

# Inspection of a good school: St James' CofE Junior School

Wellington Row, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7HG

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 April 2022

## Outcome

St James' CofE Junior School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They feel happy and safe. Leaders and pupils worked together to agree what it means to follow the 'St James' way'. The school's mantra, 'Be kind, be respectful and give your all', is noticeable through pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to each other. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils learn and achieve well. Pupils enjoy their learning and the other activities that teachers provide outside of lessons.

Leaders ensure that pupils behave in a respectful and considerate manner. Pupils are friendly and polite towards each other and towards adults. They move around the school in a sensible and calm way. Pupils trust adults in school to deal with any concerns around bullying, should they arise, quickly and successfully.

Pupils value the opportunities to be responsible and active citizens by leading activities. Class ambassadors raise awareness of school, local and global issues. For example, pupils joined a local youth project to create a mural using plastic which was collected from the sea. The 'crazy it crew' plan games at breaktimes to ensure that pupils are included during social times. This helps pupils to develop empathy and tolerance.

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

Leaders have ensured that all pupils, including those with SEND, access a broad and ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and when this should be taught. Leaders have organised the curriculum to help pupils build their knowledge over time. This helps pupils to achieve well. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. Leaders have not clearly identified what pupils should be learning in these subjects.

Leaders have considered the important vocabulary that they want pupils to know. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to practise using new vocabulary in

different subjects. As a result, pupils have the language that they need to explain their ideas well. Pupils remain focused on their learning in lessons and any low-level disruption is rare.

In some subjects, teachers use assessment strategies to check that pupils have learned new knowledge and to identify any gaps in their learning. They use this information to revisit learning if it is not secure. However, this is not the case in some other subjects. This means that teachers are less certain that pupils are building their knowledge securely across all subjects.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Teachers read to pupils regularly and provide many opportunities for pupils to read independently. Leaders celebrate a love of reading. Pupils are rewarded with new and exciting books for reading widely and often. Leaders have introduced a new phonics curriculum for those pupils who are still in the early stages of reading. Leaders have provided training and support for staff to deliver this curriculum well. They have invested in new books to match the sounds that pupils know. Pupils who struggle with reading are supported well by staff to catch up. This helps pupils to build their phonics knowledge and to become fluent and confident readers over time.

Leaders and staff know all pupils well and they ensure that all pupils are supported effectively, including those with SEND. Leaders work closely with the neighbouring infant school to ensure that they are quick to identify and support the needs of pupils with SEND.

Pupils benefit from a range of experiences outside of the academic curriculum. They appreciate the opportunities to attend clubs, such as drama, science, tennis and adventure club. Pupils have performed in front of the local community and competed in events and festivals. Recently, the whole school completed a fell walk. These wider opportunities help pupils to develop resilience and perseverance. Pupils also learn about other faiths, beliefs and cultures. They use the prayer shed at breaktimes as a place for reflection. Pupils understand and appreciate difference in the world and treat people equally and with respect.

Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge. Leaders have taken steps to reduce the workload of staff. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have training to identify any safeguarding risks to pupils. This training helps staff to understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders have clear systems for staff to report their concerns about pupils. Leaders respond swiftly to any concerns raised about pupils who may be at risk of harm. They work with different agencies to secure help for pupils and their families.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, including online. Staff and other agencies, such as the police, teach pupils about safeguarding issues. Pupils know how to recognise risk and know what to do if they have any concerns.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge they want pupils to learn. This means that there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders their achievement. Leaders should clearly identify the key knowledge they want pupils to acquire, and by when, to ensure that pupils have a secure and rich body of knowledge in those subjects.
- In some subjects, assessment is not used well enough to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of key learning. As a result, teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' learning across all of the subjects that they teach.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2016.

## **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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112298
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199721
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rob Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Beattie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk">www.stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 April 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school belongs to the Diocese of Carlisle. The most recent section 48 inspection was in November 2015.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. There has also been some restructuring of the leadership team.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders in school. She also spoke with a range of staff.
- The inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.

- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered responses from the staff and pupils to Ofsted surveys.
- The inspector examined a range of safeguarding documentation. She checked how leaders ensure that safer recruitment procedures are in place. The inspector checked records of staff's safeguarding training. She spoke with staff to check how well they understood safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, in lessons and around school. She also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and computing. She met with subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. The inspector spoke with pupils and looked at examples of their work. She considered the curriculum across some other subject areas. She also observed pupils reading to trusted adults.

### **Inspection team**

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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