



Fell House
School  growing & learning together

Fell House School
Ofsted Report
16 to 18 April 2024

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There are **high expectations** for pupils. For many, **this is the first time they have felt settled in a school**. Pupils have found a school where **they are happy, can be themselves and achieve well**.



Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour and in the way that they treat them. They **skilfully support pupils to manage their emotions well**. Pupils look out and are **supportive of each other**. They demonstrate **highly positive attitudes** to their learning.

They are resilient to different challenges that they sometimes face.



The school **caters for pupils' personal development extremely well**.

The **opportunities to extend pupils' wider personal development** and to **develop social and emotional skills** are carefully thought through. **The school selects these experiences with pupils' successful futures in mind**. Pupils have a **well rounded understanding** of how they are all different, **celebrating differences** regularly.



The school is a **calm oasis for pupils**. Staff have **warm and respectful relationships** with pupils. This promotes the **orderly feel** to the school and **helps pupils to behave exceptionally well**.



Appletree
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growing & learning together

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Inspection of Fell House School

1 Grange Fell Road, Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6AS

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 April 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit immensely from their time at Fell House School. Staff guide and support them to get back on track, with many having had a challenging time in the past. There are high expectations for pupils. For many, this is the first time they have felt settled in a school. Pupils have found a school where they are happy, can be themselves and achieve well.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff, including therapists, use their expertise to understand what each pupil needs. Pupils are well supported to meet their individual targets. Everyone celebrates pupils' successes. Staff spot the small steps that pupils take to reach their personal goals.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour and in the way that they treat them. They skilfully support pupils to manage their emotions well. Pupils look out and are supportive of each other. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning. They are resilient to different challenges that they sometimes face.

The school devises an exceptionally rich range of experiences for pupils outside of lessons. For example, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe in different situations through the local 'Amber Watch' scheme. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop their teamwork and practise life skills in a different context.

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

The school rightly prioritises pupils' personal and social development as they transition into the school. Bespoke support packages, such as occupational therapy, help pupils to re-engage with their learning. Over time, pupils build their confidence and resilience well.

The school has set out a broad and balanced curriculum. Within many schemes of work, the school has set out the knowledge that it wishes pupils to learn. The careful selection of key knowledge is important. This is so that gaps in pupils' understanding can be addressed successfully. Typically, teachers design lessons which help pupils to understand the intended learning. In general, they use assessment strategies effectively to understand whether pupils have learned the required knowledge. Where needed, they use this information to continually shape pupils' forthcoming learning. In many subjects, this is effective. Pupils' gaps in their learning are diminishing over time. Their understanding of the topics which they study is strong.

However, the school has not been explicit in one or two subjects about the knowledge which they wish pupils to learn. Where this is the case, teachers are not clear about what pupils should know. This hinders staff's ability to design effective

learning opportunities. Occasionally, pupils do not have the opportunities they need to learn the intended content.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Pupils have access to high-quality texts which help to broaden their knowledge of different authors. Where needed, pupils access a bespoke phonics curriculum. This focuses on ensuring that pupils develop into more confident, fluent readers. For many pupils, the phonics programme and the support which pupils receive are effective. Pupils gain a strong understanding of the sounds which letters make. On rare occasions, the support provided for those who struggle with reading is not as effective as it could be. This means that, in these instances, improvement in pupils' phonics knowledge is delayed.

The school caters for pupils' personal development extremely well. The opportunities to extend pupils' wider personal development and to develop social and emotional skills are carefully thought through. The school selects these experiences with pupils' successful futures in mind. Pupils have a well-rounded understanding of how they are all different, celebrating differences regularly. Their insight into different faiths, cultures, relationships and values is strong. Pupils take part in fundraising and experience responsibility through participation in the school council. They learn about how to keep themselves healthy through exercise or by learning how to cook nutritious meals.

The school is a calm oasis for pupils. Staff have warm and respectful relationships with pupils. This promotes the orderly feel to the school and helps pupils to behave exceptionally well. Pupils have productive free time, helping pupils to focus and have a physical outlet. Pupils' attendance is high. The school tracks pupils' attendance closely and puts in valuable support where necessary.

The proprietor and local governors keep a close eye on the provision. They ensure that they challenge the school on pupils' academic achievement and social development. This strong oversight ensures that the school meets all of the independent school standards. The buildings and school grounds are well kept and are safe. They comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff well-being is a high priority. The school, alongside the proprietor, supports staff to manage their workload. For example, staff value the company-wide opportunities to share good practice, which helps to improve their work.

Where they can, the school works well with parents and carers. They provide them with updates on their child's education so that parents understand their child's current strengths and next steps in their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few subjects, the school has not clearly set out the knowledge which they wish pupils to know. In these subjects, teachers' understanding of what pupils should be learning is not as secure as it could be. Occasionally, this impacts how successfully the school ensures that pupils' knowledge over time improves. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in these subjects.
- On a few occasions, the support which staff provide to pupils who need additional help with reading is not as effective as it could be. This means that some pupils do not routinely receive the required assistance when they need it. The school should ensure that staff receive effective training and guidance so that they can support pupils with reading more successfully.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	133346
DfE registration number	943/6051
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10322494
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	6 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Proprietor	Appletree Treatment Centre
Chair	Amanda Irwin
Headteacher	Rowan Knapton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£73,996
Telephone number	01539 560253
Website	www.appletreetreatmentcentre.co.uk
Email address	admin@appletreetc.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Information about this school

- The school is located at 1 Grange Fell Road, Grange-over-Sands LA11 6AS.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils who have suffered from severe trauma.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is registered to admit up to eight pupils.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's provision.
- 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 met with the headteacher, the school improvement partner and the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of the school, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and honest culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors examined school policies and other documents to check the school's compliance with the standards and other requirements. These included: minutes from the management body; information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records were also scrutinised.
- As part of their checks on the standards, inspectors toured the school premises, accompanied by the headteacher.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

Ofsted Inspector

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We aim to help our children establish a secure safe base in the world, by helping them to:

Feel valued, feel good, feel loved and deserving of a safe, warm, caring place to live and learn.

Feel a sense of belonging, where they can feel valued and loved regardless of what they may do.

Build secure, healthy attachments with dedicated, dependable adults.



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In our caring safe space we support our children to:

Explore, understand and manage thoughts and feelings.

Discover the joy of learning and believe they can achieve.

Engage in therapy, helping them to make sense of what has happened in the past.

Care about and help others.

Gain self-confidence, build their own Bands of Resilience to help them cope with future challenges.



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