

Inspection of a good school: Kimbolton St James CofE Primary School

Kimbolton, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HQ

Inspection date: 19 October 2022

Outcome

Kimbolton St James CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Be the best I can be' is a frequently heard statement from both staff and pupils. It goes beyond a statement. Pupils behave well. They enjoy school and are proud to work and learn together. Parents and carers value the family and community spirit.

Staff know the pupils well across the school. Strong, nurturing relationships, alongside high expectations, ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They say it sometimes happens but adults sort it. Pupils spoke highly of the care all staff give them and feel safe. They appreciate that they can talk to adults in school about their feelings.

Pupils embrace and fully participate in school life and beyond, for example through the student council, gardening club and a range of fundraising activities. Pupils understand and show respect, especially within the school's Christian values. However, pupils' understanding of some fundamental British values is less well developed.

Animals are a unique part of the school. Pupils love chatting to the goats at playtime. A cat checks in on lessons. Pupils choose to share their unusual reading places, from the back of a pony or in the sheep pen.

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

Leaders have clearly set out the key learning that pupils should gain across every subject of the curriculum. Leaders have worked hard and effectively to make sure the curriculum is designed around the mixed-age classes. Their careful thought and attention to detail about the curriculum content, vocabulary and assessment ensures that pupils gradually build up what they know over time.

Children's learning starts from their first days in Reception. Staff know what must be taught. They balance specific teaching with time for children to explore and play. This helps children to show what they know through words, actions and mark making. For example, children's sculptures made from natural materials showed them using colour, shape and texture with purpose and pride. Staff are quick to notice if children need extra help. They put support in place within an activity or across the school day. This support allows children to be successful. Children are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Leaders provide training to staff about a range of pupils' additional needs, including medical needs. This training gives staff the confidence and skills to do their job well. All pupils, including those with SEND, are fully involved in their learning. Staff make sensitive and individual changes to the learning to support pupils with SEND so they achieve well. All staff understand pupils' learning needs exceptionally well and support them effectively.

Governors understand the context of the school. They are ambitious for all pupils to do well. They have made sure that resources are prioritised to support all pupils, including those with SEND. However, sometimes, governors do not ensure that their strategic responsibilities are undertaken in a timely manner. For example, they have not made sure that some important policies have been kept up to date.

Leaders' recent investment in a new scheme for phonics is paying off. Staff teach phonics well. Pupils use what they have learned to help them read their books accurately. Staff keep a close eye on any pupil who falls behind where they should be. They put extra phonics support in place and reading time when needed. Pupils learn to read well.

Pupils share their reading recommendations with others enthusiastically. 'Stories on the sofa' is a firm indoor favourite each week. The school's 'reading shed' takes reading outdoors for pupils. Pupils appreciate reading for pleasure, as well as for learning. They know that reading can take place almost anywhere, whether reading on a beach, up a tree, in a tractor or on a treadmill; pupils rate reading as an enjoyable pastime.

Pupils recall the many different clubs and visits with fondness. The gardening club, rightly, take great pride in providing a colourful welcome to the school. Visits to zoos, the farm and aquariums add an extra dimension to pupils' learning; sporting and dancing events provide variety and further learning opportunities. However, leaders do not provide enough learning experiences to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures different to their own.

Leaders work closely in partnership with another local school to share subject leader expertise and develop the curriculum. Staff appreciate the way that leaders look after them as individuals and help them manage their workload. They are proud to be a member of staff at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They complete the right checks to make sure staff are safe to work in school. Leaders and staff know and understand the risks that pupils face. Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies. Leaders are persistent in following through on actions and on making sure others involved have done what they should be doing to keep pupils safe.

Pupils know about how to keep safe on and off line. They say staff help them and are caring. They know what it takes to be a good friend.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils have a sufficiently good understanding of different cultures and aspects of British values. As a result, pupils may be less well prepared for life in modern Britain than they should be. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop a better understanding of all aspects of British values and improves their understanding of cultural diversity.
- Governors' checks on the school's effectiveness do not always go deep enough in holding leaders to account. This means that some policies and information are not as up to date as they should be and, therefore, stakeholders do not have access to the most current information to base decisions on. Governors should ensure they have systems in place to fulfil all their core functions effectively.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116890
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10240494
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gillian James
Headteacher	Adam Breakwell (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.kimbolton-st-james.hereford.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school works in partnership with Orleton CE Primary School. The executive headteacher splits their time between the two schools.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also spoke to leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.

- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority, the school improvement partner and the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' safety.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracey O'Keeffe-Pullan

Ofsted Inspector

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