

# Victoria Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112144
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	337852
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 April 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>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bill Chicken
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pauline Robertson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Islay Place Workington Cumbria CA14 3XB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the progress and attainment of pupils, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents and carers, through 176 returned inspection questionnaires, and the opinions of staff were analysed.

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

- the progress of all groups of pupils
- the way in which assessment helps pupils to understand what they have to do to improve their work
- the contribution to learning of the strategy to increase the creativity in the curriculum
- the effectiveness of the governing body in enabling the school to have sustained improvement in future.

## Information about the school

This is a large infant school which is a full time service provider providing day care in an Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery. It has close links with a Children's Centre which is on site and offers family and community support. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The large majority of pupils are of White British ethnicity. The school holds the Investors in People status, the Artsmark Gold Award and QUISS (Quality in Study Support), Activemark 2009, Flying High, Healthy Schools Award and the Financial Management in Schools accreditation (FMSiS). The school is a founder member of the Cumbria Primary Teacher Training Programme training teachers and trainers and has links with a variety of training establishments.

**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 which fulfils its motto of 'Achievement for all'. At its heart is excellent leadership and outstanding care which gives each pupil a really good start to life. Teaching is excellent and makes learning fun. Strong teamwork between staff, educational and social agencies and parents contribute to excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, inclusion and equal opportunities are excellent. At all times, pupils are safe and secure and high quality care provided for all, including those attending the extended school facilities.

Excellent provision and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage sets children well on their way in life. Rapid progress occurs in the Nursery and Reception Years. This excellent progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils not only reach average attainment by the end of Year 2, but also become secure, confident and independent youngsters. Whilst progress is very good in mathematics, there is scope for the more able to do even better. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils say that they feel safe at all times. They have an excellent understanding of the choices needed to live safe and healthy lives. Whilst pupils have an advanced understanding of their immediate community and regularly make significant contributions to it, their understanding of people of other cultures is not as advanced. Pupils thrive on an exciting and highly stimulating curriculum which generates high levels of enjoyment and contributes to good achievement. Much is done to enrich learning. Regular visits by artists, musicians and trips to places in the locality and further afield helps to bring learning alive. Every pupil is very well known by staff who work tirelessly to make sure that the need of each is met. Learning is enhanced by an excellent array of resources which includes the most amazing range of outdoor learning facilities and excellent facilities for information and communication technology (ICT).

Visionary and caring leadership results in all staff sharing a crystal clear vision in which everyone has an equal chance. Very effective links with parents and carers enable them to get involved with their children's education. Rigorous procedures are applied for monitoring the effectiveness of the school and highlighting its weaknesses. These inform a very tightly constructed improvement plan which focuses on the most important areas to develop. Since the last inspection, the school has not only maintained its outstanding qualities but also strengthened its quality of provision. The school has an outstanding capacity to improve further and gives excellent value for money.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics by:

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- increasing the expectation and quality of intervention for the more able pupils
- ensuring that the mathematics curriculum is refined to fully match the pupils' interests.
- Improve pupils' understanding of other cultures beyond their own, by taking steps to enable them to interact with pupils who are different to themselves.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Achievement is good and pupils' enjoyment of learning is excellent. Pupils become mature and confident young citizens. In lessons, excellent levels of concentration are sustained and pupils thrive on discussing their own ideas and voicing their opinions. Their enthusiasm for learning is infectious, and particularly so when actively involved in their own learning, for example in performing poems. They become very effective learners who make a valuable contribution to their school and local community.

A high proportion of children starting school have development that is very low for their age. Excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage promotes excellent progress. By the start of Year 1, a good proportion of pupils have caught up to those expected for their age, but a significant number are still below the standard expected. In Years 1 and 2, excellent progress continues and attainment rises. Pupils make particularly good progress in reading and writing. Challenging targets set by the school are consistently met and by the end of Year 2, attainment is average although more able pupils could do rather better in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same outstanding progress as others.

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provides a firm basis for the pupils' good personal development. A host of excellent initiatives have enabled pupils to develop an outstanding understanding for their age of how to live healthy and safe lives. Pupils gleefully eat fruit and drink juice provided for them and happily take a daily fish-oil tablet. The superb range of outdoor play facilities instils in pupils a love of the outdoor learning and an excellent understanding of the importance of regular exercise. The pupils' opinions are valued highly by staff giving pupils a strong influence on school life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and create a well-ordered and calm environment. Lessons are lively, engaging and imaginative. Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants enables pupils to benefit from learning in small groups. Staff are very skilled at developing and extending pupils' existing knowledge and skills through questions and discussions. High quality planning based on very effective diagnostic assessment, means that the needs of individual pupils are usually fully met. Pupils are encouraged to think about how well they are doing and they are very aware of their next steps in learning.

