

# Victoria Junior School

Victoria Road, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 2RE

**Inspection dates** 4–5 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is at the heart of the local community. It is highly valued by pupils and all those connected with the school.
- Most pupils currently at the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading is extremely well taught and, by the time pupils leave Year 6, they are highly competent readers.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved significantly over the last three years. It is currently above national levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning through a range of topics which link subjects and make learning relevant to real-life situations.
- Teachers plan lessons well to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Pupils who find learning difficult are very well supported.
- New procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are now established across the school. As a result, pupils now behave well and this helps them to make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe and are safe in school because they are well cared for by all staff.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating and exciting experiences for pupils. New technology is very effectively used to engage potentially reluctant learners and it motivates pupils to find out things for themselves.
- Since the previous inspection, new systems have been introduced, including regular checks on how well pupils are progressing.
- The outstanding headteacher ensures school leaders, including governors, work very well as a team. Their successful actions have a positive impact on pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching. This is an improving school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- There are times when opportunities for pupils to practise their skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects are missed.
- Pupils do not always have enough time in lessons to improve their work.
- Middle leaders do not always check that teachers successfully implement initiatives to accelerate progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the school staff; groups of pupils; senior staff and leaders with responsibility for a specific subject; governors; parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils’ standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils’ work in their books.
- There were 20 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which the inspectors took into account alongside the responses to the school’s own parental survey. Thirty-one responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Victoria Junior is similar in size to most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is much higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- Most pupils have previously attended Victoria Infant School or St Michael's Infant School nearby.
- In 2013, the school was awarded 'Literacy School of the Year' by the United Kingdom Literacy Association.
- The executive headteacher is also headteacher of Victoria Infant School and is a National Leader of Education. The literacy, numeracy and modern foreign language coordinators are Specialist Leaders of Education.
- The school is part of the West Coast Teaching School Alliance.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and thereby drive pupils' progress at an even faster rate by making sure that:
  - teachers take every opportunity across subjects to allow pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills
  - pupils have enough time in lessons to respond to teachers' marking in order to correct and edit their work.
- Further develop the role of middle leaders in regularly checking that all teachers are implementing changes in order to accelerate pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils settle well into school thanks to very effective links between the junior school, the infant schools and pupils and their families. There are many opportunities to visit Victoria Junior and this helps pupils and staff to build positive relationships before starting school. Staff from the infant and junior schools work well together to understand how pupils like to learn and find out if additional support will be needed.
- Pupils' abilities when they join the school are usually in line with national expectations, although in some year groups they are slightly lower.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 shows an improving trend between 2011 and 2013. Attainment in 2011 was well below the national average and average in 2012. The most recent test results in 2013 show that reading, writing, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar are well above the national average.
- The end of Key Stage 2 2013 test results showed that pupils made excellent progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing. The school is addressing ways to improve writing, particularly amongst the boys. This was seen first-hand during the inspection when a professional storyteller captivated the imaginations of all pupils and especially the boys as they learnt about conditions for the soldiers during the First World War. Using drama, pupils re-enacted rising from the trenches to go to battle and the positive impact on their creative writing was clearly evident.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make the same good progress as their peers in the school and some do better, as a result of additional, carefully targeted support by senior leaders. Their attainment in mathematics, reading and writing is higher than this group of pupils nationally. Those from minority ethnic groups make good progress, as do the few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make at least good progress.
- The most able pupils make excellent progress in reading and good progress in mathematics and writing. However, the school is addressing this discrepancy and there are now several pupils in Year 6 who are working towards Level 6. The school displays genuine commitment to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. All pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, with some examples of excellent teaching; this helps pupils to make good progress.
- There is a whole-school approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and the system for checking on how individuals are progressing is now well established across the school. This effectively highlights pupils who need extra help and no time is wasted in providing highly effective additional support, as and when it is needed. Effective teamwork by teachers and skilled teaching assistants guarantees a high level of support for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils and develop their enthusiasm for learning and finding things out for themselves.
- In a Year 3 class, pupils were learning about how to structure sentences using main and subordinate clauses. After writing their own sentence starting with the word 'when' onto a strip of paper, they were encouraged to discuss their work in pairs. After being instructed by the teacher to cut the sentence into two parts, and swap parts of their sentences, there was a great deal of laughter. The pupils made outstanding progress in securing their understanding of different clauses.

