



St James' CofE Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112362
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278915
Inspection dates 12 September 2005 to 13 September 2005
Reporting inspector Gordon Alston

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blake Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Barrow-in-Furness
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Cumbria, LA14 1NY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01229 894633
Number on roll	172	Fax number	01229 894634
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Dave Pidduck
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2000	Headteacher	Miss Angela Rawlinson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St. James is a junior school serving an area of significant social deprivation in Barrow in Cumbria. The 172 pupils in the school cover the full range of abilities. Many of them receive free school meals, and the proportion who have special educational needs is high. Very few pupils do not have English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own self-evaluation. This is a good school with many outstanding features, valued by parents, pupils and the local community. Pupils achieve well, standards are above average, and the progress pupils make from year to year is good. All pupils are given every opportunity to succeed and the great majority do so. The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school, the generally effective teaching and the many enrichment activities provided, lead to outstanding personal development on the part of pupils. They enjoy their school and are strongly encouraged to think for themselves and to have their say. The leadership of the headteacher and the deputy is outstanding in its relentless drive for improvement; the management of subjects is more uneven. Overall leadership and management are good. Governors discharge their responsibilities very effectively, and the school gives very good value for money. It has improved markedly since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

Continue to implement, monitor and evaluate the planned programmes it has in place aimed at:

- raising standards in writing, particularly for all higher attaining pupils and boys
- increase opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across all subjects in order to raise standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than the national average. Although the targets set in national tests are very challenging, the school has a record of reaching them. Standards in English have been steadily improving, although pupils' lack of experiences and opportunities to write is contributing to lower standards in writing. The school knows this, and is taking action to put it right. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected; at the last inspection, they were unsatisfactory.

Rigorous testing of pupils on entry gives the school a clear picture of pupils' abilities, which cover a wide range. The school uses this information well in setting challenging targets for pupils to achieve. These targets are checked termly to ensure pupils are making the progress they should. These shared targets encourage pupils to work hard and as a result they make good progress. As they move through Years 3 to 6 increasingly pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in understanding about living healthily, being safe and contributing to the community.

No group is significantly underachieving. The large number of pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. The very few pupils whose home language is not English make good progress. This is because of the effective help they get from a very conscientious and knowledgeable team of support assistants who enable them to take part fully in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school and inspectors agree that the promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils display a joy in learning that is testimony to their rapid development as sensitive, reflective individuals. The very effective contribution of all staff helps to enhance pupils' views of themselves. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds treat each other with great consideration and respect. The many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school have a very positive impact and contribute greatly to raising the self-esteem of individuals. The school council makes a significant contribution, enabling pupils to take on additional responsibilities.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are very confident when communicating with adults and clearly enjoy their education immensely. Pupils are very keen to learn and their attitudes in lessons are extremely positive. Attendance is above average and reflects how much the pupils enjoy coming to school.

One governor said, 'school is a safe haven for many pupils'. He was right and pupils are very proud of their school. They take an active role in keeping healthy. The school's wide range of out of school clubs is instrumental in ensuring that pupils exercise regularly and participate in sport. The children are safe from bullying and know about the dangers associated with drugs. They are very actively involved in several community projects and the school is seen as a very important contributor to community harmony.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school and inspectors judge the teaching that pupils receive and the learning that results from that teaching as good. As a result, pupils make good progress and develop excellent attitudes to their work. However, owing to the absence of some teachers and some inexperience in an enthusiastic staff, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Training and support have enabled teachers to be confident in their subject knowledge and this is reflected in teaching which engages pupils. A strong belief that all pupils will succeed motivates and excites pupils in their lessons. Pupils say, 'lessons are really interesting'. In a Year 6 poetry lesson there was a buzz of interest and enthusiasm as pupils composed their own poems. Very rigorous testing and recording of pupils' achievement in lessons help teachers plan interesting tasks that stretch and challenge all pupils without inhibiting them. Behaviour is not a problem,

