

Victoria Park Primary School

Atlas Road, Bristol, BS3 4QS

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Achievement and attainment have consistently improved throughout all year groups for the last two years, and are continuing to do so.
- Nearly all pupils are making the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, and a good number in every year group do better.
- Teaching in the school is consistently good and very occasionally outstanding. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and provide many interesting and stimulating learning activities, which enhance the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Pupils are well cared for and staff ensure that they are kept safely. They behave well and have good, enthusiastic attitudes to learning, which they enjoy. Their attendance is much improved.
- The school is led very effectively by an ambitious and clear-sighted headteacher, who has encouraged staff to create a strong culture of improvement in a thriving learning environment, with the good support of the senior leadership.
- The governing body has good knowledge of the school's strengths, areas for improvement, and the progress and attainment of pupils, and works effectively with the school leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding, and it has not been effective enough in helping some more able pupils to reach above, or well above average, standards.
- Although pupils are developing their basic skills in numeracy and literacy well, they do not have enough opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.
- School leaders, other than the most senior, do not yet have sufficient opportunities to check on teaching and learning and give teachers more opportunities to observe good practice

elsewhere, further developing their skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or part lessons taught by 20 teachers. Six lessons were observed jointly with either the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the management team, three members of the governing body and an officer of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. The examined safeguarding arrangements and other documents, including school development plans and self-evaluation records, behaviour and health and safety records, school policies, and a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 74 responses to the online Parent View survey and responses to a recent school survey, as well as receiving a number of letters from parents and one telephone response.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Marion Hobbs	Additional inspector
Ben Jordan	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Victoria Park Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a range of other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is organised into 17 classes. In most years these are single-year classes, but there are five mixed-aged classes in Key Stage 2 for Years 3 and 4.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- The current headteacher took up his post in September 2011 after a period of considerable instability in the senior leadership of the school. The school staffing has been stable in the last two years, following many changes previously.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching already present in the school so that more pupils, especially the more able, reach above average levels of attainment and progress in all year groups by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their independence in learning and research skills
 - ensuring that teachers further improve their skills by having regular opportunities to observe excellent teaching in the school and other school environments.
- Accelerate the recent development of the leadership roles of all managers by:
 - increasing the opportunities for them to check teaching and learning and consistently guide the development of colleagues' skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is not outstanding because the progress of some pupils, especially the more able, is not yet consistently higher than that found nationally.
- Pupils' progress in all age groups has improved in the last two years. As a result, achievement is now good and continues to improve. Most pupils make the progress they should and many are making better progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved from low levels in 2011, further improved in 2012 and continue to accelerate. Standards in reading and mathematics in the present Year 6 are above average overall as a result of good progress, and average in writing.
- Many children enter the school with skills and understanding below the levels expected for their age, although this varies from year to year.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes, and develop self-confidence in their language and physical development, as seen in a physical education lesson when they talked about the changes in their bodies during and after energetic exercise.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made consistently good progress in the last two years and are reaching average levels in reading, writing and mathematics, although few reach above-average levels. Present data and observations suggest their progress is accelerating.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils are achieving well. Although there are a few small pockets of pupils who are not making sufficient progress, the school's rigorous and extensive tracking enables teachers to identify them and provide necessary support for their improvement.
- Pupils recognise their letters and sounds (phonics) well, as shown by the pupils' good performance in the national phonic reading test for Year 1 last year.
- Improvement in reading has been especially successful because of good teaching of basic reading skills in all years. School strategies such as 'Reading Recovery' have played a key part in promoting pupils' interest in reading and improvement of skills. Pupils throughout the school read widely and enthusiastically. The school works closely with parents so that their children are regularly supported at school and home.
- All groups of pupils achieve equally well, including those in the mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils from different ethnic heritages and pupils who learn English as an additional language.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make good progress and the gap in attainment between them and other pupils is narrowing in every year group. In 2012, their average point scores for mathematics were equal to those of pupils not entitled to funding, and very slightly below in English.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching overall is not outstanding because not enough is of this high quality to ensure that pupils make consistently rapid and sustained progress throughout all year groups over several years.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, and some is outstanding, although not enough at present to enable some pupils, especially the more able, to reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils in all classes, although this results in some pupils relying heavily on adult support and direction. These pupils are not yet confident in working on their own, away from direct supervision or the help of adults.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is effective because children are provided with well-planned

sequences of activities which build and consolidate learning, as observed in a phonics (letters and sounds) lesson about 'oo'.

