

Victoria Park Nursery School

Victoria Park, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 1EH

Inspection dates 20–21 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children make outstanding progress in the three key areas of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. They thrive in a rich, exciting and stimulating setting, both indoors and outdoors.
- Nursery staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Children benefit enormously from the support they receive from their key person. Staff are highly skilled in supporting children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Children like learning and really enjoy their time in Nursery. They settle very quickly into the day-to-day routines and know, for example, the importance of washing their hands and wearing an apron when playing with water and paint. They make friends easily and enjoy playing together. Their behaviour is exemplary because they never have time to be bored.
- Since the last inspection, there has been significant improvement in the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have a detailed understanding of the progress children make by gender, ability and ethnicity.
- The governing body has rigorous and robust policies in place to ensure that children are safeguarded at all times.
- The Nursery has excellent links with parents and carers. Those who spoke to the inspector were full of praise for the high-quality support they received, including those with children who have special educational needs and those whose children speak English as an additional language.
- While staff have made an excellent start on using 'Learning Stories' to assess children's progress and to set targets for improvement from these, the process is not fully embedded in planning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent seven hours observing children learning and playing, including six short sessions when they spent time with their key person.
- He held meetings with the senior leadership team, all members of staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a few parents and carers.
- He took into account the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the school's and governing body's most recent surveys of parents and carers.

Inspection team

David Curtis, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average size Nursery. Children attend on a part-time basis for either a morning or afternoon session.
- The Nursery supports funded two-year-olds.
- The headteacher and governing body manage the on-site Children’s Centre which was not inspected at this time.
- The Castle Nursery School class is housed in the building but this is inspected as part of inspections of The Castle School.
- The proportion of children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language varies from year to year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the link between the assessment of children’s learning and the setting of their next–step targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children show a love of stories and are confident in talking about the pictures and characters. They listen very carefully when their key person reads a story and show great delight when they can join in, for example, with 'I want my Mummy!' in the story *'The Owl Babies'*.
- Boys and girls spend much time engaged in early mark-making activities, which is a major part of developing early writing skills. Many already make a real effort to write their own name. The typewriter in 'The Playhouse' is especially popular and motivating for boys. In 'The Cafe', children really enjoyed taking orders from their 'customers'.
- In mathematics, children make excellent progress in reading and ordering numbers to 10 through the use of jigsaws and matching the number of blocks to a given number. They show confidence in making patterns with shapes and know 'circle', 'square' and 'rectangle'.
- Children make outstanding progress in their physical development, especially in the outdoor area. They are very confident in climbing, swinging on ropes and using the slide. Two girls made excellent progress as they developed and refined a gymnastics routine involving jumping and landing correctly.
- Through exciting role play children develop an excellent understanding of the world, particularly through developing their own ideas, for example creating their own camping holiday, complete with barbecue.
- In expressive arts and design children show impressive skills in painting, sticking and cutting. They show excellent concentration and skill as they enjoy making collages and patterns.
- Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make the same outstanding progress as their peers. This is because staff provide excellent support, for example, in using pictures to show children how they will spend their session.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Staff have embraced fully the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which came into effect on 1 September 2012.
- The key person system works exceptionally well for children and their parents and carers. Each key person has a detailed knowledge of the children in their group. They are highly skilled in supporting children who have just started nursery and find leaving their parent or carer a struggle. The few who do cry are swiftly distracted and quickly become absorbed in learning and play.
- Staff provide an excellent range of resources for children. The outdoor area is superb, with 'The Beach' proving to be especially popular, as is 'The Red Train'. One child said to the inspector, 'It is beautiful going on the train to London.' Unfortunately, on another journey, where parents, pushchairs and babies were in the carriage waiting to go shopping, the driver did not turn up!
- There is an excellent focus on providing many opportunities to develop children's key skills in communication and language. The 'Library Area' is stimulating and children enjoy looking at books and/or reading with an adult. In both the indoor and outdoor areas there are excellent opportunities for mark-making, which underpin the staff's expertise in knowing how to motivate boys to write.
- Children's 'Learning Journeys' give them and their parents and carers an excellent picture of children's progress; they are very much a two-way dialogue between home and school. Day-to-day assessment of children's learning is excellent and contributes significantly to the strengths in the key person's understanding of their children.
- As part of the regular assessment of learning, key persons complete a more in-depth

'Learning Story'. These are then used to set targets for children's next steps in learning which are shared with parents and carers. At the moment, the Nursery accepts that these are not fully embedded as part of the planning process.

- Staff have developed an excellent programme whereby they encourage parents and carers to share familiar songs and rhymes with their children at home, including number and action rhymes. Once children have learned a set of rhymes, they are awarded a certificate.
- Parents and carers are exceptionally positive about the quality of provision for their children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children really enjoy their time at Nursery. They show impressive levels of confidence and independence, especially when choosing their own activities.
- Relationships are excellent. Children learn and play together successfully in pairs and groups. They sustain interest well, for example in making and serving meals in 'The Playhouse', or when deciding that a red car in the car park is a 'dinosaur' and developing their own resulting game of 'hide and seek' with the 'dinosaur'.
- On other occasions, children show impressive levels of sustained concentration when working alone. One child spent a considerable time creating a pattern with paint and then used a pen to write her name between the spaces she had left. All the while, she was totally absorbed in learning.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary because of the excellent provision both indoors and outdoors. They benefit enormously from the high-quality adult support and, as a result, spend their time productively in learning and playing. No child could ever be bored.
- Children feel very safe in the Nursery and know the day-to-day routines they are expected to follow, especially in terms of health, hygiene and playing outdoors. Parents and carers raised no concerns about their child's safety.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have a shared vision and determination to provide the best quality provision and standard of care for their children.
- Significant strengths in the leadership of teaching contribute to the high-quality care and support given to children by their key person. Monitoring of teaching and learning is highly effective and results in a school improvement plan that is focused on improving outcomes for young children.
- The curriculum, especially the use of the outdoor area, makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school promotes excellent relationships and ensures all children benefit equally from high-quality experiences.
- Effective partnerships with parents and carers are seen as a vital part of children's learning and development. Those parents and carers who completed 'Parent View', supported by the school's own returns, show that parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of its work.
- Very strong links with the Children's Centre, The Castle School and outside agencies are used very effectively to support children's learning and development, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- The local authority provides very effective support for the school which impacts positively on school improvement. In addition, it uses the Nursery as a model of good practice and a member of the school's senior leadership team supports other Early Years settings within the authority.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has made significant progress in improving its effectiveness since the previous inspection, especially in ensuring that children's safeguarding and welfare are given the highest priority.
- It has a much more in-depth understanding of how to hold the school to account for the

progress made by children. Performance management is focused clearly on improving children's learning and development.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupil's needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupil's needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109757
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	401075

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Anderson
Headteacher	Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 May 2010
Telephone number	01635 41296
Fax number	01625 41296
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