

Inspection of St George's CofE School

School Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 2JN

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this happy school where staff care for them well. Children in the early years settle quickly into the school's routines and learn to adhere to the high expectations all staff have of them. Pupils learn to play cooperatively together and develop warm and positive relationships with staff. Pupils are confident that staff will listen and support them if they have any worries.

The school is ambitious for the achievement of pupils. Typically, pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and they achieve well across a wide range of subjects. They listen attentively in lessons and move around the school calmly.

Pupils have a voice at St. George's. For example, their preferences influence the food choices that are available to them at lunchtime.

The school's vision is for all pupils to experience 'life in all its fullness'. The school ensures that every pupil benefits from the many exciting and enriching experiences that it provides. The school offers an exceptionally wide range of activities. These include sporting competitions and outdoor and adventurous activities. The school also works with other schools on the Peace Fields Project, where children (inspired by the 1914 Christmas Truce) learn to be peacemakers for the future.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that provides pupils with the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in the future. The school has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and the order in which content will be taught. Similarly, the curriculum in the early years equips children with the knowledge that they need and prepares them well for Year 1.

In most subjects, pupils build their knowledge well over time. However, the curriculum does not set out carefully enough the skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn, in order to become proficient writers. This makes it more difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge that they need to write fluently and accurately.

Staff use their strong subject knowledge to make checks on what pupils know and remember. They use this information successfully to address any misunderstandings that pupils have about their learning.

Reading is a high priority across the school. The school develops a love of reading for pupils. For example, children in the early years, including those in the two-year-old provision, listen attentively to stories and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes.

Staff ensure that pupils have a range of suitable books to practise reading regularly. Any pupils who struggle with early reading are given the help that they need to become more confident and fluent. Older pupils become keen and able readers. They talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors.

Support for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is very effective. The school identifies pupils' needs quickly and puts appropriate support in place. Skilled staff ensure that pupils with SEND work towards the same curriculum goals as their peers. A range of adaptations are in place to help pupils with SEND to achieve well. These pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual. However, in recent years, the attendance of some pupils has declined. The school has taken robust action to ensure that it focuses strongly on improving pupils' levels of attendance. It checks on the reasons why pupils may be absent from school and works to support pupils and their families where absences are frequent. This has led to an increase in the rate of attendance for many pupils.

Pupils behave sensibly during lessons. They listen carefully to adults and their classmates. Pupils work well together and have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils who struggle with their behaviour receive highly effective support from well-trained staff.

The school's offer for pupils' personal development is exceptionally well designed. Pupils benefit from a very wide range of experiences that are carefully chosen to develop and stretch their talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy meeting visitors, such as professional musicians, poets and inspirational people from different cultures. Older pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and they are proud to represent the school in a range of ways, including through collaborating with pupils from other schools. This has led to pupils having increased self-confidence.

Equally, the school ensures that pupils develop a range of strategies to support their mental health, for example discussing their feelings. As a result, pupils have an astute understanding of their own feelings and those of others. Pupils know what qualities contribute towards a healthy relationship.

Governors have clear oversight of the school's work. They know the school well and carry out their roles effectively. They provide effective support and challenge to leaders. The school has considered the well-being and workload of staff when making changes to the curriculum. Training opportunities have strengthened teachers' skills and knowledge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not set out clearly enough the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn for writing, including grammar, punctuation and handwriting. This hinders teachers from ensuring that pupils learn to write with accuracy and fluency. The school

should ensure that the curriculum identifies these skills clearly and progressively so that pupils build accuracy and fluency in their writing.

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

Unique reference number	112289
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10348102
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Allington
Headteacher	Steven Herbert
Website	www.stgeorges.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England Primary School is part of the Diocese of Carlisle. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in May 2023. The next section 48 inspection will take place by the end of 2028.
- The school makes use of one alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders to discuss SEND, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, English and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and evaluated the curriculums in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke to representatives of the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Cleo Cunningham, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Tracey	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Dryland	Ofsted Inspector

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