- Some teaching, as seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 3/4, is challenging for pupils of all abilities, enjoyable and succeeds in promoting enthusiastic learning and achievement for every group. Similarly in an English lesson in Year 6, learning moved along quickly and was enhanced by the teacher's subject knowledge and ability to improve the diary writing of all pupils.
- School leaders have begun to give teachers more opportunities to observe teaching of high quality, and this is helping all teachers to develop their skills.
- Teachers are working hard to promote an exciting and creative curriculum, and are successfully ensuring that the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are an important part of learning in all subjects.
- Teachers have been especially effective in developing good questioning skills in order to encourage better standards of verbal answers and explanations by pupils about their learning, including the good use of 'talking partners'.
- The marking of pupils' work is much improved, enabling pupils to have good understanding of what and how they should improve. One pupil talked animatedly about comments in her book about trying to put more emotion into her writing.
- Teachers plan well in partnership with their teaching assistants, who were observed in classes and interventions with small groups of pupils guiding their learning effectively.
- Pupils are regularly encouraged to evaluate their own work both in their books and in class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because a small number of pupils do not always comply with the school's clear rules of acceptable behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good throughout the school and outside. They behave safely in a playground without green areas, and are very clear about what is acceptable and what is not.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, which benefit strongly from the good relationships with their teachers, and the increasingly stimulating and exciting curriculum. They name many activities which they enjoy, including dressing up for a Second World War theme, which they describe as 'amazing', and, unusually, 'doing handwriting' and 'chanting tables'.
- Their behaviour and enjoyment of learning strongly support their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Children in the Reception classes are equally enthusiastic, and are friendly, curious and co-operative in their activities. This was seen when they were engaged together in choosing ways of exploring numbers.
- Most pupils think that behaviour is good for nearly all pupils, but there are 'some who don't take notice of little ones in the playground'. However, pupils speak highly of the staff who help those who have difficulties or are upset.
- Pupils have an appreciation of the dangers of cyber-bullying. They are not worried about other aspects of bullying, mentioning only 'taking your seat, or your place in the line'. There have been a few exclusions in the last year as a result of a new behaviour policy which is well understood now by all pupils.
- The school has good links with external professionals such as Childline. Specialised services are used regularly to support pupils and families in difficult circumstances.
- Attendance is average and has improved strongly in the last 18 months after being well below average for several years. The school is now taking equally robust action to ensure all pupils arrive punctually for school.
- Behaviour is also good in the well-organised breakfast club.

- Parents and staff are almost unanimous in believing that behaviour is good and well managed.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are not outstanding because not all leaders have yet developed the experience and confidence needed to develop the skills of other staff.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in the school have been led vigorously and effectively by the headteacher and deputy for the last year and a half.
- Other school leaders are not yet experienced in checking the quality of teaching so are not always able to make telling contributions to managing and improving teaching. However, they have been receiving recent training in preparation for this and their other responsibilities.
- The headteacher is recognised by the whole school community as providing insightful, shrewd and decisive leadership in guiding the school from its past difficulties. He has encouraged staff to share the same ambition for the school to improve relentlessly, so that its pupils do the very best they can.
- The school's record of improvements to achievement, teaching, pupils' behaviour and attendance in a comparatively short time indicate that the school has a strong capacity for further improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation and development plans are accurate and realistic and benefit from a clear and carefully timed programme for improvement.
- Improvement has been carefully aligned to the training needs of staff, whose targets are closely related to the school improvement priorities. This gives a related structure of common priorities which are linked to the performance management of staff and their pay.
- School leaders have introduced a much wider range of interesting topics and learning activities across a range of subjects, specifically aimed at the interests of pupils. This has been supplemented by a large number of very popular daily in-school and after-school clubs. These additions support the good behaviour of pupils and contribute effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- School leaders promote equal opportunities and harmonious relationships well in a fully inclusive school, which has contributed towards eliminating past underachievement. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination through gender, disability, special educational needs or ethnic heritage.
- The funding from the pupil premium is very carefully monitored, and is explained in considerable detail for parents on the informative school website. Funding is allocated to at least 20 different support provisions, including one-to-one teaching, extra resources especially for English, and a number of extra learning opportunities. This is helping almost all of the pupils eligible for the additional funding to make good progress.
- The local authority has been heavily involved with supporting the school in the past, but, with the schools' increasing improvement and self-sufficiency, has been able to scale back its support to when the school requests it.
- There are good relationships and engagement with almost all parents, many of whom express praise for the leadership and management of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body, led by an experienced and highly regarded Chair, have an extensive knowledge of the strengths and priorities for continuing development of the school. They frequently challenge the school leadership, and are especially rigorous in setting annual performance targets for the headteacher. They have a thorough understanding of the policy guidelines for the pay of other staff, especially relating to the quality of teaching in the school, and the achievement of pupils as compared with pupils nationally. Governors know very well how funds are allocated, in particular those for the pupil premium, and how effective their use is in raising the achievement of these pupils. Governors ensure that regulatory safeguarding requirements are met, and that school policies are reviewed regularly.

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 pupils' 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 pupils' 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	135780
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	406629

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	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Denham
Headteacher	Jack Lacey
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2011
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