

Inspection of Ulverston Victoria High School

Springfield Road, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0EB

Inspection dates:	30 September and 1 October 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud ambassadors for the school. They make a strong contribution to the calm and respectful atmosphere that exists at the school. Pupils form trusting relationships with staff, who care for them extremely well. Most pupils flourish here, and they are happy.

Typically, pupils rise to the high expectations that the school has for their achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the guidance that they need to succeed. Most pupils, including those in the sixth form, achieve well.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of opportunities that help them to become confident young people. Students in the sixth form make a significant contribution to the life of the school as leaders in sport and performing arts, and as reading ambassadors. Clubs in music, sport, the arts and the school's 'identity' society help pupils to develop their talents and interests.

The school ensures that trips, such as to Europe, the theatre and universities, help pupils to build their aspirations and broaden their knowledge of the subjects that they study. As members of the school parliament and as senior students, pupils welcome the opportunities that they have to make improvements at the school. This helps them to become independent and resilient young people.

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

Governors have a precise understanding of the performance of the school. They provide robust support and challenge to the school to ensure that it makes decisions in the best interests of pupils. Collectively, leaders at all levels have worked effectively with stakeholders to create an aspirational culture, where pupils are welcomed and valued. They have addressed the areas for improvement that were identified at the time of the previous inspection effectively.

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. It has thought carefully about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. Most pupils are well prepared for each stage in their education. Students in the sixth form have access to a wide range of academic courses. This includes the appropriate use of remote education to help some students to gain qualifications in their areas of interest. The school takes great care to ensure that pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 move on to appropriate destinations. These destinations include further and higher education, apprenticeships and employment with training.

In most subjects, staff have strong subject knowledge. They benefit from a comprehensive package of training, which supports their workload. On the whole, learning activities, and checks on what pupils know and remember, help pupils to achieve well. However, at times, teaching does not address the gaps or misconceptions that pupils have in their learning. When this happens, some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. In addition, some of the activities that pupils complete do not help them

to learn the curriculum in sufficient depth. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. It provides staff with clear guidance and training about how to support pupils with SEND effectively. This supports the workload of staff. Most staff use this information well to ensure that pupils, including those with SEND in the sixth form, receive the guidance and support that they need to succeed.

Reading is a strength of this school. Staff prioritise reading and communication skills, helping pupils who need support to become confident and fluent readers. For some pupils, this includes support to develop their phonics knowledge. Carefully chosen books foster pupils' readiness for life in modern Britain by promoting identity, tolerance and respect for diverse perspectives.

Pupils are well mannered and respectful. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and they attend well. Students in the sixth form demonstrate a high level of maturity. They take great pride in being first-rate role models for younger pupils in the school. Staff provide effective support to the small number of pupils who need help to improve their behaviour or attendance. This has led to an increase in attendance rates for these pupils.

The school's personal development programme is central to the school's commitment to preparing pupils for adulthood. Character development is woven into the life of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their actions, take on responsibilities and contribute to their community. Staff place great importance on supporting pupils with their physical and mental health. Through ethical and moral discussions, pupils gain insights into safety, healthy relationships and the importance of caring for others. The school's comprehensive approach to careers education prepares pupils well for their next steps.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, learning activities do not help pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge of the subjects that they study. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they could. The school should ensure that it supports staff to design learning activities that prepare pupils well for each step in their education.
- Occasionally, the school does not address the gaps and misconceptions in some pupils' knowledge as well as it could. When this happens, pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that teaching addresses any gaps or

misunderstandings in pupils' learning consistently well so that pupils build their knowledge securely over time.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112385
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10337654
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	1,326
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Isabel O'Donovan
Headteacher	Matthew Hardwick
Website	www.uvhs.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the South Lakes Federation of schools. This is a partnership of education providers in the South Lakes area.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide information for pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of two registered and four unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, art and performing arts. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair. He also spoke with a representative from the local authority and the South Lakes Federation.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss provision for pupils with SEND, the curriculum, assessment, reading, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Edmondson	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Yarwood	Ofsted Inspector
Phill Walmsley	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Kelly	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025