

Inspection of Victoria Junior School

Victoria Road, Workington, Cumbria CA14 2RE

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Victoria Junior School value the respectful relationships they have with staff and each other. They extend a warm welcome to new arrivals who join the school. Pupils are polite and kind. They behave well in lessons and at other times of the day. Pupils attend regularly. They are happy and enjoy coming to school.

Although the school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school has not ensured that pupils benefit sufficiently well from the school's academic curriculum.

The school provides pupils with access to many activities that help them to develop their talents and interests. These include sports and music clubs, robotics club and the choir. Trips to places of interest help to deepen pupils' understanding of the subjects that they study. For example, they visit a museum to learn about the Victorians. Pupils take part in outdoor and adventurous activities during residential stays. Visitors to the school help pupils to learn about engineering and a range of careers.

Pupils make a positive contribution to their community. For example, they visit residential homes to sing and to deliver presents. Pupils become confident and independent young people.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has established an environment where everyone is valued. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge. Despite this, the school is not fully aware of the impact on pupils' achievement of the recent changes to some subject curriculums. As a result, some pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for each stage of their education. Even though the school has not fully realised their ambitions for the quality of education that pupils receive, they are clear about what needs to be done. Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively.

The school ensures that pupils study a broad range of subjects. In some subjects, the school has not given sufficient thought to the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that some staff do not know what they should teach and when. Consequently, the activities that they design for pupils to learn, do not help them to develop a deep understanding of these subjects. These pupils are not suitably prepared to tackle more complex learning in the future.

In those subjects where staff have strong subject knowledge, staff make effective checks on what pupils know and remember. However, in some subjects, staff do not get to the heart of the gaps and misconceptions that some pupils have in their learning. When this happens, staff miss opportunities to correct errors in pupils' knowledge and pupils move on to new learning before they are ready.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are provided with clear guidance and training to

support these pupils effectively. Staff appreciate this as it helps with their workload. Typically, staff use this information well to ensure that pupils with SEND can learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school provides effective support to pupils that find reading difficult. This helps to close gaps in their phonics knowledge. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers. They read from books that help them to gain a wider understanding of the world. For example, from the texts they study, pupils learn the importance of being courageous and how to care for the environment.

In lessons, pupils are motivated to learn. They attend school regularly. The school provides well-considered support to a small number of pupils who need help to manage their own behaviour or to improve their attendance. Pupils respond well to this help.

The school's provision for personal development prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For instance, they appreciate the importance of democracy and value the differences that exist between themselves and others. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They know how to stay safe, including online. Creative enterprise projects help pupils to manage finances well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not given sufficient thought to the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that staff sometimes lack clarity about the curriculum content they should teach. This hinders pupils from building on their knowledge securely in these subjects. The school should ensure that staff are clear about what pupils should learn so that they can help pupils achieve as well as they should.
- At times, staff design activities that do not help pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge in the subjects that they study. This prevents some pupils from achieving well. The school should ensure that it supports staff to design learning activities that prepare pupils well for each stage of their education.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' learning do not give staff enough understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum. At times, pupils do not have the knowledge that they need for subsequent learning. This limits staff's ability to help pupils to catch up. The school should ensure that its assessment strategies are well matched to the knowledge that pupils should learn so that staff can accurately identify, and then address, any gaps in pupils' learning.

- In some subjects, the school does not have sufficient oversight of the impact of the curriculum. This means that the school is not as clear as it should be about how recent curriculum developments are preparing pupils for each stage of their education. The school should provide staff with the knowledge and skills they need to check if these changes are helping pupils to achieve as well as they should.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112145
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10294281
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Wendy Kendall
Headteacher	Pauline Robertson
Website	www.victoriaschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Victoria Junior School is part of Victoria School. Victoria School is a federation that includes this school and Victoria Infant School.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, reading, pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kathryn Pym	Ofsted Inspector
Garry White	Ofsted Inspector

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