

Victoria Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135780
Local Authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	360749
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Denham
Headteacher	Helen Brown
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Atlas Road Bristol BS3 4QS
Telephone number	01179 030343
Fax number	01179 030345
Email address	victoriaparkprimary@bristol.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Inspection number	360749

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons taught by 17 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, records and assessments, as well as questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 137 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Have the present temporary leadership arrangements maintained the school's effectiveness?
- Does teaching have sufficient consistency and quality to promote at least good progress?
- How much has attendance improved this year?

Information about the school

Victoria Park Primary School is larger than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as their first language. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; the largest group within this category have speech, language and communication needs. The school was created from the amalgamation of two schools in September 2009. It has been led by an acting headteacher and a reduced leadership team since October 2010; a substantive headteacher takes up his post in September 2011.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Victoria Park Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It is emerging from a period of temporary leadership and is well placed to move forwards. The current leadership team, ably led by the acting headteacher, has maintained the quality of the school's provision. After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make satisfactory progress in the main school so that attainment at the end of Year 6 is average and rising steadily. Effective work to include all pupils in their learning ensures that they make sound and consistent progress, leading to satisfactory achievement for all groups. Pupils' personal development is largely good; for example, they demonstrate a good grasp of how to stay safe and have been well briefed on dangers inherent in modern life, such as on the internet and while travelling on the busy local roads.

Pupils are happy at school, secure in the knowledge they are well cared for. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving, and many lessons are both challenging and engaging. Good behaviour and positive relationships are a feature of most classrooms. However, some lessons are no better than satisfactory, lacking the challenge and pace required to promote good learning. On these occasions, while there is an enthusiasm to learn, the pace can be too slow and some pupils are not fully occupied. Staff often use assessment strategies well to gather information on pupils' progress, but the marking of books is inconsistent in quality

Attendance is low but has seen rapid improvements in recent months. Successful initiatives to engage parents and carers and raise awareness of the issue have reduced absences. The curriculum meets requirements but the school is aware that it does not always engage pupils' interest. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding and respect for cultural diversity both nationally and internationally. Some cross-curricular links have been established and the school has interesting plans to increase these and develop a more stimulating curriculum.

During the period of interim leadership, the school has successfully focused on sustaining its strengths and addressing the most important weaknesses. The school is well managed and runs smoothly. Limited leadership capacity due to staff absence means that progress in moving the school forward has not been rapid, but there have been clear improvements in attainment and attendance. Increasingly effective self-evaluation and clear, simple plans for the future have begun to have a positive impact and the school has effective systems to enable it to continue improving. Its capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
 - improving the consistency and effectiveness of teaching so a higher proportion of lessons are challenging and promote good learning
 - building on work to engage closely with all parents and carers and further reduce absence rates.
- Develop the curriculum to stimulate learning by providing more engaging activities for all pupils. ♦♦
- Improve opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the variety of cultures across the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school and participate fully in their education. Consistently good behaviour and warm relationships make a significant contribution to progress in lessons. Improving classroom practice has started to raise attainment across the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is similar to the national average with no significant variations between subjects or groups of pupils. Given pupils' starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement. The early identification of those requiring additional help and effective interventions support consistent progress. In consequence, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language progress at a similar rate to their peers. Most teachers work well with teaching assistants to drive learning for all groups, ensuring equality of opportunity and parity of progress. While numerous recent initiatives have ensured that attendance is improving very quickly, it remains low. This limits the achievement of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inconsistencies in teaching mean that learning varies in quality. In most lessons, planning is thorough and the pace is brisk, so pupils learn well. For example, Years 2 and 3 pupils were enthused to write a description of life on earth by a fictional video clip and 'letter' from an occupant of a distant planet. Engaging teaching, supported by excellent marking, set high expectations, which pupils were keen to meet. However, some lessons lack drive and energy so pupils are insufficiently challenged. Where few deadlines are set, for example in some Year 6 mathematics lessons, pupils' pace and enthusiasm diminishes and more-able pupils have to wait while others catch-up; this slows their learning.

Pupils enjoy numerous opportunities for exercise and show a good understanding of the significance of sport and a good diet in helping them to develop into healthy adults. The school council meets regularly and provides pupils with an opportunity to air their views but it has few responsibilities and, apart from influencing play arrangements, has had a limited impact on the school. The positive ethos of the school and warm relationships are a fine testament to pupils' strong moral and social development. However, pupils have had too few opportunities to develop a knowledge of the multicultural elements in British society, so their understanding of this area is limited.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum promotes satisfactory outcomes for pupils, although the content of some lessons does not always effectively engage pupils in active learning. Cross-curricular links between subjects are satisfactory and information and communication technology is used well to enliven learning. For example, pupils were able to discuss the nature and forms of mountains with their teacher because they had been conducting research on the internet. Provision for potentially vulnerable pupils is good and effective reading schemes contribute well to the progress of many. Opportunities for enrichment activities are sound and an interesting range of visitors enlivens pupils' learning, for example visiting teachers provide all Year 5 pupils with the opportunity to play a musical instrument.

While the quality of teaching is inconsistent, many lessons are good. Warm relationships encourage good learning. Careful planning addresses pupils' needs and helps generate a brisk pace. For example, a Year 3 guided reading session had been carefully planned so that each pupil was challenged appropriately and that all were fully engaged in a range of relevant activities. Other adults contribute well to learning, providing unobtrusive yet effective support to individuals, for example to pupils with speech and language needs. Where lessons are less effective, teachers' expectations are too low; pupils are not challenged to work briskly and purposefully so their learning slows.

