

Inspection of James Calvert Spence College

Acklington Road, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 0NG

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this safe and welcoming school. Staff are warm and friendly. The words 'pride' and 'respect' form the basis of the well-structured behaviour policy. Pupils learn about the positive futures open to them after they leave school. An annual careers fair allows pupils to find out about local businesses. They learn about their own interests and strengths.

Pupils know what staff expect of them. They are keen to do well. Occasionally, lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Staff manage this very effectively. They get pupils back on track quickly. Bullying does happen sometimes but it is resolved quickly. Staff take it seriously. They are very capable in addressing pupils' concerns.

In most subjects, teachers are clear about what pupils need to know. However, in a few subjects, such as history and religious education (RE), this is not the case. In these subjects, pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they might. Leaders are taking effective action to put this right. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. Highly trained staff provide the right support for each pupil. Students in the sixth form are proud to be part of the school. Staff support them to choose courses that meet their interests and needs.

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

In most subjects, staff know precisely what pupils need to learn. Teachers check that pupils understand each step in their learning before moving on. Pupils remember their learning well. However, in some subjects, leaders have not identified clearly enough what pupils need to learn. Pupils do not learn enough in these subjects. Pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers. Teachers know when and how to adapt their approach so that pupils' learning needs are met. Leaders monitor interventions such as activities to develop social skills, to ensure that they meet pupils' needs. Curriculum planning in the sixth form is extremely strong. Students speak with knowledge and enthusiasm about the subjects they study in Years 12 and 13.

Provision for key stage 2 pupils has improved greatly. Leaders plan the curriculum so that pupils have the knowledge and skills they will need in key stage 3. Pupils are taught by subject specialists in every subject from Year 6 onwards. Pupils who struggle with reading receive effective support right from the start. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how much their reading has improved. Staff read aloud to pupils in Years 5 to 11 several times each week. Pupils really enjoy this. There is a growing culture of reading across the school.

Governors are knowledgeable and experienced. There is a strong commitment to improving the school at all levels of leadership. Leaders have invested heavily in staff training, especially in curriculum development. This work has been effective in

improving the curriculum in most subject areas. Staff are enthused by the training and support they receive. Morale is high.

Leaders are taking action to increase the number of pupils who follow the English baccalaureate. This group of subjects has been shown to prepare pupils well for further study. Leaders have improved aspects of their curriculum design, especially in geography. This is not the case in all subjects.

Some pupils do not attend as well as they should. Leaders have taken action to improve this. They use external agencies to support them. However, persistent absence remains stubbornly high.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to explore the world of work. This includes an annual careers fair. Staff use the fair to establish close links with local businesses. Pupils meet working people and learn about careers. Some pupils access specialist careers mentoring. Teachers provide students in the sixth form with regular opportunities to explore their next steps. Pupils speak positively about a recent visit to Newcastle University.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is sequenced well. Pupils learn about how to stay safe and physically healthy. They learn strategies to support their mental health. Pupils learn to treat people respectfully whatever their background. However, staff do not consistently check what pupils have learned in PSHE. Some pupils do not remember enough of the curriculum. There are a range of extra-curricular clubs open to pupils, including chess, astronomy and running club. Leaders are working to increase the number of clubs they offer. Students in the sixth form continue to learn about healthy relationships and mental health. They know how to look after themselves as they grow into young adults.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well informed about local risks to pupils, including county lines. They encourage pupils to share any concerns they have. Most pupils are comfortable talking to staff about their worries. Where staff are concerned about a pupil, leaders follow this up quickly and effectively. When handling complex cases, leaders seek advice from appropriate external agencies. They make timely referrals for extra support. Their work is highly effective in keeping pupils safe. For example, pupils with mental health needs, such as anxiety, are referred for appropriate medical help.

Leaders carry out the appropriate checks on new staff to make sure pupils are kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects, including RE and history. Pupils do not learn as well as they should. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders should ensure that they complete the process of clearly identifying what pupils need to know within all subjects to a consistently high standard.
- Pupils struggle to remember what they have learned about different religions. This means that they do not have a strong enough understanding of world faiths. Leaders should review the curriculum to ensure that the content and mode of delivery enable staff to check that pupils understand and remember important knowledge.
- Some pupils are not attending school as often as they should. This means they are not benefitting from a high-quality education. Non-attendance contributes to gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to work with parents, carers and pupils to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	122363
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10227435
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	9 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	731
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Currie
Headteacher	Neil Rodgers
Website	www.jcsc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 January 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a key stage 2 provision. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 attend the school.
- The school makes use of alternative provision. One provider is used. This is Northumberland Pupil Referral Unit. This institution is registered with the Department for Education.
- Through its careers programme, the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, science and art. 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, where appropriate, looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Members of the inspection team met with those with responsibility for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with five governors, including the chair and vice-chair.
- An inspector spoke with one provider of alternative provision who is currently educating a small number of pupils who usually attend this school.
- Inspectors took into account 61 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 68 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. This included 66 free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school. Inspectors also took into account 52 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks. They spoke to governors, the designated safeguarding leader, the behaviour lead and looked at how incidents are logged and followed up. Inspectors explored a range of case studies in detail. Inspectors also spoke to a range of teaching and non-teaching staff to check their understanding of safeguarding training.

Inspection team

Zoe Helman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector

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