

Victoria Park Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103940
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	376993
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Davis

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Seymour
Headteacher	Andrew Morrish
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 25 lessons and 16 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff, and groups of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at: policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; pupils' work; and 47 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

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

- How effectively do pupils in current classes learn, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of the highest ability?
- How consistent is the quality of teaching and learning across the school?
- How consistently do teachers use assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' individual needs?
- How well does the school promote regular attendance? What has been the impact of strategies to raise levels of attendance?

Information about the school

Victoria Park is a much larger-than-average sized primary school serving an area of high deprivation. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds of which the largest proportion is of Pakistani origin. Over 65% of pupils speak English as an additional language and include over 40 different languages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than that found nationally. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is well above average. Many of those arriving speak no English or at an early stage of learning English. The school provides a breakfast club and there is a children's centre on the same site. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

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

The pupils of Victoria Park Primary know that they go to an outstanding school. They bubble over with enthusiasm when talking about the things they learn, the experiences they are offered and the outstanding care they receive. As one pupil commented: 'The school looks after its pupils and makes sure that learning is fun.' This is a key feature of the school's work, as the outstanding curriculum, much of it planned in response to pupils' suggestions, seeks to provide a continual stream of memorable experiences that stimulate curiosity and inspire writing.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment and rates of progress across the school have accelerated strongly over the past three years, particularly in writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 is slightly lower and the school is seeking to more fully engage parents and carers in supporting their children's reading at home. Pupils say that the school keeps them safe and they show an excellent understanding of how to look after themselves. This is because they are given the responsibility of undertaking risk assessments, both in their classrooms and for school trips, so that they have a secure understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation. They behave well and are extremely welcoming and confident in speaking to visitors. Attendance, however has been low, with a higher than average proportion of persistent absentees. Support to promote regular attendance and the exciting curriculum provision is now showing an impact and, as a result, attendance rates are improving. The school recognises, however, that this remains an area for improvement and is continually seeking to support the very few families for whom this remains a problem. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and local community, taking a lead role in community events and in ensuring that the school provides for their needs, confidently requesting improvements and making suggestions to promote their learning.

The quality of teaching across the school is good and a substantial proportion is outstanding. Leaders have established a high level of good practice across the school and teachers consistently plan well to meet the different needs in their classes, including providing extra challenge for those of the highest ability. They provide a lively environment and a range of innovative resources to excite pupils and stimulate their imagination. Promoting independent learning is a key focus for teachers who ensure that pupils are able to evaluate their own work and that of their peers against clearly stated success criteria. As a result, they are able to identify what they have to do to produce high quality work, and can edit and develop what they have written. In a small minority of lessons, learning is only satisfactory because teachers fail to

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explain tasks sufficiently or organise lesson activities to enable pupils to build progressively on prior learning. All pupils are known and cared for as individuals. The care provided for those pupils and their families who face challenging circumstances is exemplary. Pupils who enter the school during the school year, some of whom have had no prior schooling or who are at an early stage of learning English, are extremely well supported so that they are quickly included into school life; many supported by other pupils who speak their language.

The inspirational headteacher is supported by a strong team, including a vibrant group of middle leaders, who share his vision, enthusiasm and energy for driving improvement. As a result, substantial improvements have been made since the previous inspection in all areas of the schools' work and the school shows an outstanding capacity to sustain these. Leaders have high expectations of both staff and pupils, and teachers are held responsible for the progress made by their pupils through a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation. The school knows its community well and the promotion of community cohesion is exemplary, ensuring that pupils have first-hand experience of pupils in different contexts, both nationally and internationally. The diversity of the school population is celebrated and, as a result, the school is an extremely cohesive and harmonious community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment across the school, particularly in reading at Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently good or better
 - working with parents and carers to increase the opportunities for pupils to extend their reading skills by practising at home.

- Raise attendance rates and improve punctuality by:
 - communicating with parents and carers the importance of ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance, and the negative impact of taking term-time holidays on their children's learning
 - rigorously following-up absences.

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

Pupils enter Year 1 with average skills in most areas of learning. However, pupils currently in Key Stage 2 entered at a lower level as the result of previously poorer provision. The improved quality of teaching and the curriculum has resulted in rising results in the Year 6 national tests over the past three years from well below average in 2009 to average in 2011 in both English and mathematics. Rates of progress have been significantly higher than the national average over the past three years. Pupils are extremely keen to do well, taking responsibility for their own progress because they are so accomplished at assessing their own work. They love their learning and are often reluctant to stop work at break times because they are so engrossed. They enjoy the wealth of active cross-curricular tasks that are provided for them that make their learning relevant. For example, a Year 6 class used practical mathematics

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to work out the size of beds needed for their ‘victory garden’ as part of their Second World War study. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress to their peers. This is as a result of the support they receive in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. Appropriate tasks are planned for them enabling them to achieve higher than these groups of pupils do nationally, particularly in mathematics. The school’s thorough progress tracking shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are achieving the highest levels in English and mathematics.

