

Inspection of a good school: St James' C of E Junior School

Blake Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1NY

Inspection date: 20 October 2022

Outcome

St James' C of E Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending St James' C of E Junior School. They feel safe and happy. Pupils settle in well. This is because staff help them to make a smooth transition from infant school. Leaders and staff know pupils well. Pupils feel confident to share any worries or concerns that they may have with staff. Staff act quickly to stop any bullying if it occurs. Many parents and carers spoke positively about the school.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. They have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well around the school and in class. Pupils easily live up to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. They are well mannered and eagerly welcome visitors. Pupils uphold the school's values well. They are accepting of each other and respect people of different faiths and backgrounds.

Pupils value the opportunities that they have to take part in the many extra-curricular activities on offer to them, including the thriving breakfast and after-school clubs. They proudly champion the well-resourced library and dedicated reading areas that leaders have created around the school.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum identifies what pupils will learn and be able to do over time. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained so that they deliver the curriculum effectively.

Leaders quickly identify any pupils with SEND. Staff ensure that these pupils receive effective support to access the same curriculum as other pupils and learn successfully.

In most subjects, staff organise the curriculum content into smaller building blocks of knowledge so that pupils can learn essential information well. In most subjects, pupils explain their learning confidently and achieve well. Older pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

In a few subjects, leaders are in the process of refining their curriculum design. In these subjects, pupils' knowledge of concepts and vocabulary from earlier in the curriculum is not secure. This sometimes hampers their ability to apply what they know to new learning.

In many subjects, teachers check pupils' knowledge and understanding of key curriculum content regularly. This helps staff to accurately identify and address pupils' misconceptions. However, in some subjects, assessment strategies are less well developed. This means that some teachers do not know how well pupils are retaining the knowledge and vocabulary that they need to learn well in these subjects.

Leaders are determined for all pupils to read successfully. Reading is promoted well across the school. Pupils learn to read with confidence and fluency by the end of key stage 2. Pupils experience a wide range of high-quality texts. They enjoy listening to the stories that their teachers share with them. Staff have further improved their knowledge of phonics in order to support less confident readers in Year 3. Leaders have established effective systems to identify when a pupil is at risk of falling behind with their reading. They act promptly to ensure that these pupils keep up with their peers.

Pupils, including those with SEND, listen attentively to their teachers. Pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning means that poor behaviour rarely disturbs learning.

Pupils relish the many opportunities that leaders provide to enrich and extend the curriculum. Pupils enjoy representing the school in sporting and musical events. They eagerly look forward to residential visits.

Governors have a secure oversight of the school. Together with leaders, governors are clear about how to improve the school further. Leaders and governors are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff value this support. They are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have developed a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff have regular training to make sure that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues. They know what actions to take if they become concerned about the safety or well-being of a pupil. Staff report any concerns promptly.

Leaders and staff liaise well with other agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the help that they need in a timely way. This ensures that vulnerable pupils are supported well.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different ways. This includes when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, pupils are not confident in recalling the knowledge that they have been taught in the past. This hampers their ability to build on this knowledge and develop a deeper understanding in these subjects. Leaders should finalise their design of the curriculum in these subjects so that teachers are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils need to remember.
- In a few subjects, assessment strategies are at an early stage of development. This means that some teachers do not know how well pupils have learned the most important concepts and vocabulary in the curriculum overtime. Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies in these subjects give teachers the information that they need to check how well pupils have learned the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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](#)' 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	112362
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10212385
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jack Knill-Jones
Headteacher	Jacqueline Rushton
Website	www.stjamesjun-bif.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in June 2017.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 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 senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers.

- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also spoke to several parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted’s online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding at the school. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders’ expectations of pupils’ conduct.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning, and reviewed samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading and spoke to other subject leaders about their curriculums.

Inspection team

Keith Wright, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Louise McArdle

His Majesty's Inspector

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