

# Vernon Terrace Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121920
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359118
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Lewis

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ruth Lowe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Lapsa
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Vernon Terrace Northampton NN1 5HE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work, including that of its hearing impaired support base. Inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings and discussions with representatives of the governing body, staff and pupils, together with some of the school's partners, including the School Improvement Adviser. Inspectors looked at the documentation relating to: safeguarding; the school's improvement planning; reports on the school's progress; minutes of governing body meetings; records of pupils' progress and achievements; and pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 73 parental questionnaires and took account of 120 staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- How good is the progress of all learners and particularly the youngest children, those whose first language is not English and those with special educational needs?
- How well do teachers use the information they have about learners to plan and deliver lessons linked to their differing learning needs?
- How well does the school help late entrants to the school to settle into the school?
- Has attendance and punctuality improved and how well is the school working with families and others to continue to improve this?

## Information about the school

Vernon Terrace is an average-sized primary school. It shares its site with a children's centre which is managed by the governing body. The school also manages specialist resourced provision for deaf pupils. The hearing impaired resource base (HRB), currently supports nine pupils using a 'natural aural' approach. This involves intensive use of spoken language and hearing aid technology to develop their language skills and to support their inclusion and learning.

Over three quarters of the school's pupils come from minority ethnic heritages. About two thirds of pupils have English as an additional language, representing over 30 different home languages. Many pupils who enter the school, either in Early Years Foundation Stage or in older classes, are at the early stages of learning English. There is a higher than usual proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, including 13 who have a statement of special educational needs. About a quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is much higher than usual but this varies considerably from year to year.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Staff, the governing body, parents and carers, and pupils are rightly proud to be part of this school and of the ways in which they have worked together to improve its provision. It is now a good and effective school. It has particular strengths in the ways in which it welcomes and cares for all pupils and their families whatever their needs and backgrounds. Care, support and guidance is good, including the ways in which the school has worked with families and others to improve pupil attendance and in supporting pupils when they first arrive at the school. Attendance is now average and, more recently, higher. Pupils say they love to come to this school because everyone is kind and the learning is fun. It is a highly inclusive school which works hard to find ways in which everyone can join in. Pupils say 'everyone matters here' and 'is respected, whoever they are'. They feel safe and quickly establish very strong, trusting relationships with staff. This means they try their best even when the work seems hard and enthusiastically celebrate each other's achievements.

The headteacher and the leadership team form a strong and determined team. They have a clear and ambitious vision for the school, know the school's strengths well and have taken effective steps to improve it further. Leaders and managers have been tenacious in working to raise pupils' attainment by carefully targeting resources and introducing whole-school initiatives and support for individuals and groups to do this. This strategy has paid off because attainment at the end of Year 6 is now broadly average, despite very low starting points, and pupils' achievement is good. The school has been particularly successful in raising attainment and accelerating progress in mathematics, previously an area of weakness. Governance is satisfactory. Recent changes mean that the governing body is up to strength. Its members have a range of relevant skills to offer and the Chair of the Governing Body has a good overview of what needs to be done. This, together with the strengthening of the roles of middle managers, means that the school is well placed to improve further and its capacity to do so is therefore good.

Teaching and learning are now good, enabling pupils to make good progress. Teachers have improved their use of the information they have about what pupils know and can do to guide their lesson planning and the tasks they set in lessons. Occasionally, teachers still focus too much on what they want pupils to do rather than what they want them to learn. A strength is the way in which teachers in all classes use questioning to help pupils to think carefully about what they are learning and to find answers for themselves. A further strength is the high expectations teachers have of pupils' behaviour and their skill in managing it. Behaviour is good and pupils get on well with each other and with adults.

Many pupils arrived late with limited prior education and limited English skills. They make good and sometimes exceptional progress in their language development and their learning whenever they enter. Those with special educational needs also make good

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progress. The gap between pupils with additional learning needs and others of their age quickly narrows but, although they are very well set up for learning more, the limited length of time some pupils are in this school before they transfer to other schools is too short for them to make up all of the missing ground. Pupils with hearing difficulties also make good and sometimes exceptional progress, particularly in their language and listening skills. This is because of the strong leadership in this provision, the high quality individual and technological support they receive, and the good training mainstream staff and support staff have had to enable these pupils to get the best out of their lessons.

