

# Ashfield Infants' School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112146
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	357051
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Byrne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Hodgson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pat Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Newlands Lane Workington Cumbria CA14 3JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 325245
<b>Fax number</b>	01900 325247
<b>Email address</b>	head@ashfieldinf.cumbria.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons taught by six teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The school's work was observed, and inspectors looked at a range of documentation including policies for safeguarding and health and safety, the school's assessment records, development plans and curriculum schemes of work. The 73 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed along with those returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The validity of the school's own evaluation to establish whether its judgements are accurate.
- Whether or not the progress of pupils across the school is outstanding, including the more able.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders in monitoring the school and taking actions to improve it.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average infant school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British ethnic backgrounds. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained an Activemark, an Artsmark and has Healthy School status.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Inspirational leadership and management and exemplary teaching result in pupils of all abilities making excellent progress in both their academic and personal development. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently high for many years. Given their average starting points this represents outstanding achievement. Pupils love learning, as one stated, 'I love everything about school and don't like home time!' This enthusiasm is reflected in high attendance. Outstanding care nurtures the vast majority of pupils into becoming mature, responsible young citizens. The school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent. They applaud the school's quality of provision, the standard of teaching and leadership and the communication they receive.

High expectations are made of pupils in all aspects of school life. Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to impressive behaviour. The very caring ethos within the school instils consideration for others in pupils. The pupils' voice is valued through the school council, influencing decisions such as the development of the school grounds. Every Wednesday pupils take part in 'walk to school day' and this encourages exercise. This, combined with the good quality of school meals contributes to the pupils' advanced understanding of the choices required for healthy lifestyles. The pupils are excellently prepared for future life.

Outstanding features in the curriculum include an excellent array of out-of-school activities and imaginatively planned educational visits, for example, a residential stay at Hawse End. Activities inspire pupils and provide many amazing opportunities. However, across the school opportunities are missed for learners to direct and lead their own lines of enquiry. Good partnerships with the community enhance learning but the advantages of working closely with other schools are not fully exploited.

Strong, visionary and compassionate leadership by the headteacher has created a very strong staff team united in the desire to provide the best possible quality of education. Equality of opportunity is excellent with great success in closing the gap in the performance of boys and girls. An excellent governing body supports yet challenges the school and ensures that excellent levels of safeguarding are in place. The school has improved since the last inspection and given its superb management procedures and accurate self-evaluation, has an excellent capacity for improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of education even further by:
- - increasing opportunities for children and pupils to be more responsible for their learning by developing the confidence to more often pursue their own enquiries

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- - take advantage of closer professional links with other schools in the locality.

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

**1**

Pupils love school because lessons are fun and are planned to meet everyone's needs. Excellent attitudes to learning among pupils promote excellent progress in lessons. Pupils thrive on opportunities to talk about and act on solving problems. The high quality of handwriting and the use of grammar and punctuation in Year 2 demonstrate the pupils' great pride in their work. Pupils are diligent, hardworking and get on very well together.

Attainment at Year 2 is high and has been consistently so over the last five years. Pupils make outstanding progress in their time in school. From starting points in Early Years Foundation Stage that are typical for their age, pupils leave Year 2 as articulate, skilled readers and writers and very competent mathematicians for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make excellent progress. This is a result of excellent teamwork between teachers, teaching assistants and support from outside specialists. The more-able pupils are suitably challenged, although in some instances, their independence is not fully exploited. Boys' personal and academic development tends to be lower than girls when they start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Swift actions by the school successfully narrows the gap and by the end of Year 2, the performance of boys and girls does not differ significantly.

Children are polite and thoughtful at all times. The high quality of care shown by staff is reflected in extremely warm and close relationships at all levels throughout the school. Pupils respond very positively to rewards for desirable behaviour. They burst with pride if they gain the Golden Boot Award for being the class with the highest proportion who walk to school on Wednesday. Initiatives such as these, coupled with an emphasis on healthy eating, give pupils an excellent understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. Pupils say they feel safe at all times. They act sensibly and with a good awareness of others. Pupils unselfishly raise funds for others less fortunate than themselves, for example, for Children in Need and for a school in India.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Pupils benefit from a dedicated and skilled teaching team that sets high expectations for pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are a highly effective team constantly seeking ways of bringing learning alive. Where teaching is outstanding, pupils are highly motivated by lively and charismatic teaching. Practical approaches involving solving problems are skilfully employed to capture the pupils' imaginations. This was evident when a group of pupils worked together to programme a toy snow plough to move around an imaginary town. In all lessons, pupils are given clear objectives to focus and direct teaching and learning. Pupils are expected to present their work neatly and their confidence to speak publicly is constantly encouraged. Assessment is used very well to guide planning. As a result, learning activities target the needs of individuals. Progress is accelerated by the good knowledge that pupils have of their own attainment and are very aware of their targets for improvement.

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and in promoting advanced levels of speaking and listening. Excellent learning overall is promoted through the provision of many memorable experiences for pupils. The quality of provision for out-of-school activities is excellent and educational visits to places in the locality add relevance and meaning to learning. Personal, social and citizenship education is highly valued. Through initiatives such as 'Philosophy for Children', pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions and develop the skill of mature debate.

