

# Ashfield Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112147
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	385853
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jean Kendall HMI

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kathryn Illsley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Ditchburn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 March 2011
<b>School address</b>	High Street Workington CA14 4ES
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Jean Kendall  
John Ellwood

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Nineteen lessons were observed and all teachers were seen at least twice. Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in every class; in some classes they looked at the work of pupils alongside school leaders. They spoke to pupils, met with pupil representatives and listened to pupils read. They met with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, and a local authority representative. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's monitoring, self-evaluation, action planning, and policies. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and the 71 parental questionnaires that were returned. They took account also of pupil questionnaires and returns from staff.

## Information about the school

Ashfield Junior is an average-sized school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has a resourced facility for pupils with a statement of special educational needs, although there is currently only one pupil on roll in this facility. The school has Healthy Schools status.

The previous inspection gave the school a notice to improve. Significant improvement was required in pupils' learning, progress and achievement, including that of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. There have been changes in staffing following the last inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for achievement at Key Stage 2.

There is separate childcare provision on the school's site which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires a notice to improve.

- This is a good school. The school is not yet outstanding because teaching is not consistently outstanding and some developments are at early stages, particularly those in relation to curriculum planning and the teaching of early reading. Leaders and staff have shown great determination to tackle weaknesses and the school has a strong capacity to build on its good practice and sustain improvement.
- Pupils' achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection. All groups, including pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, are making good progress from their starting points. That is because assessment is used well to ensure that teaching builds on pupils' prior attainment.
- The majority of teaching is good and there is some outstanding practice. Where teaching is most effective, it provides engaging activities that enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum and promotes their independence as learners. Such opportunities are more limited in some lessons. The school is promoting enjoyment of reading successfully. However, the teaching of reading at early stages is not targeted sufficiently to help pupils overcome gaps in their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and to develop a range of strategies to work out unknown words.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They are enthusiastic learners, showing great perseverance and concentration in lessons. They are polite and encouraging towards each other.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff and the governing body have a full understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on good-quality monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress. All share high ambitions for the pupils and are enthusiastic in their drive for further improvement. Self-evaluation is used effectively to plan professional development and whole-school initiatives to improve provision. Teaching has improved from satisfactory to good as a result.

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

- Secure consistently good and outstanding teaching so that all pupils make the best possible progress across the school by:
  - developing topic, themed and cross-curricular work further to enhance pupils' skills and provide meaningful contexts for lengthier projects, enquiry and research
  - encouraging pupils' independence as learners
  - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists in the school.
- Develop approaches to teaching reading by:
  - ensuring pupils who are in the early stages of reading systematically build on their phonic knowledge (the sounds letters make) and are taught a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words
  - teaching higher-order reading skills explicitly and promoting reading for pleasure
  - sharing the best practice in the school.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Most pupils start school in Year 3 with above-average attainment and all pupil groups are now making good progress from their starting points. Pupils are enthusiastic and motivated learners. For example, pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson showed great perseverance and excellent problem-solving skills when working out complex problems involving highest common factors and lowest common multiples. Pupils of all abilities and in all year groups make good progress in lessons because activities are matched to their ability well, to provide just the right amount of challenge. Pupils' books and the school's tracking of pupils' progress show that they have made rapid progress since the start of this academic year. The pupils receive very clear feedback from teachers about how they can improve their work and, consequently, have an exceptionally good understanding of the next steps they need to take.

Pupils with disabilities, those with special educational needs, and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive effective intervention and good support in lessons, so that they make similarly good progress to their peers. Their progress is monitored carefully, so that further support can be put in place if they fall behind.

There is evidence that attainment is rising across the school as the result of improved teaching, focused marking and targeted additional support. Gaps in learning, which resulted from uneven teaching and some inadequate practice, are being tackled effectively. Attainment in the current Year 6 class is now above average in reading, writing, and mathematics. That is a vast improvement on the school's previous performance which led to below expected levels of achievement in Year 6 standardised assessment tests in 2011. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires think that their children are making good progress and this was confirmed by inspection findings.

## Quality of teaching

Most teaching is good and there is some outstanding practice. Staffing is now stable, following a period of some disruption. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and teach a range of subjects well. Where teaching is most effective, teachers make skilful links between subjects and develop pupils' skills through purposeful activities. That was illustrated very well in an outstanding sequence of teaching seen in Year 5. With excellent guidance from the teacher, pupils showed creative flair in making wallpaper, plates, and coasters, based on their previous research of patterns in nature. They produced then very adept pieces of persuasive writing, which were used as a sales pitch when they set up their 'stalls' for presentation to the rest of the school. That approach to planning the curriculum is less developed in other classes, but teachers are enthusiastic about developing it further.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness effectively. Pupils collaborate successfully and show respect for one another. The best lessons promote independent learning through challenging, enquiry-based activities, developing pupils' self reliance well. However, such opportunities are limited in a few lessons, particularly where activities are overly directed by the teacher and pupils have limited time to work on tasks independently.