A wide variety of activities are blended together to create a vibrant and stimulating curriculum. The arts are very high on the school's priorities and it is in the process of developing more opportunities for creativity for pupils. Close partnerships with artists, sports coaches and local firms open many doors for learning and contribute to good achievement. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are planned for fully. Creative links to art, history, music, dance and drama make the basic skills relevant. This raises attainment for all groups but particularly boys. Innovative initiatives such as 'Numbers Count', very effectively boost learning for the less able pupils. However, the school rightly feels that the mathematics curriculum has not yet been adapted well enough to meet the needs of the most able. There is a good focus on using visits, including a residential visit for Year 2, to broaden pupil's horizons.

The care for pupils and their families is second to none. Very effective links with support agencies enhance the high quality of guidance given to all pupils but particularly the vulnerable. This enables all pupils to take advantage of all that the school provides. The

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school is very proactive in supporting families so that absence is reduced to a minimum. As a result, attendance is above average. Very effective measures have been taken to ease the transition of pupils from class to class and also on to junior school.

*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?**

Very caring and far-sighted leadership coupled with extremely efficient management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher manages the staff team very well and everyone has clear roles and responsibilities. Subject and phase leaders fulfill their responsibilities well and contribute to evaluating the school's performance and taking action to improve it. Any gaps between the performance of different groups of pupils are picked up immediately and hence differences, for example, in mathematics outcomes, are minimal. Resources are very effectively managed to get the best possible value from the budget. The standard income is supplemented very much by the school's great success in receiving grants. These have, for instance, enabled the school to create a vibrant and stimulating outdoor play area.

Good governance under the very effective leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body supports staff and pupils very well. Governors' careful monitoring helps to ensure that all improvements are sustained. The appointment of a highly effective safeguarding officer contributes to all safeguarding procedures being meticulously applied so that everyone is safe and secure at all times. Very strong partnerships with the community and with parents and carers, enhanced by strong links with the Children's Centre, make a highly valued contribution to the cohesion of the community. Leaders identify the need, however, to extend the pupils' knowledge of different cultures and backgrounds.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>

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<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</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

Excellent leadership and management give children an outstanding start to school life. From the moment children arrive in Nursery, they are spellbound by the rich and exciting indoor and outdoor environment. Children quickly become close to their key worker and as a result, staff quickly get to know each child very well. Good planning enables individual support to be given. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are made to feel part of the family and participate fully in all that goes on. In the Reception class, the same high quality care and support continues. Children thrive on being given a very good balance between adult-led learning activities, and directing their own learning. They become happy and quite sociable, develop the confidence to be independent but also cooperative and become interested in learning. Children are far too busy to misbehave.

Children start school with low language skills and a narrow knowledge and understanding of the world. However, their progress is outstanding. By the time children move on to Year 1, they have caught up in most areas. They have secure physical skills due to the host of practical indoor and outdoor activities. Creative development is also outstanding owing to the many opportunities for the children to engage in role play, and art and musical activities. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is broadened significantly through the rich range of visits and visitors and access to computers. However, some still struggle with aspects of language and still have some way to go to reach the standards expected for their age.

The school has very close partnerships with parents and carers who willingly come in and talk with staff and seek advice. The school constantly strives to find ways of involving parents and carers in their children's education. Staff members are watchful over the children in their care and place a high priority on safety and well-being. All share in the process of assessment by noting children's individual developments which informs the direction the children should take to develop further.



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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
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**

The response from parents and carers to the questionnaire was very high. The school and its headteacher enjoy the confidence and support of almost all. A few eloquent comments praised the high quality care, support and guidance given to pupils. The inspectors agree with these views. A few parents and carers felt that the school could do more to help them with their children's learning. Inspectors found that the school is doing a great deal to keep parents and carers informed and to guide them about how to help their children at home.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Victoria Infant 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 176 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 237 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	120	67	58	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	128	71	48	27	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	97	54	73	41	8	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	103	57	70	39	6	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	119	66	56	31	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	100	56	70	39	7	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	111	62	64	36	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)	88	49	80	44	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	101	56	73	41	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	57	69	38	5	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	91	51	74	41	7	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	112	62	64	36	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	123	68	52	29	3	2	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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is 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 term 2009 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 pupil's 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.**



30 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Infant School, Workington, CA14 3XB

Your school is outstanding. It gives each of you a super start to life. All adults working in the school do really well to make your lessons interesting and to keep you all safe. Your smiling faces and sense of fun showed me how much you like school. The way you understand what you need to do to improve your work helps you all to make excellent progress in your time in school. Despite some of you having difficulties with learning, most of you attain as well as other children at the age of seven.

Your behaviour is excellent and you get on with others very well indeed. For your age you have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, and be healthy. Your school grounds are excellently equipped which makes a massive contribution to your love of exercise and outdoor learning. The many visits and visitors to school help you all learn more about many and varied things.

Your headteacher and all your other teachers know exactly how to make sure that your school continues to get even better. To help them to do this, I have asked them to:

- find ways of helping those of you who are good at mathematics to do even better
- give you more opportunities to learn about and meet children who have different backgrounds to most of the children who go to your school.

I am sure that you will help them by always working hard and aiming really high.

I send you all my best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr David Byrne

Lead Inspector

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