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Opportunities for pupils to lead their own enquiries with reasonable independence are, however, not yet fully exploited.

Parents rate the quality of care and guidance very highly. The comment of one parent/carer typifies their views, 'From the teaching staff to the midday supervisors, everyone puts the children's learning and welfare as a priority.' An ethos of care pervades all that the school does and impressive systems are utilised to support the pupils' personal and academic development. The involvement of parents and carers in their children's education is successfully encouraged. An amazing educational website developed by the school enables parents and pupils to share learning at home. Very effective methods are established to ease the induction of children into the Early Years Foundation Stage and to smooth the transition from Year 2 on to the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher, supported by a very competent management team, constantly seek and achieve excellence in all that the school does. Effectively distributed leadership and management at all levels ensure that everyone works to their strengths. Meticulous systems are in place to identify the areas for school improvement and to evaluate how effectively the improvement targets are met. All that happens in school is inclusive and fully promotes equality of opportunity. Concerted efforts ensure that there is no discrimination and that all groups achieve extremely well. An outstanding governing body supports and challenges the school very well. It keeps a close eye on the school's performance and is involved in all aspects of its running. Safeguarding practices are scrupulously maintained by the headteacher and governing body. Designated child protection staff and governors have up-to-date training and robust arrangements ensure the health and safety of all in the school.

The engagement with parents and carers is excellent. The school works hard to keep them very well informed and to listen to their views; questionnaires are used to canvas their opinions and the headteacher is regularly available at the school gates. Good partnerships are established with a local initial teacher training centre and the school works closely with external agencies to support pupils. Links with other schools to promote and develop staff, however, are relatively underdeveloped. The school has evaluated its provision for community cohesion and does great work to promote cohesion within the school and its locality. Global awareness of another culture is promoted by helping to support a school in need in India but pupils have few opportunities to meet and understand children who are different from themselves. The school is very well managed financially by the

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headteacher, administrative staff and the governing body. Together, they ensure that all spending decisions give the best possible value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry to the Reception class vary over time, but are generally in line with expectations for their age. Following a very effective induction into their new surroundings, they settle down quickly and are soon working and playing very well with their peers and engaging enthusiastically in all the activities. They continue to make good progress in all areas of learning and show high levels of curiosity about the world around them, for example when they explored the ice that had formed overnight in the outdoor area. The good progress overall results in children reaching above-average standards by the time they leave Reception. Good direct teaching, strong support from teaching assistants and good use of resources enable children to gain a good grasp of basic number, and early reading and writing. Although the outdoor space is rather small, staff plan carefully to maximise opportunities to extend learning to the outdoors. While children are independent in many ways, for example, they take out and put away resources, opportunities for them to initiate their own learning are relatively weak.

Excellent leadership and management ensure an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are considering ways of strengthening opportunities for pupils to have more ownership of their learning. Children's welfare and safety have the highest priority and are very well maintained. Regular and high-quality assessment leads to an accurate evaluation of the needs of each child and enables suitably tailored activities to be provided for individuals. There are strong links with a variety of outside agencies for the benefit of the children and parents



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and carers speak very positively of home–school communication and of the high quality support provided for their children.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Around half of parents returned the questionnaires. The vast majority of returnees rate the school very highly. The quality of provision and the outcomes for their children are applauded and the role of the headteacher praised highly. Many positive comments were expressed in the questionnaires. The vast majority are of the opinion that the school helps their children to attain highly and make good progress. Parents and carers emphasise that the school values the development of the whole child and that they make good progress both personally and academically as a result. There were a few negative comments about behaviour and the way it is managed. The inspection findings strongly endorse the positive views expressed. Behaviour is judged to be outstanding and there is no evidence of weaknesses in its management.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashfield Infants' 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	82	13	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	84	12	16	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	68	23	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	64	23	32	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	82	13	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	82	13	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	78	15	21	0	0	0	0
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)	55	75	14	19	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	75	17	23	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	67	23	32	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	64	24	33	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	81	14	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	75	18	25	0	0	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ashfield Infants' School, Workington, CA14 3JG**

It was a delight to share some time with you at your school. Thank you for sharing time with us during your lessons and at lunch.

My job is to look at your school and report about what it does well and how it could do better. Your school is outstanding. This is because of the dedication of the headteacher and the skills of teachers and support staff. They do an excellent job in helping and supporting each of you to do as well as possible. As a result, you are all doing very well in your reading, writing and mathematics. You also have an excellent understanding of why it is important to take exercise and eat sensibly. This will help you to be happy and gives you a good chance of being healthy as you grow up.

You were very positive about the school and said that you really enjoyed lessons. It was a delight to see your excellent behaviour and the way you really liked learning. The many jobs you do in class and around school to help others mean that you are growing up to be kind and thoughtful young people. You are fortunate that the school provides lots of clubs for you out of school hours and also takes you on trips to places around your town and beyond.

There are two things that the school could do to make your education even better. These are for you to be given more opportunities to follow your own interests when you are learning, and for the school to work together more with nearby schools.

Good luck with the rest of your time in school. Keep working well and above all keep smiling and caring for others.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Byrne  
Lead inspector

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