

# Victoria Junior School

Devonshire Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 5NE

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional; they are extremely helpful and polite, showing respect for each other and the adults around them.
- Pupils feel safe in school because staff care for them very well.
- Achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy an interesting range of activities and as soon as they show confidence at one level, they are challenged to step up to the next level.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide a good level of support to pupils with special educational needs.
- School leaders have established excellent relationships with local colleges and businesses. This adds a further dimension to the exciting curriculum that includes a wide range of inspiring experiences for all pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Pupils strive to do their best in sports and artistic pursuits.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, all leaders, governors and staff share the aim to provide the very best for all pupils in the school.
- School leaders, including governors, are maintaining the quality of teaching and actions are improving pupils' achievement still further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking does not always highlight errors, especially in spelling, so pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- Information regarding pupils' progress is not always summarised precisely enough to check on the progress of different groups of pupils. Consequently, it is not always easy to compare the progress of different groups with similar groups nationally to ensure they are making the progress expected of them.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by teachers and a range of sessions taken by teaching assistants.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons, met formally with three groups of pupils and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the parents’ forum, staff, senior leaders and managers and members of the governing body.
- Two telephone conversations took place, the first with a representative from the local authority, the second with the headteacher at Newbridge House.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school’s analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils’ progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils’ books.
- Inspectors took account of 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to a small group of parents at the start of the school day. They also considered one letter from a parent, 22 staff questionnaires and pupil and parent questionnaires recently distributed by the school.

## Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Hargreaves

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below that usually found.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The headteacher is a local Leader of Education. She is instrumental in leading initiatives such as developing the school curriculum through links with local businesses.
- Most pupils join the school from a nearby infant school, though approximately 20% join from other schools.
- Staff at school work closely with staff at Newbridge House, which is an alternative provider used by the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' progress, by making sure that teachers always check that marking identifies errors, especially in spelling, and insist pupils complete their corrections so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by developing further systems to check and analyse the progress of all groups of pupils so that information is readily available and acted upon quickly to further accelerate progress when necessary.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils join the school with standards that are typical for their age. From their individual starting points, they make good overall progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since 2012, pupils have been leaving Year 6 with standards in writing and mathematics that are slightly above national averages; reading lagged behind a little. However, effective actions have been put in place and the school's information on pupils' progress and unconfirmed 2014 national test results indicate that reading is now also above average, with an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5.
- Pupils in lower Key Stage 2, who have not already mastered the skill, are taught effectively to match letters to the sounds they make. Pupils continue to develop their reading skills well as they move up through the school. Teachers ensure pupils read regularly; the Year 6 pupils who read to the inspector did so fluently, commenting on how much they enjoyed reading and how it helped make their own writing 'more inspirational'.
- Writing is supported in many subjects. Teaching inspires pupils to write imaginatively; many pupils write exciting stories and structure their work well using paragraphs and appropriate punctuation. However, spelling is not as strong as other basic skills.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. Teaching ensures a secure knowledge of basic skills and pupils apply these well to solving real-world problems. For example, Year 4 pupils used a catalogue to buy stationery in bulk and worked out the cost of the value-added tax.
- Staff provide focused support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils from these groups learn well. They make good and often excellent progress. Pupils supported through the joint work between Newbridge House and Victoria Junior School make good progress because their academic and pastoral needs are fully met. The school is currently supporting Year 6 pupils to prepare them for high school. The school's work to support pupils with additional needs is particularly stunning.
- The most able pupils are given tasks that really make them think hard about their work. Pupils challenge themselves constantly. As soon as they are confident with their learning, they move on to something even more difficult or develop some questions to challenge their friends. As a result, the most able pupils make good progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress. In Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was approximately two terms behind that of other Year 6 pupils in reading and mathematics and almost one year behind in writing. Current school data show that the gaps between these pupils and others are closing and it is not unusual for eligible pupils to make more progress than their non-eligible classmates. This confirms the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- School progress data, work seen in pupils' books and discussions with staff, parents and pupils, confirm that over time the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics is good and some is exceptional.
- Classrooms are organised well, and are bright and alive with the buzz of pupils discussing their learning. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard at their tasks because they are clear about what is expected of them, and encouraged to learn and challenge themselves as much as they can.
- Teachers are always looking for imaginative ways to help pupils make even better progress. This is clear in the effective teaching of reading. Pupils take on the role of 'reading detectives' looking for clues in the text to improve their understanding and their reading skills.
- A wide range of opportunities enables pupils to use their skills in real-life situations. This helps them to understand how important it is to develop skills to the best of their ability and how useful literacy and numeracy skills will be in the future. For example, pupils write a letter of

application to a local college and attend an interview for a selected college course. Successful applicants are then able to attend a taster session for the course.