as excellent relationships between teachers and pupils lead pupils into wanting to do well for their teacher. Pupils are aware of their responsibility in the learning process and they are encouraged to work independently, which they do very well. The challenging targets that pupils are set motivate them very effectively and often pupils assess their work themselves or discuss reaching their targets with the teacher. 'Teachers only accept our best work', one pupil commented as he sweated over his poem, reflecting the high expectations that teachers have of pupils. Effective individual plans for pupils with special educational needs are used well in setting tasks for these pupils. These, alongside the energetic contribution of well-prepared and conscientious support staff, ensures these pupils receive teaching that is as effective as that for other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum meets the pupils' needs exceptionally well and contributes well to their good academic progress and excellent personal development. It provides pupils with a great many opportunities to develop skills, using direct experiences. A large number of visits and visitors to school give pupils excellent opportunities to learn in a range of very stimulating ways. The school is beginning to make good use of pupil's literacy and numeracy skills as a help to learning in other subjects. However, pupils' ICT skills are not sufficiently well used in many subjects. Great care is taken to attend to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties through a wide range of very good additional support available to them. Staff at all levels help raise pupils' awareness of the need to take regular exercise and encourage them to take up additional sporting activities. The school has taken appropriate action to ensure that pupils have access to good quality information relating to drugs misuse, as this is a major concern in the immediate community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding; particular strengths include the way their personal development and well-being are extremely well promoted. As a result the pupils' self-esteem is very high, they are very confident when communicating with adults and know that their contributions are greatly valued. The high quality of support and encouragement that pupils receive is instrumental in motivating them to achieve their challenging individual targets. Through the school council and in class discussions all pupils are encouraged to make a strong contribution to school life. There is a very high level of commitment from all staff to promoting the health and safety of pupils. Child protection procedures are very good with the school being very clear on how to handle any issues that arise. There are no incidents of bullying or nastiness between pupils. Arrangements for pupils to start school and the support provided for them when they leave are also very strong features of the school's work. The school quickly responds to pupils who have problems, often involving parents

and other agencies to ensure the pupils' learning does not suffer and their good progress continues.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and provide the school with a good capacity to improve. The headteacher and deputy provide dynamic and inspiring leadership. Their strong belief that all pupils should do well both academically and in their personal development is the driving force in providing a school where pupils make good progress on all fronts and which also meets the needs of its community well. This belief filters throughout the school, leading to a common sense of purpose amongst an effective team of staff. Co-ordinators are very enthusiastic in their roles and strive to raise the quality of delivery of their subjects. Very effective leadership and management are present in several subjects; for example, English, mathematics and ICT. However, owing to absences and variance in the experience teachers have had as co-ordinators, there are variations in effectiveness.

The school successfully evaluates its own performance and sees this as being central to improvement. For example, it has identified two areas linked to raising standards in writing and ICT and has devised detailed action plans which it is implementing. All issues from the last inspection have been dealt with and improvements made. The school seeks the views of parents and pupils and takes account of their views in planning school improvement. A strength is the smooth and happy day to day running of the school with clear routines in place. Both human and learning resources are very well used ensuring pupils' progress is good and securing very good value for money. Staff are very carefully scrutinised as to their ability to meet the needs of the pupils and vetting procedures are robust. The school realises the importance of strong links to parents to support its work and its success is reflected in the deservedly good reputation it has with parents and the community.

The governors meet their statutory duties well and clearly know what the school is achieving. They are regular visitors, getting to know pupils and staff and good use is made of their skills. For example, one governor organises a choir and a steel band to enrich pupils' experiences.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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	NA	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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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14th September 2005

Dear Pupils

I am writing this letter after spending two days in your school and want to thank you all so much for making the experience a very enjoyable one. We came to see how well your school is performing and you had a very important role in this just as much as your teachers had.

You did not let the school down in any way, in fact your very good behaviour and excellent relationships with one another are a credit to you all (and I suppose your teachers had some part to play in this) and helped us to judge just how well you and your school are doing.

Well, what did we think after these two days? I know your teachers were worried with Ofsted coming but we hope our report will help them feel all the hard work they do is worthwhile. I always ask pupils their views of the school and one boy said 'St James's is well good'. He was right; your school is a good school. You have a super headteacher and deputy who lead your school and have your well-being at the centre of all they do. Along with all the staff they make learning interesting, make you work hard and as a result you are learning lots in lessons. They also do lots of things to try to excite you with the many visits you go on and lots of visitors to school. We were pleased with how hard you worked but equally important was how well everyone got on and we saw lots of pupils who had responsibilities who did them very well. We were also very pleased to see all the clubs you have and the good attendance by you to take regular exercise and that sport is important to you.

I'm sure your teachers always say, 'this is good but you could make it even better if you ...' Well this is what we are telling your school – try to get the more able pupils, particularly boys, to write even better and to give you all more opportunities to use computers to help you learn in all the subjects you do. (I'm sure you'll like the second one best).

Finally, we would like to thank you again and if you and your teachers continue to work as hard as when we were in school I am sure your school will continue to do well.

Gordon Alston
Lead inspector

Annex B