The teaching of reading is a current school priority. There are plentiful opportunities for the teaching of individual pupils, guided group sessions, and opportunities to read for pleasure. Where teaching is at its best, pupils are taught reading and comprehension skills very explicitly through good modelling, prompting and questioning. However, the explicit teaching of reading skills is not embedded fully throughout the school. Some pupils at earlier stages of reading are not taught the phonic knowledge and skills they need systematically and they do not develop a full range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words.

The use of assessment to ensure pupils build on their prior learning has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers are assessing pupils' levels of understanding and the standards reached accurately, so that activities build on prior learning. Regular meetings to moderate work and assess pupils' progress are having a positive impact. Highly effective marking and feedback are strengths in all classes. The 'assertive mentoring' approach, which is used throughout the whole school, gives pupils a strong sense of ownership over their learning. They talk confidently about their achievements and know how they can improve their work. Parents and carers are very pleased with that successful approach, stating for example, 'Children understand better what is required of them to move forward and make good progress.' The vast majority of parents and carers feel their children are taught well and this is reflected in inspection findings.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and often the pupils display excellent concentration and perseverance when faced with challenging tasks. A few parents and carers expressed concern about disruption to lessons due to inappropriate behaviour by a small minority of pupils. This was not observed during the inspection and pupils who spoke with inspectors say behaviour has improved in the last year. Pupils show great maturity when they are asked to reflect on their own learning at the end of lessons. For example, in Year 6, pupils were able to evaluate the effort they gave to a task and so were able to identify behaviours

that would help them learn more effectively. Their very well-developed social and leadership skills help them to learn from one another and share their ideas.

Pupils are polite and respectful toward each other in shared areas such as the playground, canteen and hall. They make a strong contribution to the school's well-ordered and calm environment. Almost all parents and carers who returned questionnaires say their children feel safe and well looked after. Typical comments include, 'The school is a happy, safe environment' and 'My child has improved both behaviourally and academically due to tremendous support from the teacher.' However, a very small minority feels that their children have been bullied. The school takes bullying of any kind seriously and pupils who spoke with inspectors were confident that any issues that might arise would be dealt with appropriately. The overwhelming majority of pupils say that bullying is not an issue for them. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy in the wider community, including keeping safe from cyber-bullying or manipulation. Attendance has dipped since the last inspection due to the persistent absence of a few pupils and is broadly average. The school is working with families appropriately.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have the full support of staff and everyone has played their part in tackling the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The headteacher is providing clear direction and is supported extremely well by the deputy headteacher and senior leader team members, who provide excellent role models in teaching. The monitoring and evaluation cycle is fully embedded and includes the governing body in monitoring activities. Systems are thorough and accurate so that all staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's performance. Staff have embraced well-targeted professional development with enthusiasm and teaching and assessment have improved as a result. All are strongly driven to continue the journey of improvement from good to outstanding and there is strong capacity to sustain improvement.

Pupils enjoy the range of subjects they experience thoroughly. The curriculum is well balanced, with many extra-curricular opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. There is some excellent cross-curricular work being done by the deputy headteacher, which motivates pupils and enhances their skills in meaningful contexts. She is leading further developments across the whole school. The school is working closely with the infant school at all levels, to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning when they transfer into Year 3. Those developments are ensuring that pupils build on what they have learned at Key Stage 1.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination very effectively. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are integrated into the main school well, while receiving specialist support where appropriate. The special educational needs coordinator monitors support carefully to ensure pupils with special needs and those whose context may make them vulnerable make good progress. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted extremely well in lessons and assemblies. Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations, displaying good social and leadership skills during collaborative working. They have a sophisticated understanding of moral issues and respect for cultural differences. The school's strategies to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements fully and include robust recruitment procedures and thorough assessment of risks.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Ashfield Junior School, Workington, CA14 4ES**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school. We judged your school to be good. It no longer needs a notice to improve, as it has improved extremely well since the last inspection, under good leadership. School leaders, the governing body, and all staff all have high ambitions for the school and want you to achieve your very best. They are all working very hard to make sure the school continues to improve.

Most of the teaching we saw was good and there was some that was outstanding. You told us that lessons are more fun and demanding now. We agree. It is clear you enjoy challenges and you rise to the high expectations of your teachers. We were very impressed with the way you concentrate and persevere with your work. You also behave very well around school. That maintains a calm and pleasant environment, so everyone feels safe. Your achievement has improved significantly as a result of better teaching and your excellent attitudes to work. Well done!

We have identified two areas for improvement. These are:

- Share the best practice in teaching so it is all good and outstanding. We think teachers can do this by developing cross-curricular work and giving you lots of opportunities to work independently on interesting tasks.
- Develop approaches to teaching reading further. In particular, we have asked teachers to ensure that those of you at earlier stages of reading build on your phonic knowledge (knowing the sounds that letters make) and are taught a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words.

Please thank your parents and carers for their questionnaire returns. The vast majority are very pleased with the school. We agree that there is much to celebrate. Well done!

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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