- As observed during the inspection, learning was most effective in mathematics in Year 5 when pupils shared ideas on how to improve their work. Pupils used their own experiences to give the imaginary character 'Jimmy Poorsocks' tips on how to improve his skills in dividing numbers. Pupils were encouraged to think hard to provide the best advice possible to help Jimmy.
- Marking often gives pupils accurate guidance regarding how to improve their work. Comments tell pupils how to improve and many respond. Although good advice on how to improve punctuation and presentation is provided, incorrect spellings are not always pointed out. Pupils do not always correct these errors and learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and their well-established teamwork guarantees that pupils with additional needs are provided with the support that they need.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have a highly positive attitude toward learning; they say that teachers make learning so much fun that 'Even children who don't like learning want to get involved.'
- The 'Pupils' Parliament' makes sure that pupils' opinions make a difference. Members debate any suggestions offered by pupils and take along good ideas to the headteacher. For example, pupils recognised that the six-stage behaviour management system included too many stages. This has now reduced to five stages and may reduce to four, as behaviour is excellent. Pupils also felt that they lined up for too long before going to eat their packed lunches. This has now changed and pupils can play for longer. Pupils are very proud that they have their say and are listened to at Victoria Junior School.
- Pupils really value being trusted to take on the range of responsibilities available to them. Attitude ambassadors act as excellent role models, peer mediators are trained to help resolve any disagreements between pupils, play leaders make sure that no one feels lonely and Year 6 pupils enjoy helping Year 3 with their reading.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils agree that there is no bullying at school and records kept by the school confirm that incidents are rare and always well managed.
- Pupils have taken part in 'Young Citizens' training at the fire station to help them to keep themselves and others safe in case of fire. Moreover, they feel confident that the regular talks from the community police officer help them to 'do things right'.
- The primary school sport funding is used to pay for training so that staff are able to teach sporting activities to a higher standard. Pupils have been asked which additional sporting activities they would like made available at school; this ensures that there is something for everyone to enjoy. Pupils are encouraged to take part in sports to help them stay healthy and promote well-being. Staff and pupils are proud of the success of the school golf team.
- Attendance is above national levels and has improved further this year, which reflects pupils' enjoyment in school.

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

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and is clearly focused on continuing to improve standards. She is effectively supported by the senior leadership team, staff and governors. This is a team determined to provide the best for pupils.
- The school's improvement plan exemplifies actions to achieve the clear vision that the headteacher has for the school. The evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate because it is informed by regular monitoring of the work that the school does.

- Senior and middle leaders are effective and frequently check the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are supported by a training programme and are able to visit and work with other schools, including schools in other countries, to observe excellent practice. They are also provided with the opportunity to work together and benefit from a good level of peer support.
- School data are detailed and show clearly how well individual pupils are progressing across the school. Staff are set targets based on pupils' progress and salary awards are linked to the achievement of these targets.
- Assessment data are not always analysed closely enough to provide precise information regarding the progress of specific groups of pupils. This sometimes restricts the ability of leaders to assess quickly if these groups are making the progress expected of them when compared to the national picture, and to intervene quickly if this is seen not to be the case.
- The headteacher is absolutely determined to lead a truly democratic school with the motto 'Small children have big ideas'. The central tenet of the school curriculum is that it gives pupils a voice and prepares them well for their future. One of the ways in which this is achieved is by developing opportunities for pupils to engage in real-life learning experiences. For example, pupils designed a tote bag and canvassed local businesses to sponsor production. Bags, together with other items designed by pupils, are currently sold at a local shop. This enterprise has raised enough money to finance other projects so that pupils coming up through school can continue to develop these skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. No opportunity is missed to introduce pupils to new cultural experiences and other cultures. For example, a Chinese teaching assistant introduced pupils to speaking Chinese. A fabulous dragon was produced that is displayed together with work from other superb art projects.
- Leaders work well with the pupils attending Newbridge House and provide appropriate support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well, including its priorities for improvement, the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils. They benefit from comprehensive reports supplied by the headteacher and other staff, which they robustly question if there is anything that they do not understand. The governing body makes sure that teachers' salary increases are related to how effective they are. Moreover, they maintain rigorous supervision of the school's budget, including checking that the spending of the pupil premium grant makes a real difference for the pupils entitled to it. Governors attend training to improve their skills and make sure that statutory duties, including safeguarding, meet requirements.

## 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>	112204
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	444152

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>	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Glyn Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Vernon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01229 870812
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