

Vittoria Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100426
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	376394
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Isaac

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	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Page
Headteacher	Sue Hamer
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 May 2007
School address	Half Moon Crescent Islington London N1 0TJ
Telephone number	020 7837 6063
Fax number	020 7837 8624
Email address	admin@vittoria.islington.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in 17 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and examined documents including planning and safeguarding records, the school's self evaluation, development planning, attendance information, and assessment data used to monitor pupils' performance. Inspectors analysed the responses to questionnaires from 25 parents and carers, 41 pupils and 10 staff.

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

- Attainment in reading and writing and the teaching of literacy.
- Pupils' awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
- The balance between teacher-led activities and those chosen by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The quality of provision and resources for the teaching of letters, words and sounds.

Information about the school

Vittoria is a little smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils live nearby. The largest group come from White British backgrounds. Other groups represent a range of minority ethnic heritages. These include Black British, Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Turkish, Somali or Vietnamese backgrounds. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is very high and represents a majority of all pupils. Their needs relate to a wide range of specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties and communication difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery class and the Reception class. The school has a breakfast club and after-school activities on site, which are managed by the governing body. The school's accommodation has been extensively refurbished and rebuilt in the last two years. The school has gained accreditation as an 'Investor in People.'

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

1

Main findings

Vittoria provides a good quality of education and is a fundamental force for good in its community. Personal care, guidance and support are outstanding, as is the school’s engagement with parents and carers. Pupils are happy, feel confident and get a good start to their learning. They are proud of their new accommodation and enjoy coming to school. Teaching and learning are good and the school provides an interesting and well-balanced curriculum. Pupils as well as parents and carers value the school’s inclusiveness, a typical view being that ‘Vittoria is an exciting school to be involved with.’

Many pupils enter the school with skills well below typical expectations. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. They join Key Stage 1 with below average skills but make good overall progress from year to year. Many younger pupils are new to learning English and require time to master basic skills but they do well. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils’ attainment is at least average, although standards in mathematics are higher than those in English. Overall, pupils’ achievement is good.

Behaviour is good. This is a result of the high expectations of staff who set firm boundaries. Because teachers are well organised, pupils respond positively. Levels of attendance have been maintained since the last inspection and remain average. Good teaching ensures that pupils learn well and get good support as they learn. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to increase the levels of challenge. They help to give each pupil an individualised curriculum. Work is matched consistently well to the needs of pupils and this helps them to make good progress. Teachers’ assessments of pupils are accurate but pupils do not evaluate their own reading and writing enough in order to take responsibility for improving it. The curriculum is well planned and relevant.

The headteacher and senior managers provide outstanding leadership which ensures that the school is highly aspirational. Staff have a strong sense of purpose and feel part of an effective and conscientious team. Morale is high. The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has identified where improvements can be made. The school’s leaders have managed the process of refurbishment and rebuilding very well while continuing a strong and successful drive to improve provision and not losing a day’s

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education in the process. The school has seen a sustained pattern of rising attainment in recent years. All areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been tackled with great success and several aspects of the school's work have improved significantly. This is as a consequence of its determination to improve and its persistence in focusing on shared aims. As a result, Vittoria has an outstanding capacity for further improvement. It completely lives up to its motto: 'Onwards and Upwards'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading and writing to the same level as that in mathematics by:
 - fully establishing systems in every class to teach pupils about letters, words and the sound patterns they make;
 - ensuring that every classroom and specialist facility is rich in literacy-based displays, literacy-rich texts and other relevant resources;
 - developing links to literacy in all lessons across the curriculum.
- Help pupils to evaluate their own work so they know how well they are doing in learning to read and write and what they need to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment in recent years has been broadly average by the end of Year 6 with a sustained rising trend in English and mathematics. Given that many enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are low, this represents good progress. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are above average. In English, attainment is not yet as high as the school's effective systems for teaching reading and writing are not yet fully established across the school. Nevertheless, there are strengths in the teaching of literacy; writing is linked to real-life experiences and popular books that captivate pupils and inspire a love of reading. They use stories to enhance their vocabulary and improve their descriptive writing. In music, drama and art, pupils think and act creatively.

