

James Bateman Junior High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124428
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359667
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Bowers
Headteacher	Gordon Hart
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. One inspector focused on safeguarding for half a day. Inspectors observed 18 teachers in 24 lessons. One inspector also conducted a series of brief lesson visits focused on the engagement of boys. Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils and seven members of the governing body. One inspector spoke to two parents on the telephone. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, data and analysis, policy documents, the school's monitoring records and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They considered the responses to questionnaires from 212 parents and carers, 102 pupils and 26 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective have leaders and managers been in ensuring progress is good or better across all subjects and in all years, especially English and mathematics?
- Is teaching consistently meeting the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly, boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they all make good or better progress?
- Do leaders, including governors, effectively monitor and accurately evaluate the school's performance and use this evaluation to secure clear and sustained improvement, particularly for boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Information about the school

James Bateman Junior High School is an average-sized middle school. Most pupils are of White British heritage although many other ethnic groups are represented. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and all speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Boxhall Quality Mark for Nurture Care.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

James Bateman Junior High is a satisfactory and strongly improving school. Its strength lies in the high quality care it offers to pupils so that they develop good personal skills. In this warm and caring atmosphere, pupils feel safe and happy. They form strong relationships with adults and with each other. Consequently, pupils develop generally good attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. They are friendly and helpful to each other so that the school is calm and purposeful. They take their responsibilities seriously and play an active role in the wider community. For example, many pupils are involved in the school's work as a guardian of the Biddulph Grange Gardens.

Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement has improved, especially in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics. Many pupils, particularly girls, make good progress. However there remains some variability in the progress boys make and progress in English as not as strong as in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

One of the reasons for this strong improvement is the rigorous monitoring and evaluation that leaders have implemented. Middle and senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They undertake regular and effective checks of the quality of lessons. This has helped them to swiftly identify and eradicate inadequate teaching, demonstrating the school's good capacity to sustain improvements.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and the majority of lessons seen by inspectors were good. There remains, however, a stubborn core of satisfactory teaching. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons. Boys' progress accelerates when the pace of lessons is brisk and they have tasks which are active and engaging. This is not fully consistent and sometimes they become distracted.

Governance has also improved since the previous inspection. The financial management of the school is strong. Governors offer a good level of support and the work they do in offering challenge is sound.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress so that it is consistently good or better for all pupils and across all subjects, especially in English, by:

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- ensuring that all pupils, particularly boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have consistent opportunities to develop independent learning skills
- ensuring that pupils have consistent opportunities to offer extended written and oral answers.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - using existing good practice to develop teachers' questioning skills
 - ensuring tasks closely match the needs of all individuals and groups of pupils
 - improving the ongoing feedback to pupils in lessons so that they have a precise understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. By the time they leave at the end of Year 8 many have attained levels expected for pupils at the end of Year 9. Within this good progress, there is some unevenness across different subjects. The progress made by boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities does not always match that of girls. Progress in mathematics and particularly in science is also good. The reason for inconsistencies in progress is that not all lessons cater for individual pupils needs. For example, boys make better progress when lessons are active and practical.

Learning in the majority of lessons seen by inspectors was good. Teachers' good subject knowledge gives pupils the confidence to ask questions. Pupils behave well and they have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about their work and take pride in doing their best. Many pupils are keen to answer questions and in good lessons they are encouraged to give extended answers, but this is not consistent. Consequently, some pupils, especially boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, lack confidence in offering more than one or two word answers. This also extends to their written work.

Pupils develop healthy lifestyles through the extensive sporting opportunities open to them and the healthy food offered in the canteen is popular. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and this can be seen in their good attendance. They develop sound skills to help them to be successful when they move to the high school. Pupils have a refreshing curiosity about the natural environment. For example, the school chickens are frequently a stimulus for pupils' reflections about life and care for the world around them.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Care and kindness pervades the school because of the quality of work done by adults to make sure that pupils' personal development is good. Transition arrangements from first schools and to the high school are carefully planned. Consequently, pupils are confident and transitions smooth. The work the school does for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is especially strong. There are several telling examples of where pupils have been supported in overcoming distressing personal circumstances to make good academic progress. Work with external partners is detailed and ensures the school can secure exactly the right support for individual pupils.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving rapidly. There is a growing core of good teaching, in which teachers' skilful questioning helps pupils to think deeply and to develop a thorough understanding of the work. For example, in a good English lesson a group of Year 6 pupils made good progress in using context to understand the meaning of archaic words. This was because the teacher ensured her questions promoted a thoughtful approach and, subsequently, they were able to produce written work incorporating these words. This good level of skill is not consistent across the school. Teachers' planning is thorough and identifies pupils with different needs. However, they do not always plan tasks that closely match these needs or use the support of teaching assistants effectively. As a result, progress slows for some pupils, often boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the very best lessons, pupils benefit from accurate and

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ongoing feedback. This helps them to understand precisely how to improve their work. The school is working hard to ensure this good practice is fully consistent.

