rare. If it did occur, they were clear that they would tell an adult. They said that they were confident that staff would 'sort it out'.
- Pupils know about the risks they can face and how to keep themselves safe, including when online. This is because the school uses a range of strategies to help pupils explore and learn about the world and develop their own resilience.
- The school has a large, complex and open site. Staff manage this well so that pupils feel safe and at home. Staff supervision at the start and end of the day and at break and lunchtime is very effective and very visible. Movement around the site is careful and between lessons it is prompt. Lateness is uncommon; pupils move efficiently to their

learning.

- Pupils enjoy learning. They are eager and readily engaged by effective and stimulating teaching and opportunities to learn. For example, Year 7 pupils talked enthusiastically about books and authors and the opportunities they have to read in school. There are regular opportunities for sustained reading in school. Careful online records are kept.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved very significantly since the time of the previous full inspection in 2015. Inspectors saw no examples of low-level disruption during this inspection. The monitoring HMI saw very few examples of low-level disruption during his series of monitoring inspections. This is because leaders at the school addressed this key aspect of the school very promptly and effectively. There has been sustained good behaviour at the school ever since.
- Pupils are polite and self-assured, and talk enthusiastically about their learning and their life at school. They show high levels of consideration for others.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and often outstanding, with pupils taking a real and focused interest in their learning. They are keen to help each other to learn. In a physical education lesson, for example, pupils were very aware of and sensitive to the needs of those who found the activity challenging.
- 'The Base' is an on-site provision for pupils who from time to time need support. It is very well managed. Pupils are carefully monitored and disruptions to their academic progress are minimised because of imaginative, clear and supportive approaches and systems.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision off the school site. These pupils' attendance, progress and well-being are very carefully and regularly monitored by senior staff to ensure that they make the progress that they can and should.
- Overall attendance is good. The absence and more persistent absence rates for disadvantaged pupils have been historically high. However, they are reducing rapidly due to the success of the wide range of carefully targeted, regularly monitored strategic and personalised interventions and encouragements which the school has put in place.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Over time, pupils make good progress from their starting points across the school. This progress is similar to, or better than, that of pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- For pupils in Year 7 whose skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not strong enough to give them full access to the curriculum, the school offers additional, very carefully focused support. This provision is very effective and enables these pupils to catch up and make progress similar to that of their peers.
- In summer 2016, outcomes for Year 11 pupils improved in English and significantly so in mathematics as a result of improvements in teaching and more rigorous monitoring of

pupils' progress.

- Information about current pupils across the school, including for those who are disadvantaged, shows that progress continues to improve. Evidence seen in books and folders during the inspection shows that this is the case. The differences in progress between those who are disadvantaged and their peers in the school are diminishing rapidly, particularly in the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good and sometimes better progress. This is because this aspect of the school's work is well led and all staff are increasingly aware of and carefully trained to cater effectively for the needs of these pupils. Governors monitor this rigorously.
- The school encourages reading. There are many opportunities across the school for pupils to read a wide range of different types of books. Pupils welcome this and talk enthusiastically about their reading.
- The proportion of pupils moving on to further education, employment or training is above average. This reflects the high quality of pupils' careers advice and guidance.
- There is some variability in the quality of teaching between subjects which has resulted in outcomes not being as strong in certain areas of the curriculum, especially in key stage 3. Leaders and governors are aware of this and have taken effective steps to address it. It is too early to say whether these actions have had a sustained and positive impact.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Students benefit from a wide range of options, both academic and vocational, in the very well-led 16 to 19 study programmes. The sixth-form leader and her staff ensure that the students experience and learn through a curriculum that focuses on what they need to do to prosper as young adults and prepare them for their next steps.
- In the majority of academic subjects, students achieve better than other students nationally. A-level results at the school are improving year on year.
- All learners who needed to improve their GCSE grades in English and mathematics did so significantly in 2016. The historical difference between success in mathematics and English outcomes and progress has been eradicated as a result of the school's actions. Mathematics results are now as good as those for English.
- The quality of impartial careers advice and the experiences to which learners have access are good and help students make informed decisions about next steps. These experiences are also shaped to suit students' aspirations.
- Teaching is strong, regularly and rigorously monitored and students make good and better progress from their starting points. Students said that they enjoyed their learning and that the support they received from staff was of a very high quality. They said that their teachers 'go above and beyond' to support and help them. This was clearly the case in the lessons seen during the inspection.
- The students' 'formal' curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular



activities. Students are encouraged to engage with action and support for others that 'leave a legacy', a lasting impact for good. These activities vary from acting as a mentor for younger pupils to regularly supporting older members of the local communities through visits and other activities. The sixth-form leader and her team are committed to ensuring that students develop a sense of service to others and a growing understanding of their responsibilities as members of society.

- The sixth-form staff help provide students with a range of work and other related experiences. This helps develop students' understanding and widens their experience of the world and the opportunities it offers so that they can make informed choices about what to do with the first part of their adult lives.
- The vast majority of students move on to higher levels during and after their study programme and achieve qualifications that help them attain their next steps and ambitions. Very few students do not complete their courses.
- Students said that they felt safe and that the school has helped them to develop. Students said that they were happy and that their sixth-form experience was a very positive one.
- It was noted during the inspection that not all sixth-form students wore their identity badges when leaving and entering the learning village.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137457
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10025824

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,949
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeff McCartney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Heslop
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 712311
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cramlingtonlv.co.uk/">www.cramlingtonlv.co.uk/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@cramlingtonlv.co.uk">admin@cramlingtonlv.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 April 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Cramlington Learning Village is a much larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for special educational needs support and those who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school has a very small number of pupils who are currently accessing part-time

alternative provision provided through Northumberland local authority.

- The school has effective partnerships with Cragside Primary School, Whitley Bay School and Cardinal Hume Catholic School.
- The school has a large sixth form.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 59 parts of lessons across a range of subjects, in all year groups. Six short visits to different lessons were conducted with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in detail.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with pupils, middle leaders, senior leaders, teaching staff, including a group of recently qualified teachers, the headteacher and governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 60 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the school's website; the school's self-evaluation and development plans; records from external reviews; records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; the school's own information and data relating to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the single central record, safeguarding records and associated policies and procedures, including checks on the suitability of staff.

## Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Geoffrey Lumsdon	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
Angela White	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Ofsted Inspector

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