Boys and girls generally make at least the expected progress in different subjects. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. The great majority of pupils are keen to learn and interested in what they are taught. They respond well to their teachers and are eager to take part in lessons. They settle to tasks quickly and are well-motivated.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good and occasionally outstanding progress from a low starting point. Those who enter the school with little or no English leave at the end of Year 6 with at least average

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attainment in English as a result of the high quality tailored support provided. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mix easily and harmoniously with others in lessons.

Pupils commented that they like school and enjoy their work. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and they look after one another caringly. The school is an amicable and tolerant community where pupils of different backgrounds and abilities get on well. Pupils understand the elements of a balanced diet and enjoy many chances to be active. The school council takes its role seriously and helps make a difference to pupils’ lives and their early experience of democracy. Pupils are eager to undertake the many responsibilities they are offered. They play an important part in helping the school run smoothly, whether as peer mediators, classroom assistants, school counsellors or local parliamentarians. Many are keen to support local, national and worldwide charitable fundraising. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding because the school does much to support this aspect of their growth. Pupils are especially proud of the school’s inclusive ethos and rich ethnic diversity.

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	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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching is characterised by activities that are tailored to the needs of individuals and close support for pupils’ learning. Thoughtful questioning encourages pupils to reflect upon their knowledge. They gain a deeper awareness of concepts as a consequence. Teachers use an imaginative approach and link different subjects

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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well. The school has adopted an effective and systematic way of teaching letters, words and the sound patterns they make, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in lessons but is not yet established across the school. Teaching includes a strong focus on practical activities and a multi-sensory approach to learning. This provokes good learning in many classes. In the small minority of lessons where progress is less marked, the pace is slow and strategies for developing literacy skills are at an early stage of development. A few classes have visual references to punctuation but there are too few references to letters, sounds and words on display and not enough of a literacy-rich ethos. Teachers’ marking is usually regular, helpful and detailed. Teachers provide clear feedback for pupils. Assessment systems are good and the school analyses pupils’ attainments carefully in order to inform what is taught next. However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to evaluate their own work, or that of their peers, in order to take greater responsibility for improving it.

A carefully planned curriculum helps pupils to not only develop their basic skills but also their creativity, such as in specialist art sessions or drama activities. The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) activities enhance the curriculum effectively because they are accessible and matched to pupils’ needs in a range of lessons. There are good links between the work pupils do at school and that completed at home. The school takes a successful part in competitive sporting events. There are outstanding elements to the curriculum, for example in special events such as the ‘Pop-Up Festival of Stories’ where pupils have worked with an author. Nevertheless, school leaders recognise the need to establish stronger links to literacy in all lessons across the curriculum. Pupils also benefit from the provision of specialist tuition for aspiring artists, singers, actors and musicians.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and happy. They know with whom to speak about their concerns and are confident to discuss any issues with the learning mentor or the home/school liaison worker. The responses in their questionnaires were very positive, especially about the adults who care for them. Many parents and carers are positive about the quality of provision and feel that their children enjoy school a lot. One commented that ‘I appreciate what this brilliant school is doing so much I cannot begin to say’. The school monitors pupils’ attendance closely and vigorously promotes the value of regular attendance to parents and carers. Close links with professional agencies ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are supported outstandingly well. They make significant progress as a result. There are good transitional links with other local schools and Vittoria has fostered many curricular links as well, often acting as a mentor for other schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has guided the school sensitively and dynamically through a period of change and improvement. Other senior leaders also make a strong contribution to the school’s leadership, which is collegiate and consultative in character. They share high expectations. The school has a marked and widely shared sense of its direction and a concerted ambition to improve its provision in every way. All adults feel that they are part of a united team and their morale is strong. Staff throughout the school work very effectively together and their professional and academic development is encouraged strongly. This is a reflection of the school’s Investor in People status, Senior leaders check the school’s performance regularly and offer constructive support for new staff. Other leaders also provide good management, in areas such as provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and planning has identified precisely where these aspects can be improved further; managers are now rightly focusing on linking areas for improvement more closely to literacy priorities. Managers provide staff with excellent resources in a range of subjects and aspects although the stock of books in the well-appointed library is currently low and being developed.

