

Vernon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135327
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	381872
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2012
Lead inspector	Lyn Pender

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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Robinson
Headteacher	Joanne Glimmerveen
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lyn Pender
Adrian Martin
Lynne Read

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 17 lessons and parts of lessons and observed 14 teachers. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and members of staff. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed the work they have been doing in class this academic year. They also observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including the school self-evaluation summary, school improvement plan, safeguarding evidence and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors analysed 124 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as questionnaires completed by some of the pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, supported at school action plus or by a statement, is much lower than the national average. The school has a resource unit to help a small number of pupils with statements of special educational needs that have complex moderate learning difficulties. Staff in the resource unit also provide outreach support for other local primary schools. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark and Dyslexia Friendly award. It also has the Silver Eco School award and holds Healthy School status. The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. It was good at the last inspection and has continued to improve in all respects since that time. Pupils are extremely happy and well cared for. Excellent opportunities are provided for them to achieve academically and personally and, as a result, the achievement of all pupils is outstanding. Parents' and carers' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. One parent wrote, 'The school and teaching are fantastic and my children are very happy and well challenged in their learning.'
- Most children enter Reception with skill levels that are broadly in line with that expected for their age. They go on to make excellent progress and leave the school with outstanding achievement and attainment that is well-above average.
- Outstanding teaching is a key factor contributing to these very positive outcomes for pupils. Teachers plan activities which closely match pupils' abilities, interests and needs; this helps pupils become enthusiastic learners who apply themselves exceptionally well in lessons. Marking is very thorough and provides good guidance to help pupils understand the next steps in learning. However, teachers do not always offer pupils sufficient opportunities to become involved in assessing and judging how to improve their own work.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their consistently high attendance. Their exceptional behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute very effectively to their excellent progress. Pupils concentrate very well during lessons, treat each other with respect and consideration, and enjoy excellent relationships with the staff who take such good care of them.
- School leaders, governors and staff hold clear and ambitious views for continued success. The headteacher and assistant headteachers have continued to drive the school forward with energy and determination. Leadership of teaching and the management of performance are rigorous and a vibrant curriculum inspires and motivates pupils and teachers alike.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to ensure that pupils make rapid and sustained progress by developing further their ability to accurately assess their own learning and help them gain a better understanding of how they can move forward.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The achievement of pupils, including those supported by the resourced provision, is outstanding. In lessons, learning and progress are excellent because pupils are self-motivated learners with a thirst for knowledge; they set high expectations of themselves, their teachers and each other. Pupils work very successfully with each other and readily share ideas and resources. They are keen to learn, enjoy a challenge and display high levels of concentration. Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires indicated that they are extremely happy with the progress their children make.

Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from average starting points. High-quality teaching and a lively curriculum help them develop very positive attitudes to learning. This enables most children to enter Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment above those expected for their age.

Effective action taken by the school in the current year has accelerated progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 and continued the successful rise in the rate of progress in Key Stage 2 for the fourth year. As a result, pupils now make outstanding progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence from the school's assessment data, scrutiny of pupils' books and lesson observations confirm that attainment overall is high. Pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs progress at an equal rate to their peers; they are helped to cope with all aspects of school life and to enjoy success.

From an early age, the school promotes pupils' literacy skills well and encourages reading and writing for pleasure. From Year 1 onwards, pupils create 'self-study books' linked to the current curriculum topic. They take great pride in this work, the outcomes of which reflect their individuality and growing creativity and demonstrate well the skills they are developing as independent learners. As a result, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is well above the national average.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that their children are taught extremely well at Vernon Primary School.

Excellent subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve help teachers build on pupils' skills very effectively. They offer challenge to all pupils and support them well to become highly effective, independent learners. Older pupils, in particular, eagerly embrace challenges set in lessons. They have been taught to think deeply and grasp the

opportunity to struggle for answers rather than seek the solution too quickly from their teacher. As a result, they become increasingly resilient and assured learners. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged to solve complex calculations using their understanding of algebra. Pupils manipulated the equations with confidence and displayed high levels of determination to solve difficult problems successfully.

The use of stimulating resources, and a focus on making learning practical and fun, all contribute to pupils' accelerated learning. The highly creative curriculum is planned effectively and includes many opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and communication skills very effectively across all subjects. In one lesson, Year 5 pupils became detectives investigating a crime in a Victorian mill. The teacher's effective use of drama enabled the pupils to question the 'witness' and explore life in those times. The resultant 'Thought Tunnel' where children expressed their empathy with the victim of the crime was spine-tingling and the written work which followed was of a very high calibre.

