

# Inspection of a good school: St Begh's Catholic Junior School

Coach Road, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7TE

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2023

## **Outcome**

St Begh's Catholic Junior School continues to be a good school.

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

The school provides a nurturing environment. It fosters a strong sense of pride among its pupils, ensuring that they feel happy, safe and secure.

Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff. The school has established clear expectations for the behaviour of pupils. The introduction of the 'St Begh's Way' has provided clarity to pupils about how to behave in different situations. Pupils have enjoyed creating posters and videos to help other pupils to understand the school rules.

Pupils at this school are aspirational for their future. They benefit from a well-designed curriculum. Staff also have high expectations of pupils learning. They support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve consistently well. Pupils enjoy learning and they are keen to participate fully in lessons.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of opportunities that the school offers, which enable them to experience the world of work. For example, pupils benefit from visits from nearby businesses, exposing them to different careers. Pupils enjoy supporting their local community, for example by working with care homes.

The school has successfully prioritised providing pupils with strategies to support their mental and physical well-being. Pupils are encouraged to live healthy lives. They understand the importance of regular exercise.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum. Staff have thought carefully about the most important knowledge that pupils must learn. Teachers carefully design learning activities that build on pupils' prior knowledge. These activities successfully prepare pupils for the next stage in learning. The school has ensured that teachers deliver the curriculum consistently well.

Appropriate systems are in place to check what pupils are learning and how well they are remembering essential knowledge. There are regular opportunities for staff to reflect on assessment information in order to adapt and modify the curriculum. This enables teachers to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and effectively.

The school has ensured that there are effective processes in place to identify and support pupils who may have SEND. The school liaises well with local primary schools to ensure that teachers have all the information that they need about those pupils who are new to the school. Staff are well trained to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This supports these pupils to fully access the ambitious curriculum that is in place.

The school has created an effective reading curriculum for the majority of pupils. Regular opportunities to explore and enjoy books are a key part of pupils' learning. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' wider vocabulary and comprehension skills. Pupils show a high level of understanding of a range of literature, including appropriately diverse texts and genres. However, for a small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read, the school has not developed a consistent approach to delivering systematic synthetic phonics. Consequently, some of these pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should.

The school engages well with parents and carers to share regular information about the progress that their children are making at school. However, over time, some parents have had mixed views about how effectively the school communicates with them. For example, in the past, some parents have raised concerns about the behaviour of a small number of pupils. The school has worked with parents and pupils to make considerable improvements to the behaviour of these pupils. This is due to the support that staff have provided to families to help pupils to regulate their own behaviour. Typically, staff manage low-level disruption in lessons well.

There is a range of enrichment opportunities to enable pupils to appreciate their local area. Visitors to the school provide information to help pupils to understand how they can stay safe in the local community. Pupils also take on a wide range of leadership responsibilities. However, some pupils have limited opportunities to experience what it is like beyond where they live. The school has begun to identify opportunities for pupils to have a wider understanding of life in modern Britain.

Leaders and governors have taken staff workload seriously. They listen to staff and respond positively to their suggestions on how to improve the working environment. For example, leaders and governors have reviewed the systems to assess pupils' learning and achievement. This is to ensure that staff provide appropriate feedback to pupils, while being conscious that this does not create an extra burden.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not developed a consistent approach to teaching phonics, which staff are well trained to deliver. This means that a few pupils do not catch up with their reading knowledge as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that staff are suitably equipped to deliver the phonics programme consistently well.
- The school does not offer a sufficiently broad range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. This hinders how well some pupils develop their wider talents and interests and their knowledge of modern Britain. The school should ensure that it develops and enhances its enrichment offer so that pupils have a sufficiently broad experience beyond their immediate community.

## 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112354
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10291418
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lois Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Mallard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stbeghs.co.uk">www.stbeghs.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17 and 18 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The chair of governors has been appointed to her role since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- This is a Roman Catholic school that is part of the Diocese of Lancaster. The last section 48 inspection, under the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character, was in June 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due before June 2026.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. The inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.

- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. The inspector also spoke with pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- The inspector considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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