The governing body has provided good support throughout the process of refurbishment of the now excellent accommodation. Governors are knowledgeable about the school’s strengths and weaknesses, holding the school to account and being influential in helping senior managers to improve it. All safeguarding arrangements were effective at the time of the inspection. Child protection procedures and safeguarding procedures are thorough and meet all requirements. Staff training is regular and checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough.

The school is justifiably proud of its strong links with the local community and has excellent relationships with families, including those considered to be difficult to reach. The involvement of parents and carers in the parent/teacher association does much to promote productive links between home and school. It serves not just as a fund-raising body but also as a bridge into the community. In a school where pupils come from very diverse backgrounds, every individual matters and all are included well. Equality of opportunity is promoted enthusiastically. Adults are excellent role models. The school has developed good partnerships with external agencies and partner schools to enrich the curriculum and obtain extra help for those who need it. Senior leaders are fully committed to community cohesion and the school is a vital force for racial harmony and tolerance in the locality. Opportunities are taken to enhance pupils’ understanding of the wider world. This happens through residential visits, visiting speakers and creative activities. However, leaders acknowledge that links with regional or international organisations are underdeveloped.

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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	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children rapidly settle into the Nursery and Reception classes. They behave well, are keen to learn and play happily with each other. The school provides well for their welfare.

- Overall, attainment on entry to the Nursery is low. Children work well towards their early learning goals, making good progress.
- Children are given many opportunities to take part in meaningful play. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children
- Many children take responsibility for tasks and have excellent relationships with the adults who care for them.
- Routines are well-established. Children are well looked after and are kept safe. There are good procedures to promote good health and hygiene.
- The accommodation is airy and bright. Indoor areas are clean and fresh, with much work on display.
- Classes are well resourced with good opportunities to extend learning to the easily accessed and well-appointed outdoor areas.
- Adults work hard to involve all, including those with little English. Children sing nursery rhymes and re-tell stories well.
- Teachers and assistants plan activities well and keep good records of children’s attainments and progress in photographs, notes and work samples.
- There are too few visual references to literacy on display, such as letters, words and sound patterns.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Leaders show a good understanding of an effective early years curriculum. Good analysis of data has led to clear identification of strengths and areas for development.

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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

About a sixth of parents or carers of pupils registered at the school responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, which is a smaller proportion than is usual. The school has surveyed the views of parents and carers in the recent past and enjoys the support and confidence of most of those who responded. A number of individual comments praised the high quality of provision and care and there were very few negative comments. The views of all the parents and carers interviewed informally during the inspection confirmed the positive responses in the Ofsted questionnaires, all of which were endorsed by the inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Vittoria 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 163 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	68	7	28	0	0	1	4
The school informs me about my child’s progress	13	52	10	40	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	56	10	40	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	60	8	32	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	13	52	11	44	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	44	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	44	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	14	56	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	40	14	56	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	16	64	7	28	2	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	76	5	20	0	0	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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Vittoria Primary School, Islington N1 0TJ

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons. We found that your school is giving you a good education, and that there are many good things going on. These are the things we liked best:

- You enjoy your learning and make good progress through the school.
- You are very proud of your new school buildings.
- You behave well and show a great deal of respect for one another.
- You make a very good contribution to the school community.
- You are well taught and have good opportunities for creative activities.
- You are well looked after and get good extra support when you need it.
- Your school is well run and senior staff know how to make it even better

To help the school improve further, we have asked the staff to:

- help you to be even better at reading and writing
- make sure you know how well you are doing and how you can make your work better.

Please continue to work hard and enjoy your school.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Isaac
Lead Inspector

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