- In pupils' mathematics books, it was evident that teachers had effectively planned a lesson on plotting co-ordinates and, in pupils' own assessments of their learning, they had enjoyed using this method to create different shapes. Overall, pupils made good progress and were able to accurately assess their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and usually provide clear written advice to pupils on how to improve their work. However, pupils do not always have enough time in lessons to correct and revise their work to learn from their mistakes. This slows pupils' progress.
- Topic work is enjoyed by pupils and this helps to bring learning into real-life situations. Occasionally, opportunities to allow pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects are not planned thoroughly enough.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Inspection evidence, school records and discussions with staff and pupils show that this is usually the case.
- Clear rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour are systematically carried out by all staff. Every pupil across the school now has regular one-to-one mentoring with a teacher. This helps pupils to develop a strong sense of responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. This has contributed to significant improvements in behaviour since the previous inspection, which is a view shared by almost all parents.
- There are a few pupils in the school who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. However, they are very well managed and disruption to learning is very rare indeed.
- Older pupils enjoy acting as role models for the younger pupils. They take their break and lunchtime duties seriously and go the 'extra mile' to encourage pupils to eat their meals in order to stay healthy.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying at their school and they know exactly what to do if it happens. Pupils feel safe in the school because they know that staff care about them and they are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They talked confidently to the inspectors about the potential dangers of making friends through the internet.
- Residential opportunities in both Year 4 and Year 6 promote a team spirit amongst pupils. This is also the case for the whole school when they all take part in various productions throughout the year.
- The primary school sport funding is being allocated so that pupils and staff work with external coaches. A broadening of the sports curriculum includes participation in dance across all year groups. This is encouraging pupils to lead healthy lifestyles and promoting their well-being.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and the vast majority arrive at school in plenty of time in the mornings.
- The increase in the numbers of pupils in the school is a direct result of the school's deservedly growing reputation for ensuring the personal and academic development of pupils, whatever their starting points.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The executive headteacher has an excellent understanding of how to drive whole-school improvement. She has introduced and established effective systems to check on pupils' progress. Middle leaders and managers are still developing their roles to check on the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility, but are keen to play their part in furthering school improvement.
- The executive headteacher is an excellent role model for staff and leads by example. She ensures that all staff are well supported through training and mentoring opportunities. Improvements to the quality of teaching are clearly evident and, as one member of staff

commented, since the executive headteacher has joined them, she has ensured that 'the school has made considerable progress all round.'

- In her role as a National Leader of Education, the headteacher visits other schools to help them improve what they do. Similarly, staff from the school who are Specialist Leaders of Education provide support for teachers in both the primary and secondary sector.
- Effective new policies and procedures have strengthened the school's focus on both encouraging pupils' better behaviour and enabling them to reach their full potential academically. Regular checks on pupils' progress ensure support is swiftly arranged when needed.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed. The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It is enriched by a range of after-school activities and trips linked to topics which provide experiences that pupils enthusiastically recall. Inspectors saw for themselves how visiting professionals, including musicians, a dancer and a storyteller added a richness to pupils' learning and led to highly creative learning opportunities. There are several overseas links to broaden pupils' horizons.
- The local authority is effective in providing light-touch support. The school shares learning opportunities with staff from other schools through the West Coast Teaching School Alliance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school. They are aware of the school's strengths and plans for future developments because they visit school when they can and receive detailed reports from school leaders. Governors attend training and most of them are able to understand data about pupils' progress which enables them to challenge school leaders effectively. The governing body checks the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make sure that their spending is effective. They are able to talk about the positive impact of bespoke activities, such as horse-riding, for individuals who would otherwise find learning difficult. Governors know about the quality of teaching and ensure that any increases in salary are linked to this. They have rightly extended the contract of the executive headteacher because she is proving to be highly effective in improving the school. The governing body undertakes its statutory duties, making sure safeguarding meets requirements so that pupils and staff are safe. The budget is well managed.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112145
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	430960

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

<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>	253
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Petitt
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Pauline Robertson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 606053
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