

St James' CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112362
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325589
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave Pidduck
Headteacher	Miss Angela Rawlinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
School address	Blake Street Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 1NY
Telephone number	01229 894633
Fax number	01229 894634

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of higher than average social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is almost double the national average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their main language. More pupils than average are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils enter the school on transfer from a neighbouring infant school. The school occupies a large Victorian building.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good, buoyant school which has many areas of excellence. Pride and potential are keys to its ethos. It is a better school than when it was last inspected and with outstanding leadership and management has a good capacity to improve further.

The headteacher and staff have created a wonderful learning environment for pupils. It oozes a sense of joy and celebration. Pupils love attending and leave at the end of each day fulfilled and bursting with enthusiasm about their achievements. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards and most leave having attained standards which are above average, having made good progress and achieving their personal targets as a result of steadfastly good teaching.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They respond exceptionally well to the excellent curriculum, which is filled with exciting opportunities for promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside academic learning. The care, support and guidance offered to pupils are of the highest order, ensuring that individual needs are identified quickly and that pupils are taught in a safe and healthy environment. Behaviour is outstanding. There are very few interruptions during lessons, and play and lunchtimes are happy, harmonious occasions, the latter being characterised by excellent support from midday supervisors. The good academic progress made by pupils, coupled with their excellent attitudes towards learning and helping each other, result in pupils leaving school with excellent prospects for the future.

Staff and pupils contribute exceptionally well to creating a very strong sense of community which extends well beyond the school into the locality. Nearly all parents express great satisfaction with the way the school is helping their children to secure such bright futures.

The headteacher demonstrates outstanding leadership and management skills and is exceptionally well supported by the governing body. The commitment and diligence of staff ensure that, at every level, leadership and management duties are performed confidently and effectively. Self-evaluation is perceptive and accurate though occasionally the monitoring and evaluation of teaching does not make clear how good teaching could be made outstanding. The interior of the school is maintained to an exceptionally high standard and office staff give a warm, friendly welcome to visitors and ensure excellent administration.

What the school should do to improve further

- Clearly identify how good teaching can be improved and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards are above average overall. Inspection evidence and data provided by the school show, that attainment on entry is broadly average. By the time pupils leave, attainment is generally above average, reflecting the good progress of virtually all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In recent years, standards have been higher in English than in mathematics or science. This has been partly because of improvements made in pupils' writing following the recommendations of the last inspection. Results in the 2007 national tests were lower than the previous year, but reflected realistic expectations. In these tests, the challenging school target for English was comfortably exceeded but the target for mathematics was marginally missed. During the inspection, pupils were seen

to be making good progress across a wide range of subjects, including science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Well above average attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and represents an immense achievement in the school's context. After-school clubs and activities are very well attended, further reflecting pupils' enthusiasm for living school life to the full. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are cheerful, polite and welcoming. Many spoke confidently to inspectors, leaving them in no doubt about their desire to succeed and secure better futures for themselves through hard work and positive attitudes. Pupils feel safe, trust each other and respect staff. Patience and consideration are very much in evidence, demonstrating considerable awareness of what they can contribute to keeping themselves and others safe. Pupils respond extremely well to school initiatives to promote healthy living. They enjoy 'special lunches' and participate keenly in physical activities, which include much enjoyed Karate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are quick to recognise feelings and emotions expressed through art, music and poetry; they show great interest in other lands and cultures. Great pride is taken in assuming a wide range of responsibilities and celebrating the achievements of others, therefore contributing strongly to the school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Occasionally they are outstanding, but not yet frequently enough for teaching to be considered outstanding overall. Parents express a high degree of confidence in the quality of teaching and the progress it leads to. Teachers are enthusiastic and well prepared. They make learning interesting and manage their classrooms adeptly and with confidence. As a result, learning is very rarely interrupted and lessons proceed with pace and a sense of enjoyment. Teachers have access to a wealth of accurate assessment data to help them to plan work that meets the needs of pupils. They deploy skilled support staff well, usually to help pupils encountering difficulties in their learning. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to help pupils to work with more independence by varying the tasks that are set, so that they more closely match the range of age and ability in the class. Where teachers excel is in the way they perceptively check that what they are teaching is being understood by pupils. Teachers use these checks effectively during lessons as well as when they mark pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets pupils' needs and interests very well by successfully mixing the promotion of the essential basic skills of numeracy and literacy with a wealth of exciting and enjoyable learning opportunities. These excellent opportunities provide pupils with a well-rounded education that meets their needs and interests very well. Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. The result is that pupils are extremely well prepared for moving on to other schools and securing bright and healthy futures for themselves.

The curriculum extends far beyond the classroom. A vast array of well-attended and much enjoyed clubs, after-school activities, and residential experiences adds huge value to pupils'

lives. Visits, visitors and theme days are used extensively to broaden pupils' experiences, enlighten them and give them opportunities to contribute to the community.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. A safe, orderly environment has been created, with a strong emphasis on promoting good behaviour and sensible attitudes. In this setting, pupils recognise their own responsibility for caring for and supporting one another. All requirements for safeguarding pupils are in place.

Accurate and perceptive assessment of pupils' progress allows teachers to help those experiencing difficulties and those surging ahead of expectations to achieve their best. High quality assessment has contributed to the creation of small-group learning situations, such as the 'Spiders', to help all pupils fulfil their potential. Close contact is maintained with parents and the many outside agencies that provide care and support for pupils. In this way, the school builds up a truly comprehensive picture of how well pupils are doing, the factors that are affecting progress and the strategies that can be implemented to overcome difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. They have ensured that the school has come on a long way in a short time. Obstacles to further improvement are seen as challenges rather than excuses. The headteacher's cornerstones of promoting pride and unlocking potential underpin much of the school's success. In an area of considerable social and economic deprivation the school stands out as a beacon of success. Managers have a perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. While the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is rigorous and accurate, it does not always provide clear enough feedback to teachers on how to improve their teaching to outstanding. Close and constructive links with parents and many external agencies, including the community police and wardens, coupled with pupils' regular contributions to 'The Hindpool Buzz', the community newsletter, contribute enormously to the school's excellent contribution to community cohesion. Pupils, parents and staff share enormous pride in this school and it is highly respected by the local community.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James' CofE Junior School, Cumbria, LA14 1NY

So, what have you done today to make you feel proud? Let me tell you: lots.

You are a delight. Your school is good, with a number of outstanding features and it was a true pleasure and privilege for my colleague and me to share a couple of days with you recently. Enormous thanks to all of you who talked to us, helping us to decide what sort of an education you were getting.

You are getting a good one. It's obvious you enjoy school. Part of that comes from the fact that you are so considerate of one another, part of it comes from the fact that you are well taught by teachers who care deeply for you and help each of you to fulfil your potential and achieve well.

You've got a fabulous timetable and I have to admit that I didn't realise that school had finished at 3.30 because so many of you stayed on after school to enjoy all of the activities and clubs that staff organise for you.

An important part of my job is to talk with your headteacher and staff to try to come up with ideas about how to make your school even better. In a school such as yours this is difficult because it gets so many things right. We decided that the most important thing was to make sure that teachers are helped to make more lessons outstanding rather than good. You can help by working as hard as you do now and enjoying school life to the full.

Keep up the good work!

All the best

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector