

Victoria Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112210
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357065
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Last
Headteacher	Miss Sue O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons and the work of eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed pupils' work and looked at the school's system for tracking their progress, safeguarding documents and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 120 parents and carers and 18 from staff were also taken into account.

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

- How well the school uses monitoring to raise attainment and improve teaching.
- How effectively teachers use assessment to ensure all pupils are consistently challenged and know how to improve.
- How analytical the school's use is of tracking and how accurate is the assessment of pupils' performance to identify areas of strength and weaknesses and to provide challenge and support for learning.
- Whether planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage enables full use of both the indoor and outdoor environment.

Information about the school

This is an average size infant and nursery school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to free school meals is lower than the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Years 1 and 2 are taught in mixed-age classes. The school has Healthy School status and the Inclusion Chartermark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Victoria Infant and Nursery School is a good school. Its care, guidance and support for pupils and its links with a wide range of partners are outstanding. These links bring considerable benefits to the learning and personal development of pupils. The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers who rightly feel that this is a very caring school, saying that 'the school shows excellent care and attention and children look forward over the weekend to attending school on Monday'.

Children enjoy learning from their excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they are nurtured and cared for well in a safe environment and make good and often outstanding progress. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting good progress across Key Stage 1. Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, is good because of the effective quality of teaching and of the curriculum. Teachers plan lessons well to make them interesting. They use good-quality resources and make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to help to motivate pupils. However, there is an insufficient range of activities to challenge the thinking of all groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are used well but not all support staff are fully engaged in working with pupils during lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly giving appropriate praise. However, their expectations are not always clear enough, nor does marking and feedback consistently help pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's promotion of community cohesion are outstanding. Pupils' outstanding knowledge of other cultures is due to the way the school provides a rich range of experiences. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is excellent. Pupils are proud of their school, they are keen to help it improve and the school council talks excitedly about the way they enjoy raising funds to help others, including buying computers for their friends in a school in Ethiopia. Promotion of healthy lifestyles is excellent, pupils know how to eat healthily and appreciate the many opportunities to work and take exercise outside.

In the self-evaluation the school showed caution but overall, its good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development, lead to appropriate and successful strategies for improvement. Changes made to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum have ensured that this setting is now outstanding. Actions taken to improve achievement have had a positive impact showing that the school has good capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is outstanding in order to further accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - – ensuring greater differentiation in lessons in order to challenge pupils' thinking
 - – ensuring that support staff are fully engaged in pupils' learning during lessons
 - – ensuring that learning expectations are always clear, and marking and feedback consistently help pupils know how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic learners and they achieve well. They enjoy lessons, behave well, are motivated and engaged. This enjoyment of learning and pupils' positive attitudes are a key factor in their above-average attendance. During a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils worked well in pairs to select and add one number greater than 10 and another less than 10. They talked about how to use the number square to help with their additions. Discussion at the end of the lesson focused on the different ways used by pupils to add two numbers together. The teacher also seized the opportunity to remind them about the successes of working with a partner as well as useful, polite rules of sharing and taking turns. In another Year 1 lesson, pupils talked together about fish in a story, as an introduction to using 'thought bubbles' in their writing. Pupils enjoyed writing funny sentences, questioning the activities of the fish. Their use of question marks and capital letters ensured that they were becoming familiar with both grammar and punctuation in their early writing.

Overall, pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly expected for their age and make good and often outstanding progress. They make good progress in Key Stage 1, and move on to Year 3 in the junior school, with skills that are often significantly above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided for successfully, ensuring they make good progress. The skills and confidence that pupils develop ensure that they are well prepared for later life.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is first class. They have a keen sense of right and wrong. In lessons and when playing together, they treat each other extremely well and look after one another. Pupils talk eagerly about gathering food to distribute to the community during harvest, as well as taking part in a festival in the town where they enjoy dancing to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They enjoy responsibilities in school, for example, taking messages or tidying the classroom. All these activities show their outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils say they feel safe because not only do adults in school help them but they help each other as friends. The many sporting activities after school which children attend enthusiastically contribute to their excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Pupils make good progress through school because the quality of teaching and learning is good. A consistent strength in teaching lies in the good relationships between staff and pupils in all classes. Staff make clear their expectations of good behaviour, which pupils are keen to live up to. In the best lessons, learning intentions are clear but this is not the case in all lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but marking and feedback to pupils do not consistently help pupils to know their next steps in learning. Support staff often work with small groups of pupils during lessons. However, there are occasions, particularly at the beginning and ends of lessons, where they are not fully engaged in pupils' learning. Daily teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is carried out in large groups which are different from the pupils' own class. However, within these groups, there is sometimes too little difference in the tasks set for pupils of differing abilities which limits the challenge to their thinking.

The curriculum is good and its increasingly thematic approach motivates, enthuses and engages all pupils, contributing to their good progress. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts, but their skills in other subjects, for example art, are less well-developed. There are excellent opportunities for enrichment, including a wide range of well-attended clubs after school, during which pupils can learn to play golf, cheerleading or dance.

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The pastoral care and understanding of each individual pupil is a significant strength of the school. Care, guidance and support are established at all levels in the school, from the excellent induction and transition arrangements to the high quality of pupils' and adults' relationships. The first-rate nurture room is integral to the main school and makes a significant contribution to the progress of the most vulnerable pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management ensure that the school checks on its performance accurately, identifying strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders and teachers are a good blend of experienced and newly-qualified. The developing roles of the senior teachers mean they are becoming increasingly effective in driving school improvement. The governing body provides good support and challenge. They understand what needs to be done in the school and have a strong partnership with leaders and managers.

Safeguarding is good, ensuring that the school environment is well-managed and is providing a safe site for pupils. All managers are involved in monitoring pupils' progress and outcomes through pupil review meetings that also identify where additional support is needed. Resources are well-managed and good value for money is demonstrated by pupils making good progress. The school works effectively to promote equal opportunities and to avoid discrimination, and ensures that there is no significant underachievement by any group of pupils. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. There are highly-developed contacts with the local and international community, including strong links to a school in Ethiopia. This greatly benefits pupils' cultural and moral development and promotes their early understanding of a different area of the world very well. The school works extremely effectively in partnership with other schools and organisations. These strong links enable leaders to work closely together to obtain support and to provide a wide range of opportunities that promote pupils' learning and well-being exceptionally well. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's provision of well-run breakfast and after-school clubs.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, giving children a first-rate start, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Relationships between staff and parents and carers are extremely good and children settle quickly into their first year in school. Children soon develop excellent relationships; they work well together, are industrious and have very positive attitudes to learning. As a result of good and often outstanding progress, by the start of Year 1, most children have exceeded the expected levels of knowledge skills and understanding expected for their age. By learning to listen, share and take turns, children are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. They behave extremely well and thoroughly enjoy the many excellent opportunities to learn. Stimulating activities are well-chosen and children have extensive opportunities to explore the world around them, both indoors and out. The outdoor area is of a high standard; it is well-planned so that it provides an outstanding level of challenge and motivation. There is an excellent balance between activities that are led by teachers and those that children choose for themselves. Children are extremely independent. For example, a child in a life jacket was using a skipping rope to fish from his boat, whilst others were using large brushes to paint vertical and horizontal strokes on the shed, practising their early writing skills. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, ensuring that adults plan well together as a team and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. There are high expectations and leaders communicate a shared vision and understanding that translates into consistently high-quality practice. Staff are vigilant, ensuring that children are extremely well looked after.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

About half of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. All were positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. They feel that their children make good progress, enjoy school and are kept safe. Some parents and carers took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned, many to reinforce the strength of their positive views. A very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns and these were looked into during the inspection. Some parents and carers were concerned regarding finding out about their children's progress. The inspectors found that the school has a number of ways of communicating pupils' progress, including termly meetings with parents and carers and a report at the end of the year that provides the opportunity for them to feedback to teachers and the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Victoria Infant and Nursery 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	68	36	31	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	72	32	27	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	43	55	47	11	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	62	37	32	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	83	71	34	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	63	37	32	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	54	53	45	1	1	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)	71	61	36	31	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	58	45	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	56	43	37	4	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	63	54	47	40	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	81	69	33	28	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	71	31	26	3	3	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 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 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.

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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Infant and Nursery School, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 5QN

Thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to all of you and have good memories of how friendly you were. Most of you behave well. Your excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and take lots of exercise also impressed us. You obviously enjoy all the clubs you have after school. It was good to see that you raise funds for charity and help so much in your community.

We enjoyed watching how effectively you learn in your classrooms and outside them too. The school provides a lot of different for activities for you that you find exciting, but we have suggested that during your lessons there is different work for some of you to help you do even better in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers work well to help you learn and we think that teaching in your school is good. We asked the school though to make sure that all the teaching is excellent. We thought your work was good and that you achieve well. The curriculum is also good. Adults know you well and it is good to hear you say that they look after you well. Your school council also said that you also look after each other. Well done.

We have also suggested that your school checks that during lessons all the adults in the classroom are working with you all the time. The last thing we have suggested is that you always understand clearly what you have to do in lessons and have asked teachers to mark your work differently so that they can add comments that will help you to know what you need to learn next.

We were very pleased to tell your headteacher that your school is a good school. Well done and I hope you all continue to work hard and continue to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector

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