The curriculum is also good and highly relevant to pupils' needs. A strong emphasis on language, literacy and numeracy through all subjects accelerates progress in these areas in meaningful ways for pupils. However, while progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, it is less secure than in other subjects. Some teachers do not use this enough either in their teaching or in other subjects to ensure that pupils' emerging skills are systematically supported and monitored. The school is rightly focused on improving this further. Strong partnership working with other schools, the children's centre and with other agencies promotes children's well-being and learning effectively. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching so that achievement is even higher by:
  - ensuring that, in planning their lessons and the tasks pupils will carry out, teachers take account of the information that is available on each pupil and what they should learn to do next
  - improving the ways in which teachers use ICT in lessons to support pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Improving the teaching and learning in ICT by ensuring that:
  - pupils' skills and understanding are monitored systematically by all teachers
  - there are more consistent opportunities for pupils to develop and use ICT skills in all subjects.

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

**2**

Pupils' books, records and lessons observed during the inspections confirm that achievement and progress are good for all groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals. Through careful analysis of data the school has implemented well-targeted support and curriculum changes to support improved standards in reading, writing and investigations in science. The impact of this is evident in the upward shift in results in 2010 for Year 6 pupils and the highest ever achieved for Year 2. This good rate of progress has maintained for the current Year 6. In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, those who have been in school for more than two years are almost all on target to attain similarly to others of their age in all subjects. All pupils, including late entrants and those with additional learning needs, are achieving well from their starting points on entry.

During the inspection, learning in lessons was strongest where teachers had thought very carefully about what the different groups of pupils needed to do next and provided different tasks for them. Pupils take every opportunity to participate in lessons,

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cooperating well in joint activities and in their 'talking partners' activities. In an outstanding English lesson, Year 3 pupils excitedly planned a freeze frame activity and how they would show the different emotions their characters felt. Their advice to each other was constructive and they showed great concern that they should meet the objectives their teacher had shared with them for the activity. In Year 5 and Year 6 mathematics lessons, pupils took great care in making estimates and using measuring instruments, working well together to achieve a more accurate result and showing good team skills. Pupils with hearing difficulties were very well included in these lessons and demonstrated similarly good learning because teachers were vigilant and checked very well that they understood what to do.

Pupils feel safe and cared for at school. They are pleased that the occasional instances of bullying are dealt with appropriately by staff and resolved quickly. They have a good understanding about the importance of leading a healthy life and take part in a range of clubs, residential visits and sports activities which promote this well. They take on responsibilities around the school and in class with enthusiasm and fulfil these well, reminding everyone through their Eco-team work, for example, about the need to conserve energy and take responsibility for the future of the planet. Pupils' good work attitudes and behaviour, as well as the many opportunities they have for collaborative working, set them up well for the next steps in their education and for the world of work. However, the limited opportunities they have to further develop their ICT skills mean that this area is satisfactory overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding about right and wrong and a good range of cultural experiences help to promote their understanding of others' beliefs and lives.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<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

## How effective is the provision?

The school has put considerable effort into improving the quality of teaching and the learning opportunities offered to its pupils. Although there is some variation in the quality of teaching, almost all is now good or better. Lessons are organised well and teaching assistants are carefully briefed and deployed effectively, usually supporting those pupils needing additional help. In the best lessons pupils, whatever their starting points, made good or better progress because each group or individual was challenged with slightly different tasks that built well on their previous learning. Teachers incorporate into their planning ways in which they can check pupils' understanding and adjust their lessons and next steps if pupils are confused. Strong visual and practical elements are also in place, enabling those whose language skills are delayed or underdeveloped, including those with hearing difficulties, to more readily understand.

The curriculum is enhanced well by out-of-school visits, clubs and extra-curricular activities, including residential visits. Many visitors, volunteer helpers, the teaching of modern foreign languages, gardening and a very strong and relevant personal, social, emotional and health education programme add further variety and interest to a curriculum which the pupils themselves describe as 'really fun but, you know you are learning all the time.'

This is a caring school in which each individual is valued. Pupils who may be vulnerable and those with special educational needs are well supported by all staff. The school works

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well with families and outside agencies to ensure consistency and to secure pupils' learning and well-being. Good provision is made through the nurture group and through the ways in which the school shares and reviews targets with pupils who have additional learning or other needs. This ensures that pupils, including those in the hearing resource base, feel very supported and involved. Particularly good systems are in place to support transition into school whether in Early Years Foundation Stage or at other times and to support transfer into other schools. The school works extremely well with the children's centre so that many families already feel very comfortable with the school staff through attending courses and events before their children start school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

A determination to help every pupil in this school achieve well, however short the time they have in the school and whatever their starting points and needs, is clear in everything the leadership does. There is a tremendous sense of celebrating and valuing the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and of awareness of how this can be used to strengthen pupils' tolerance, understanding and achievement. The headteacher, well supported by her leadership team and by middle managers, has worked hard to raise standards. She has successfully led this, through improving the quality of teaching and learning, and by raising attendance and achievement levels.

Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Staff work extremely well with others to protect pupils and keep them safe and understand and follow through procedures well. All the necessary documentation is in place and safe recruitment practices followed meticulously, although some recently updated policies have still to be finally approved by the governing body. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are committed and well informed and regularly visit the school and act as advocates for the school appropriately. Some governors are, however, very new and still awaiting training to fulfil their role even more effectively.

Intensive support for individuals and small groups and their families, together with a real celebration and sharing of different cultures and beliefs, enables everyone to be included and to have access to the experiences they should. These also make a strong contribution to community cohesion locally and within the school. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school's work at a national level is less developed than other aspects, although it does now have contact with a village school.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Children's skills and experiences on entry are generally very low, particularly in their social and emotional development and in communication and language. Good teaching and careful targeting of additional support mean that, whatever their starting points or additional learning needs, children make good progress in all areas of learning. As in the rest of the school, attainment varies from year to year because of the differing levels of need in each cohort and the numbers of late entrants. When children have longer Early Years Foundation Stage experiences in the school, they attain more. This year, for example, over 60% have already achieved the early learning goals in reading, mathematical development and personal and social development. The 2010 results were lower, despite these children making good progress from starting points on entry.

Children make good strides in their early phonic and number work. Their good behaviour is carefully and systematically supported by staff who have high expectations and give clear messages about right and wrong. Strengths of teaching lie in the excellent trusting relationships that staff quickly establish with children. This enables children to quickly settle and be prepared to 'have a go' at new experiences. This good learning behaviour and increased concentration sets children up well for the next stage of their education and staff work well together and with Year 1 staff to promote this.

All welfare requirements are met. Staff know the children well and their safety and well-being are paramount. Activities are carefully planned so that each year group have appropriate challenges and opportunities to be with others of their age. The activities that the adults themselves lead, extend the children's thinking well and are well targeted to stretch and challenge groups. Although staff know children very well and pitch the work well to their needs, some of the data collected has not been as reliable. The coordinator and school are dealing with this through moderating more carefully. Good relationships

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with parents and carers, including the use of other languages and interpreters, help to keep them well informed of both what their children are doing and how well they are progressing. The learning environment is designed well to excite children's curiosity and interest in their surroundings and has a good balance of quieter and more creative areas. Although, the outdoor play area is adequate and is about to be further developed by the school, as some of the equipment is rather old.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well by a coordinator who understands the age group, knows the provision's strengths and weaknesses well and has identified the right priorities to improve the provision further.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

An average percentage of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. In addition, inspectors had access to data from the school's own review of how parents and carers view the school. These confirmed the views of the seventy three respondents. The very large majority of parents and carers are highly positive about almost all aspects of the school's work. They say their children enjoy school and are kept safe. They also feel the teaching is good and that their children are well supported when they change classes or move into the school. A few would like more information on their child's progress and opportunities to discuss concerns, or are concerned about behaviour. Inspectors found that the school works well with parents and carers. Staff have a high level of concern for their views. Pupils' progress is good and their well-being is well supported because of the good teaching and the good level of care and support. The school's planning is clearly focused on strengthening further its work with families.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Vernon Terrace 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	53	28	38	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	51	30	41	4	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	45	32	44	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	36	42	58	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	32	44	38	52	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	45	35	48	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	36	41	56	6	8	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)	25	34	44	60	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	29	47	64	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	32	41	57	7	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	29	44	61	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	22	31	42	58	3	4	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	42	37	51	3	4	1	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](http://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"><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 pupils' 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.**



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Vernon Terrace Primary School, Northampton, NN1 5HE**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited recently. It was good to hear about the work you are doing and the different things you enjoy. We think you are making good progress, particularly in mathematics and in your personal and social development. We were pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and that you believe that behaviour is improving. The school successfully helps those of you who are older when you enter school to settle in. The teaching is good and the teachers really try to make your learning interesting and fun. It was good to see you taking more and more responsibility for your own learning and for thinking about the needs of others.

We have asked the headteacher and the school's leaders to do three things in particular that would improve its work further.

Make the teaching even better by ensuring that teachers plan work that is closely linked to the different things each of you needs to learn next.

Make sure teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) more in their lessons so that you can practise your ICT skills.

Check up regularly on how well your ICT skills are developing.

You can help too by making sure that you attend everyday and by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis

Lead inspector

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