All pupils say that they feel safe and that there is always an adult they can turn to for help. They are proud of the school’s healthy lifestyle awards and enjoy the school dinners and wide variety of sporting activities, many of which are over-subscribed. School council members take a key role in the running of the school presenting their ideas to the governing body. Pupils also take an active role in improving the local community, for example through adopting a section of the local park, organising litter picks, maintenance and bulb planting. Pupils’ current attendance levels and average literacy and numeracy skills make a satisfactory contribution to their future economic well-being. However, they show well-developed information and communication technology skills and are confident to hold discussions with adults, including taking part in presentations to adult organisations. Pupils are proud of their diverse backgrounds and say that they all feel part of one family. They are quick to welcome and include new pupils to the school, many of whom speak no English on arrival. They have an extremely good understanding of, and respect for, different beliefs and during the inspection were thoughtfully composing a prayer that would be appropriate to pupils of all faiths.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3

¹ 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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and there is now a high level of consistent practice across the school. Warm relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all classes. Teachers use a wide range of resources to support learning and to engage and excite pupils. For example, one class was inspired to develop sophisticated vocabulary in response to a video about a haunted house. Teaching assistants are well deployed and are skilled in providing appropriate support and challenge. Information and communication technology is also used very well to enrich learning, including enabling pupils to video or record their work, or to present their work to others. Teachers use questioning well to probe understanding and common techniques are used throughout the school, from Nursery upwards, to enable pupils to quickly discuss their ideas with a partner and then report back. Assessment is used well to support learning and inform planning. For example, most lessons begin with pupils responding to advice on how to improve their work in 'gap' tasks. The quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, however.

The stimulating, motivating and highly relevant curriculum results in pupils' evident love of learning. As one pupil commented: 'I am sad when it's Friday because it means no school for two days!' The wide variety of cross-curricular topics are arranged to enable pupils to experience memorable situations and events that they would never normally encounter. Frequent school trips include, for example, the whole school going on the Severn Valley Railway, inspiring work in history and writing. The whole school is currently buzzing with excitement as a result of an 'alien landing' that had been constructed by teachers on the playground. This resulted in Key Stage 1 and Reception children writing imaginative pieces about what they saw, and Year 6 writing applications to be astronauts. Language features strongly in the curriculum, with Year 3 learning Mandarin in addition to French and pupils teaching each other Urdu. Outdoor learning is very well developed and forms part of an extensive varied programme of enrichment activities. Pupils have a wide variety of opportunities to experience the world of work through, for example, taking over the local fire station for a day.

The school uses extremely well-targeted individual support to make the best of opportunities to meet pupils' needs. The strong pastoral team ensure these are identified at an early stage. The range of strategies used to support individuals is extremely strong, including working with families and a wide range of agencies to best support the pupils facing challenging circumstances. The school never gives up in ensuring that these pupils receive the care they need. Record keeping is immaculate and includes a thorough evaluation of the support provided. Transition arrangements are exemplary, including home visits and one-to-one pupil meetings to ensure that pupils settle well and feel secure.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's very well-defined and well-informed vision of continuous improvement is shared by the whole school community. The governing body have established good monitoring systems and provide a high level of challenge and support. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary and that the large numbers of pupils facing challenging circumstances are very well supported. Partnerships with a wide variety of organisations have led to a significant improvement in the curriculum by providing a wide range of opportunities to develop creativity and to inspire interest. Strong partnerships with a significant range of external agencies ensure excellent support for pupils' well-being. The school works persistently to engage parents and carers, for example through the parents' and carers' forum and by providing information, translated into a variety of languages, and using a wide variety of media, including the website and learning platform. Leaders recognise, however, that parents and carers can be more closely involved in supporting their children's learning. Systems for tracking progress are robust and challenging targets are set. Leaders are rigorous in their analysis of the progress made by different groups of pupils and ensure that there is no discrimination and that the same opportunities are provided for all.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for	2

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money

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in their development of speech and language. They make good progress, and, by the end of the Reception class, reach expected levels in most areas of learning. Children develop good inter-personal skills so that they work and play well with others and form strong relationships with adults. They behave well and show a good awareness of safe play. Adults use their good knowledge to provide an interesting, well-equipped and welcoming environment that successfully supports children’s learning. They are skilled at establishing good learning practices that prepare children well for Key Stage 1. High quality planning and organisation ensure that each individual is suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided, supporting children’s personal and social development as well as stimulating their curiosity. For example, during the inspection children enjoyed making sandwiches, while learning how to use a knife safely. Leaders ensure good teamwork and there is a common sense of purpose to ensure that all groups of pupils develop as well as they can. They have established effective partnerships with parents and carers, other agencies and providers.

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

The very few parents and carers that responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Although responses suggest that some parents and carers disagree that the school manages unacceptable behaviour effectively, inspectors, during this inspection, found the reverse to be true and behaviour was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Victoria Park Primary 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 441 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	55	20	43	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	60	17	36	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	26	55	20	43	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	36	27	57	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	22	47	23	49	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	23	49	20	43	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	40	25	53	2	4	1	2
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)	15	32	30	64	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	32	27	57	4	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	32	25	53	6	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	32	28	60	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	17	36	27	57	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	21	45	23	49	1	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



10 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Park Primary, Smethwick, B66 3HH

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly enjoyed hearing about how much you enjoy your learning.

Our inspection has judged that you go to an outstanding school. The excellent care that the school provides ensures that you feel very safe and you are well-known to staff. Your understanding of how to stay safe, together with the class rules you have devised to ensure everyone acts safely, impressed us. The standards that you reach are rising steadily. You make good progress and are developing a high level of independence, because you know how to assess your own work and check it against your success criteria. You behave well and understand how to stay healthy. You concentrate well and very much enjoy your lessons and all the activities and visits that are provided for you. Your teachers provide lessons that are fun and interesting, and you told us how well they support you. We have asked the school to ensure that all teaching is consistently good and to work with your parents and carers to increase the opportunities for you to practise your reading at home. You make an outstanding contribution to your school community and enjoy taking responsibility. You get on very well with each other and are respectful of those with different beliefs and backgrounds to your own. We were particularly impressed by the way you help each other and welcome those new to the school. We have asked the school to continue to ensure that you attend regularly as we were concerned that attendance levels for some of you have been too low for you to do as well as you can.

The leaders of the school are working hard to make sure you learn well and develop well as young people. You can help them by continuing to work hard and attending well. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis
Lead inspector

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