

# Inspection of Sir John Barrow School

Argyle Street, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0BD

---

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love their school. Some even used words like 'amazing' to describe it. Their strong relationships with staff help pupils feel safe, happy and secure. They know who to speak to if they have any worries. Pupils said that everyone is welcome here, no matter what their differences.

Leaders and teachers have the highest expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils try their best at all times. They listen carefully and work hard in lessons. Pupils know that if they ask for help they will receive it readily. Pupils achieve highly, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Throughout the school from the Nursery to Year 6, behaviour is exemplary. The youngest children soon learn to follow the simple, predictable routines that adults provide. Older pupils set an excellent example to younger ones when they walk sensibly around school. Pupils understand the difference between normal disagreements and bullying. Leaders and adults put a swift stop to bullying should ever it occur.

Pupils benefit from an inspiring programme of activities for their personal development. These activities are exciting and challenging. For example, pupils learn to sail canoes in the Lake District. They learn to speak in public when they enter local poetry-reading festivals. Pupils have opportunities to represent their school in sports competitions. The wide range of after-school activities is as diverse as origami and tag rugby. All pupils participate in these activities, including pupils with SEND.

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

Leaders have drawn upon a wide range of research and practice to inform their thinking about the curriculum. This has enabled them to design a highly ambitious and exciting curriculum. All pupils learn this curriculum, including those pupils with SEND.

Leaders have a clear vision for what they want pupils to know and to be able to do by the time they leave primary school. In each subject, they have broken down this important knowledge into smaller, well-ordered steps from the early years to the end of Year 6. Leaders have worked with staff to ensure that all pupils learn in ways that help them to build on what they already know. This ensures that pupils of all ages build a secure foundation of knowledge ready for the next stage in their education.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Right from the start, children in the early years begin to learn about phonics. They learn new letters and sounds each day. This continues in Year 1, with more complex groups of letters and sounds. The words in pupils' reading books contain only the sounds and words that they have learned. This enables children to read with success and confidence. All staff are experts at teaching phonics. They quickly spot when children are at risk of falling

behind. This includes older pupils at the early stage of reading. These pupils receive prompt help to enable them to catch up rapidly.

Pupils across the school develop a love of reading. Children in the Nursery listened with rapt attention to stories, eagerly awaiting the moment when they could join in with their favourite part. Older pupils said that their teachers bring their class novels to life for them. Pupils learn to read and recite poetry and enjoy selecting books for themselves from their well-stocked school library. Pupils of all ages achieve extremely well in reading, including pupils with SEND.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained to deliver the curriculum consistently well. Staff use their strong subject knowledge to provide lessons that engage pupils and keep them focused. Staff check regularly to make sure that pupils understand new learning. They make sure that pupils do not move on unless this learning is secure. Over time, this helps pupils to know more and remember more.

Pupils across the school are supported to make important connections with earlier learning. This helps them to deepen their understanding and to develop an awareness of bigger ideas. Leaders and staff use a range of information from assessments to check that pupils are learning well over time. This helps them to adjust teaching and to improve the curriculum if necessary.

Leaders work effectively with staff to identify as quickly as possible any pupils with SEND. They make careful adaptations where needed to enable these pupils to access the curriculum. Leaders communicate with a wide range of professionals to secure any extra help and support that pupils need. Parents are fully involved in this process. Pupils with SEND achieve extremely well.

Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They do not disrupt learning with poor behaviour. Pupils' mature attitudes to learning contribute significantly to their ability to learn well. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is typically high. In 2021/22, more pupils were persistently absent than usual. Leaders have acted swiftly and successfully to address this.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of difference and diversity in their community and the wider world. They know, for example, that family structures may be different from their own. They learn more about different faiths through visits to places of worship such as a mosque, synagogue or Buddhist temple. Pupils learn about democracy when they vote for the school council and when they visit the Houses of Parliament. Such experiences prepare pupils well for life in British society.

Governors have a very strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask leaders plenty of challenging questions, for example about pupils' achievement. This enables them to hold leaders to account for their work to improve the school.

Staff said that they are proud to work at the school. There are many opportunities

for their professional development. Governors and leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being in the decisions that they make for the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding training. They are confident to report any concerns they have about a pupil's welfare.

Leaders gather a wide range of information about pupils' welfare in order to understand their needs. They work effectively with a wide range of agencies such as the local authority safeguarding hub and early help services. This helps leaders to ensure that pupils and their families receive the help and support that they need.

In ways that are appropriate to their age, pupils learn important lessons about keeping themselves safe when using the internet or social media. Pupils know who to speak to if they see anything that does not look right.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112232
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256041
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	223
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Barrett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Pearson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sjbarrow.cumbria.sch.uk">www.sjbarrow.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector also spoke remotely and in person with members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics

and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspectors also chatted with a few parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors spoke to some pupils about school life.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

### **Inspection team**

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Metcalfe

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023