



James
Rennie
School

James Rennie is a maintained day special school for students aged between 3 and 19 living in Carlisle and North Cumbria.

We are situated near junction 44 on the M6 surrounded by pleasant countryside. The school caters for approximately 140 pupils with Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties. Some of the pupils also have autistic spectrum condition, sensory loss or physical difficulties.

Our School offers all its pupils full entitlement to the Early Years curriculum, National Curriculum and a Post-16 Curriculum that prepares students for their next step beyond School, but with an essential focus on personalised learning.

James Rennie is an inclusive environment where all pupils feel welcome and valued, where the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matters.

***"It is a joyful place.
It makes students'
lives better."***

OFSTED June 2014



A welcome letter from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

It is with pleasure that I write these words of welcome on behalf of the staff, parents and governors of James Rennie School. We understand that starting a new school can be difficult especially for those with additional needs and we work hard to ensure a smooth transition to school. Everyone within the school community is guided by the one school rule: "We look after each other"

James Rennie School believes that progress in the development of language and communication is central to the life chances of students with severe and profound learning difficulties. As a school committed to raising standards, it has developed an integrated communication system incorporating all those disciplines that encourage thinking, self-expression and communication. The focus on communication works alongside the National Curriculum and other core strategies.

James Rennie School is an orderly establishment where high standards, hard work and sensible behaviours are expected from everyone. Not only does this ensure a safe and happy environment but one that acknowledges, encourages and celebrates achievement.

James Rennie offers a positive choice for you and your family. We hope that your child will enjoy the time spent at James Rennie and we hope you will join us in our educational partnership.

Headteacher



Learning, Believing, Achieving...

"Students are exceptionally keen to learn. They respond well to outstanding teaching and show great enthusiasm for learning, behave exceptionally well and show great pride in what they achieve."

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The development of communication skills and the social and emotional aspects of learning enable pupils to develop positive attitudes to their work in school.

Pupils lie at the heart of the school decision making, both through the School Council, questionnaires and throughout the personalised learning practices in the school. The school has a vibrant School Council made up of representatives from all upper school classes.

Pupils' needs, outlined in their Education Health Care Plan (formally a statement) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) support the planning of their curriculum on an individual and class basis. Depending on the pupils' needs lessons are delivered in whole groups, small groups or on an individual basis.

A detailed Annual Review is written each year along with termly Individual Education Plans. Parents are invited into school to discuss their child's progress and to contribute to the drawing up of the Individual Education Plan. We will always contact parents immediately if we are concerned about any aspect of their child's welfare, progress or behaviour and we hope that parents will let us know of any problems or anxieties which may affect their child in school.



Communication

“Teaching is outstanding. It has improved since the last inspection. It is highly effective in helping students to communicate by whatever means they can and to develop essential skills that help them move on successfully through significant changes in their lives.”

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The Communication Team consists of the Communication Co-ordinator, and two Communications Assistants.

The school aims to provide pupils with access to a wide variety of communication experiences relevant to their personal needs. The Communication Team implements programmes based on:

- ▶ Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- ▶ Derbyshire Language Scheme (DLS)
- ▶ Social Use of Language Programme (SULP)
- ▶ Objects of Reference
- ▶ Social/Communication/Emotional Regulation/ Transactional Support (SCERTS)
- ▶ Assistive technologies
- ▶ Computer based communication systems
- ▶ Makaton sign language

A Speech and Language Therapist works in school on behalf of the Health Service. The school has a regional Makaton Trainer who trains staff, parents, pupils and the wider community of the school.



Learning and Curriculum

"For parents and their children the most important measures of achievement are an increasing ability to communicate need and choice and to become more independent. In this, the school excels."

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Our curriculum is designed to meet our pupils' complex needs and to make their teaching and learning relevant and realistic, broad and balanced, rich and stimulating.

To this end our curriculum is much more than just the National Curriculum. It includes all the components essential to meet the needs of our pupils.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 we follow a curriculum based around play and exploration, giving children the opportunity and confidence to begin to understand the world around them. In our Primary Key Stages pupils learn through having a single theme for each term, then wherever possible all subjects link into this theme. In our Secondary Key Stages pupils move into streamed classes for literacy, numeracy and computing. Between the ages of 14-16 all pupils work towards qualifications that complement their learning needs but also push them further.

Above all we take great care to understand how we can make the curriculum meaningful to all our pupils, underpinning it with communication skills, social skills, physical development as well as spiritual and moral understanding.



Moving on

"The sixth form is outstanding. This is particularly the case in the way it so successfully prepares students for adulthood."
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Post 16 is anticipated as a time of change, new opportunities and preparation for adulthood where emphasis is placed on independence skills, work related learning, inclusion projects, community based activities and ensuring a smooth transition to Post 19 provision.

All Post-16 pupils undertake qualifications which are nationally recognised on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Qualifications are tailored to meet the needs of the individual. The qualifications may be vocational, developing skills for work and a work ethic, others will concentrate on life skills such as cooking or independent travel. Some students choose to study subjects of personal interest, such as photography or conservation. In addition, students continue to improve their functional literacy and numeracy skills. For some of our most able pupils GCSE qualifications are also available.

Students at this age learn about new opportunities for leisure, using facilities such as Carlisle Youth Zone and taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at all levels.



The Wider Community

"The excellent curriculum focuses strongly on promoting communication by whatever means possible. Staff are highly skilled in doing this in every lesson."

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"Every change in pupils' lives and circumstances is outstandingly well managed to make sure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives."

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The school works closely with parents and encourages their communications and visits to the school; it is good for children to know that their parents are interested in the school and their education. We believe that the best team consists of the child, the parent and the teacher working together. There are many events in school during the year, to which parents are invited by letter. A home-school diary is in operation for children in the school, teachers will write in the diary at least three times a week. We try to encourage its use both ways, from school to home and also from home to school.

Coffee mornings, family learning days and parent evenings are held during the year in order to discuss Individual Education Plans, review progress and discuss how to help at home with the learning of the students.

At James Rennie we believe education should lead to lifelong learning and have developed an extended curriculum which reflects the wishes and needs of the pupils. Activities include a wide range of sports, ICT, arts, horticulture, cookery and even a stand-up comedy club!



James Rennie School

California Road
Carlisle
CA3 0BU

Tel: 01228 554280

Fax: 01228 554289

e-mail: adminoffice@jamesrennie.cumbria.sch.uk

web: www.jamesrennie.cumbria.sch.uk

