

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's CofE Junior School

Hawcoat Lane, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 4HF

Inspection date: 26 May 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and show a clear sense of pride at being part of the St Paul's school family. Warm relationships between staff and pupils are quickly established, making pupils feel safe and happy. These positive relationships are underpinned by the school's clear Christian values.

Pupils live up to adults' high expectations of their behaviour. Learning is seldom interrupted by off-task behaviour. Fallouts or instances of bullying are unusual. When they do happen, leaders make sure they are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Leaders want all pupils to do well. They have developed a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well during their time at the school.

Pupils enjoy taking on different roles and responsibilities, such as being members of the school council. Sport is given a high profile at St Paul's. Pupils relish having the chance to represent their school in local sports competitions, including football, golf and gymnastics.

Pupils take advantage of a wide range of enrichment activities that the school offers. They speak enthusiastically about after-school clubs, school trips and the residential visit to Grasmere. Pupils enjoy spending time in the school's substantial outdoor learning area. They are keen, too, to contribute to their local community through activities such as litter picking and flower planting on 'Welly Wednesdays'.

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

Leaders have developed a suitably broad and engaging curriculum, which is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders know their subjects well and lead with real enthusiasm. They have made sure that staff are well trained, so they have the knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Leaders have picked out the detailed

knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order in which this should be learned. In English and mathematics, staff assess pupils' learning accurately. This allows them to make sure that pupils' prior knowledge is built on effectively. However, in some other subjects, assessments do not match the intended learning set out in the subject curriculums. As a result, assessments do not help staff to spot potential gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders pupils from learning more and remembering more of the wider curriculum.

Leaders have put in place an effective curriculum to support pupils with gaps in their early reading knowledge. Staff quickly spot those pupils who need extra help with reading. They put in place effective support so that pupils are able to catch up. Leaders have put a carefully structured plan in place to develop pupils' reading skills as they move through the school. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure, and all classrooms have well-stocked library corners. However, the range of books provided is not sufficiently ambitious or diverse. This narrows pupils' reading experiences and stops them from becoming really enthusiastic, knowledgeable readers.

Leaders are quick to pick up on the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff make sensible adaptations to the work set for these pupils and support them well. This ensures that pupils with SEND access the same broad curriculum as their peers.

There is a calm and friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is of a consistently high standard. Lessons proceed with minimal disruption. Pupils focus well on their work and listen carefully to both teachers and their classmates. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes make a highly positive contribution to learning across the school.

Leaders provide a very good range of activities to support pupils' well-being and their personal development. Pupils are positive about the wide variety of lunchtime and after-school activities that are available. They have a keen awareness of the importance of caring for the environment. They enjoy looking after the school gardens and taking part in broader ecological projects. Pupils also recognise the importance of ensuring that all pupils are valued and that they appreciate each other's individuality.

Leaders and governors know the school well and are ambitious for its future. They show a real commitment to their local community by sharing St Paul's extensive and well-resourced grounds with other schools. Staff are very positive about working at the school. They comment that leaders take staff workload and well-being into account when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture at the school. Staff and governors receive regular training. Staff know pupils and their families well. They are quick to report any concerns they have, and leaders act promptly if such concerns arise. They work well with external agencies to secure the support that pupils and families may need.

Pupils are taught through a well-thought-out curriculum about how to keep themselves safe. They feel confident to talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not given a sufficiently ambitious and diverse range of books to choose from. This does not encourage them to develop a love of reading. Leaders should ensure that pupils have access to a wider range of quality texts so that pupils can explore and enjoy books drawn from a broader range of authors and genres.
- In a number of subjects other than English and mathematics, assessments are not well matched to the planned curriculums. They do not provide teachers with the information they need to check that children have learned and remembered key knowledge and vocabulary as intended. Leaders should ensure that assessments identify where pupils have not learned the planned curriculums so that gaps in learning can be addressed.

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 June 2014.

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	112406
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10256185
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	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jackie Dower
Headteacher	Ruth Webster
Website	www.stpaulsjuniorschoolbarrow.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school took place in September 2019. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 discussions with the headteacher and other leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke to governors and to representatives of the diocese and local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders and looked at pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum.

- Inspectors made checks on leaders' records for safeguarding and staff recruitment and spoke to staff about the procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including a number of free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tanya Hughes

Ofsted Inspector

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