The good curriculum has been instrumental in securing improvement, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school has provided some specialist teaching for Year 5 and Year 6 and, as a result, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' progress, especially in mathematics. The curriculum has also been reviewed in Key Stage 3 and this is showing early signs of improving pupils' progress in English. The curriculum is further strengthened by well-planned enhancements. For example, pupils enjoyed the memorable experience of the day they explored Britain since the 1930s through costume and experiencing a street party atmosphere.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers demonstrate determination and a good level of ambition. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and take effective action to address weaknesses. For example, behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection through the detailed and concerted action taken by senior and middle leaders. Teaching is also improving strongly. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated because of the close support and exacting challenge implemented by senior leaders. The body of good and better teaching is growing and teachers are keen to improve their practice. Inspectors were impressed with teachers' enthusiasm in seeking feedback about their teaching.

The school tackle discrimination robustly. There remain inconsistencies in progress for boys and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, these gaps are closing and in Key Stage 2 there is more consistency. Consequently, the effectiveness of the school in promoting equal opportunities is sound.

Improvements in pupils' progress have been secured through accurate and rigorous monitoring undertaken by leaders at all levels. Careful tracking of groups and individual pupils enable leaders to implement swift action to address under-achievement. The school is acutely aware of the remaining inconsistencies in progress. Leaders' success in tackling areas of weakness is demonstrated clearly in the marked improvement in the progress pupils make in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics throughout the school. Together with the school's accurate self-evaluation this demonstrates the school's good capacity to sustain improvements.

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The governing body fulfils its work satisfactorily and this too is improving. Members of the governing body have many informal networks in which they independently gather the views of parents and carers. However, this is not systematic. Safeguarding procedures are robust. The record keeping for the care of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are a particular strength.

The school has a good understanding of its local, national and international context. Leaders have been especially successful in building local links with first schools and the local high school. The commitment to reaching out to the community can be seen in the school's link with a local business to enable families to purchase laptops at reduced rates.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and of these a very large majority agreed with all the statements. They were very positive about the experience their children had at school. A few raised concerns about how the school deals with bullying and the quality of communication with school. Inspectors found that the school has clear and effective systems to deal with bullying and pupils confirmed this. The school also has clear systems to communicate with parents and carers and for them to contact the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at James Bateman Junior High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 212 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 377 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	27	140	66	12	6	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	91	43	114	54	5	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	82	39	120	57	7	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	33	119	56	19	9	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	63	30	138	65	8	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	24	127	60	29	14	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	23	142	67	14	7	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	21	144	68	11	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	26	138	65	11	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	25	117	55	27	13	10	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	20	139	66	21	10	5	2
The school is led and managed effectively	62	29	126	59	14	7	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	36	116	55	9	4	5	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of James Bateman Junior High School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 7AT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We found it very helpful to talk to you, look at your work and visit your lessons. James Bateman Junior High School is a satisfactory school and it is improving strongly. There are some things that the school does very well.

You feel safe in school and your behaviour is good. The adults help you to develop healthy lifestyles and you are good citizens.

All the adults in the school care very well for you and make sure you have the right support if things are not going well at home or in school.

You all make at least satisfactory progress and many of you make good progress.

The headteacher and other leaders are improving the school quickly.

Senior leaders and all the staff want the school to be even better so we have asked them to do the following things.

Improve your progress so that it is good or better for everyone by making sure lessons help you to be independent. They should also help you to develop the skills to give longer answers in class and in your writing.

Make sure all of your lessons are good by ensuring that the work you get is exactly right for each one of you. They should also help teachers to learn from each other so they can all ask you good questions that will get you thinking hard. They could also help make sure you know exactly how well you are doing and how to improve your work throughout each lesson.

You can play your part in improving the school by working hard and continuing to behave well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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