



# St James' CofE Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 112297  
**LEA** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 278895  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Dave Byrne

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	High Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Whitehaven
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		Cumbria, CA28 7PZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 852662
<b>Number on roll</b>	129	<b>Fax number</b>	01946 696490
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Claire Brown
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jan Potter

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<b>Age group</b> 4 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278895
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

St James Infants is a below average-sized school that educates 129 pupils aged between 4 and 7. It is situated in Whitehaven in West Cumbria. Almost half of the pupils live in areas that are outside the school's designated catchment area. Overall attainment as children start school is similar to that usually seen. Almost all pupils are white British with very few from other ethnic backgrounds. None require support for learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There are six pupils with learning difficulties, including three with statements of special educational need.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors share the school's view that it is a good school. Strong leadership, good teaching, eager pupils and supportive parents contribute to pupils' success at school. The pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes are excellent. Pupils do particularly well in reading and art and design. In mathematics, whilst standards are just above average, the pupils' progress could be better. Pupils with learning and physical disabilities receive good support, ensuring that everyone is fully included in every aspect of school life. Children benefit from a good start to school in the Reception Year and make good progress in all areas of development. Pupils understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Their understanding of their own, local culture is good, but they know relatively little about the diversity of the wider culture of modern Britain. Resources throughout the school are good, particularly computers, but equipment for outdoor learning is a relative weakness. The school has responded well to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, standards have risen, attendance is better and the evaluation of the schools' strengths and weaknesses is more accurate. The school gives good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve the facilities for outdoor learning.
- Enable pupils to extend their awareness of other cultures and traditions.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school accurately identifies achievement as good and standards are above average. Children start school with average standards for their age and make good progress in their time in Reception. The results in reading and writing in the national tests at the end of Year 2 are consistently very good. In mathematics, standards are above average but pupils' results in the tests have been lower than those in reading and writing. The school recognises this but its steps to improve standards in mathematics have only been partially successful. The quality of pupils' art and design and their confidence in using computers are strengths. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from skilled support that enables them to make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and they have excellent attitudes to school. They learn enthusiastically and tackle any challenge. Pupils talk almost without exception of loving school, and this is shown in above average attendance in recent years. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies and

opportunities for discussion in class enable pupils to reflect successfully on their own actions and how they affect others. Shared class rules and codes of behaviour effectively develop pupils' awareness of how to behave and treat others. Anti-social behaviour is rare, and there is no evidence of bullying or racist incidents. Responsibility is readily accepted and classroom helpers make a positive contribution to the running of school. Pupils' awareness of their own local culture is well developed, but their awareness of other cultures is not as well developed as it should be. Pupils have a good understanding of how to behave safely and responsibly. The school's good initiatives to create a healthy school influence the way pupils eat and exercise. They enthusiastically join in with the good range of sporting activities provided by the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Lively activities are well managed and children in the Reception classes quickly settle in to school and develop good attitudes. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to high expectations in reading and writing. Teachers are skilled at using computer technology to bring lessons to life and to interest the pupils. Good links with parents extend learning in reading and writing, but the slower rate of progress in mathematics is partly due to the weaker links with parents in that subject. Teaching assistants make a vital contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Regular marking of pupils' written work keeps them informed about how well they are doing, but pupils are not involved enough in evaluating how they might improve in mathematics. This reduces the ability of pupils to focus on activities to do better.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to cover all the required areas of learning. Despite limited resources for outdoor learning, children enjoy physical activities which establish at an early age good attitudes to exercise and healthy living. In Years 1 and 2, planning links subjects together, and as a result pupils make better sense of what they are being taught. Reading and writing are given a good allocation of time and are practised in other subjects. Mathematics is often taught separately and the lack of application in other subjects holds back standards. Improvements in the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum mean that computer skills are now an integral part of learning in all subjects.

Pupils love the way that the curriculum is enriched by links with the community, educational visits, and the contributions of visitors. Children in the Reception classes roared with laughter and became totally engrossed by the presentation of two puppeteers. The thrust for healthy living and the importance of taking care of the environment is creating good attitudes. Boys and girls enthusiastically participate in

the good range of after school clubs and sporting events with other schools. Although the school shows a strong commitment to the local community, and makes good efforts to value and educate pupils about minority ethnic groups, the planning of strategies for creating a strong awareness of other cultures is weak.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The provision for care, guidance and support is good. Parents have a high regard for this part of the school's provision and the staff work to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Child protection procedures are in place. Systematic assessments of pupils from the day children start school enable staff to keep track of how well pupils are doing. The information is used to identify those who need additional support to boost standards or extend them. Rigorous risk assessments are maintained to remove unnecessary risks, although some elements of essential paperwork related to the after school club need updating. Pupils can share their concerns and worries in confidence with a teacher. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support, which makes sure that they are fully included in all aspects of school life. Good links with pre-school groups and parents ease the transition of children into school life. Satisfactory liaison with the junior school prepares pupils satisfactorily for moving to the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's evaluation of its leadership and management as good is accurate. The headteacher has created a strong ethos of care and aims to get the best from pupils, academically and personally. The needs of all pupils are recognised and effective management for pupils with learning difficulties makes sure that all are fully included in what the school provides. Throughout the school, staff are a united team. Their professional development has a positive impact in many areas of school life, for example, on standards in reading and writing. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well because of rigorous monitoring of subjects, coupled with consultation with governors and parents. Assessment information is also used well to identify areas for improvement, such as mathematics in recent years. Governance is good. Governors are involved in all important decisions and effectively monitor how well the school is performing. As the result of frequent visits, governors are well informed about what is going in school. Finances are well managed but are very tight, primarily as a result of meeting the demands of workforce reform for staff. The good standards achieved in the school, and the commitment of staff to continue to improve, are evidence of how well the staff team work together. Given these conditions, the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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14 October 2005

Dear children,

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful during my visit to your school. Your smiling, happy faces remain in my mind and the way that everyone was so caring for each other. I really enjoyed visiting the flower shop in the Reception class. Being able to buy so many flowers for one pound was a bargain!

It is clear that you like school and love learning. This shows in the way that you do so well in reading and writing. At times, your eagerness to learn was amazing and you are lucky to have such good teachers to help you in lessons. It is impressive the way that you play so well together outside and during lunch enjoy eating food that does you good. We all like sweets and crisps, but you know that this should only be as a special treat and not part of every meal.

I was very impressed by how well you read, write and use the computer. You also seem to like mathematics lessons, but I have asked your teachers to see if you could do even better in mathematics. Another thing that I have asked the school to do is make your outdoor play more exciting. I know you learn lots about people in your town, but it would be good for you to learn more about people who have different ways of life to you. I have asked the school to see if they can do that.

I wish you all happiness and good health. I hope that you always treat others as well as you do now and continue to enjoy school.

With best wishes,

David Byrne  
(School Inspector)

Annex B