The resource base manager, teachers and other staff who work in the resource provision or with disabled children or those who have special educational needs are extremely knowledgeable and provide informed, sensitive support to help pupils cope with life and reach their full potential. Teaching is adapted to provide work that precisely meets the needs of all and inspection evidence shows that this is highly successful in improving attainment for these children and reduces time spent outside the classroom.

Assessment is very effective and marking and guidance provide excellent advice to help pupils improve their work. Although teachers consistently set aspirational targets, as yet pupils are not fully involved in assessing their own work accurately and identifying next steps for themselves.

Teaching impacts strongly on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as they become confident in making mature observations and offering their own perspectives on issues. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children decided spontaneously to create a compost bin, gathering the waste from fruit snacks and designing posters to tell other children how it worked and why they should use it. They showed that they could talk knowledgeably and with understanding of the ecological aspects of the activity.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. The very large majority of parents and carers, pupils and staff confirmed through their questionnaires that this is typical behaviour for the pupils and they hold highly positive views about behaviour and safety in the school. Pupils say they feel very safe and know how to keep themselves out of danger. They agree that bullying of any kind is not tolerated and that incidents are very rare. Nonetheless, pupils are very aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what they should do if it were to occur; they also say that it is dealt with quickly if it ever does happen. Pupils are polite and well-mannered to each other and to staff and visitors. They are friendly and welcoming and care for each other extremely well. Pupils make an excellent contribution to decision making and apply for a variety of jobs around school. They carry out their duties, such as that of school councillor, very enthusiastically and sensibly. One group has formed themselves into the 'Excitable Anythings' group to be ready to help their teachers if needed. Older pupils enjoy helping younger children, for example when they act as play leaders on the playground.

By Year 6, pupils display very mature attitudes and self-discipline. A small minority, who sometimes have difficulty controlling their own behaviour are supported extremely well and integrated fully into school life, as are pupils with physical difficulties who enjoy full access to everything on offer.

Pupils are highly motivated to take part in all aspects of school life and this is reflected in their exemplary punctuality, and their attendance which is high when compared to the national average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides very effective leadership. High standards and expectations of everyone mean a climate exists where teachers, leaders and other staff support each other very well and constantly strive to improve their practice. Morale is very high. Senior leaders and the governing body are fully committed to school improvement. They manage performance exceedingly well and, through rigorous analysis, know the school's strengths and relative weaknesses in exceptional detail. Each pupil's needs are fully considered, assessed and tracked with energy and expertise. Actions are prompt and effective and leaders evaluate the success of initiatives for improvement very effectively. Robust monitoring of teaching leads to closely targeted professional development and performance management. The actively involved and well-informed governing body challenges and holds the school to account well. All of these factors, together with the skills and talents of leaders and staff, mean the school has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Through well-managed procedures, the school complies well with statutory requirements for safeguarding arrangements. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and its inclusive ethos supports the excellent promotion of equality of access to educational entitlement. The vast majority of parents and carers comment on the high quality partnerships and communication they have with the school.

The curriculum is outstanding. It is vibrant and varied. It is subject to continuous review to ensure that it remains responsive to pupils' interests and learning needs. Subjects are brought together in topics that are relevant and engaging for pupils. The curriculum is very well enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports, music and the arts. After-school activities are popular and a wide range of visitors and visits contribute effectively to promoting pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils show an excellent understanding of the high moral and social values the school promotes.

The school motto, 'Nobody else is quite like me' reflects the school's drive to treat pupils, and staff, as individuals; to celebrate and develop the talents of all.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Vernon Primary School, Stockport SK12 1NW

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Everyone we met was polite and extremely helpful and we were impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you care for each other. We very much enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about why you enjoy your time at school.

You are justifiably proud to attend Vernon Primary School as it provides you with an outstanding quality of education. You make excellent progress throughout the school and you reach high attainment by the end of Year 6 because of outstanding teaching. We looked at your books and found that you work hard, take a pride in your work and present your work neatly. Teachers mark your work carefully and help you understand how to improve. Your headteacher and the other staff have helped your school to improve since the last inspection and they have a very good understanding about what the school is doing well and what can be made even better.

To help your school to improve even more, I have asked your headteacher and the governing body to allow you to have more opportunities to judge how well you are doing and decide how you can improve your own work.

You can help by continuing to try hard in lessons. I hope you continue to enjoy school and attend regularly.

Yours sincerely

Lyn Pender
Lead inspector

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