Regular assessment and careful tracking provides leaders and managers with valuable information on progress. This is used to direct support to where it is most needed and is

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

beginning to be employed to hold class teachers to account for the progress of pupils. However, marking of books is inconsistent. Some are very well marked and pupils fully understand what they should do to improve. In other classes, marking is intermittent and vague, and pupils are given little information about targets for improvement.

Pupils, parents and carers correctly report a good standard of care. Procedures, policies and systems operate efficiently. Very thorough monitoring of progress by all groups, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is effective. The caring ethos extends to all groups, such as those who do not speak English as their first language, who receive effective support from teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers. Many potentially vulnerable pupils have made good progress, overcoming barriers to their education. A more robust approach to attendance introduced by the acting headteacher is leading to marked reductions in absence. Closer engagement with all parents and carers, and, as a last resort, the issuing of penalty notices, are proving most effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

During the period of interim leadership since October 2010, the acting headteacher and senior managers have focused on maintaining the school's qualities and building on them. The acting headteacher is calm and well organised, running the school efficiently in challenging circumstances. Moves to distribute leadership more widely have been fully supported by staff, who show good morale and work well as a team.

Leadership and management are well supported by increasingly accurate monitoring of teaching and progress, providing the senior team with a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Planning for the future is clear and well focused, showing an ambition for improvement. The school has made a secure start in improving the quality of teaching; nevertheless, some inconsistencies remain. The school has pertinent information on the progress of different groups of pupils and works effectively to provide consistent support, ensuring there is equality of opportunity and no discrimination.

The governing body has played a strong part in supporting the school during the period of temporary leadership, stepping up its monitoring and developing a clearer understanding of what needs to be done. Members are developing a good understanding of assessment data and provide increasingly robust challenges to the school. The governing body has a good understanding of safeguarding. School safeguarding policies and processes are extensive and regularly checked. Risk assessments are thorough and pupils say they feel safe at school. The school site is secure and staff are well trained.

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

The school is proactive in reaching out to parents and carers, and provides numerous opportunities for formal and informal contacts through, for example, coffee mornings and a literacy community workshop. The use of newsletters, the school website, a texting service and regular parents' and carers' evenings ensures a good flow of information from school to homes. ♦ A diminishing number of parents and carers remain hard to reach and, despite the school's efforts, keep their children away too often. The school has sound links with outside agencies that contribute well to pupils' welfare. Close liaison with local secondary schools helps to ease the transition of pupils to secondary education with special arrangements made to help those who are most anxious.

The school has audited its community cohesion offering so understands the quality of the work it does locally. However, it is also aware that there are too few links with schools in contrasting areas within the United Kingdom and globally, and that this limits pupils' understanding of other cultures and communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's starting points as they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are generally lower than typical expectations. They settle quickly, learn good behaviour, make new friends and develop confidence and independence. They soon demonstrate courtesy and a sensible approach to school. They make good progress and are well prepared for continuing education. Children's needs are well known to all staff and extra help is readily available to those who need it, ensuring equally good progress for all.

Adults understand the needs of young children and work well as a team, planning an imaginative range of activities that appeal equally to girls and boys. Good planning also ensures a correct balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The lack of

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

outdoor areas that are closely adjacent to classrooms limits opportunities for pupils to work outside independently and this inhibits their physical development a little. The school is aware of this and leaders have plans to re-arrange classrooms to provide easy access to outside areas.

Parents and carers are made very welcome to all Reception classes and are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's learning, for example many participate in start-of-day reading sessions. Experienced leadership ensures the area runs well and provides very effective transition arrangement into Year 1. Regular assessments of each child feed into children's learning diaries and into an efficient system that tracks progress. Children's safety is a high priority and robust systems are in place to ensure their security and well-being.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers hold very positive views of the school. Almost all who submitted inspection questionnaires reported that their children enjoy school and a very large majority are happy with their child's experience. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about support for children's learning and communication between school and home. Inspection evidence indicates that support for learning and communication with parents and carers are at least satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Victoria Park Primary 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 437 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	59	53	39	2	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	93	68	38	28	4	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	50	31	45	5	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	47	60	44	9	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	80	58	48	35	2	1	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	50	61	45	5	4	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	47	61	45	10	7	1	1
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)	53	39	59	43	8	6	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	44	63	46	10	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	44	63	46	6	4	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	42	57	42	8	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	61	45	62	45	5	4	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	56	53	39	5	4	2	1

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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Park Primary School, Bristol, BS3 4QS

Thank you for the friendly welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. We all thought you were most polite and would like to congratulate you on your good behaviour. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school and the inspectors feel you are well looked after.

Victoria Park provides a satisfactory education. The acting headteacher and staff work hard to run the school well and make improvements. Improvements are starting to happen; for example, your attainment, which is average at the end of Year 6, is rising. Attendance is still too low but is also improving.

There are some things that could be better. We have asked the school to concentrate on:

- Raising your attainment through:
 - making sure all lessons are pacy and provide challenging activities
 - working with parents and carers to improve your attendance.
 - Developing the school curriculum so that the topics you study are interesting and help you learn.
 - Giving you more opportunities to study different cultures in our country and abroad.

You can help by making sure that you attend school as often as possible.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.