

# Vernon Park Primary School

Peak Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 2NF

**Inspection dates** 18–19 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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.

- The headteacher, the leadership team and the governors lead the school exceptionally well, to make sure that both teaching and achievement are of the highest standard. Together they have moved the school forward rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Children begin school in the Nursery class with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make rapid and sustained progress in literacy and numeracy because their experiences in school are very well planned and exciting.
- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection in Key Stages 1 and 2. The progress that pupils are making is outstanding and better than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The tracking of pupils' learning and progress is accurate, consistent and rigorous.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations. They set challenging activities for pupils of all abilities. Pupils rise to these challenges and make rapid progress.
- All staff work well together as a team and learn from each other to enhance their teaching skills still further.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium make excellent progress because teachers and teaching assistants understand pupils' needs and how to meet them.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They are confident and feel safe in school. They are respectful towards each other and adults.
- Information about how well pupils are doing is skilfully used by leaders and managers, including governors, to make sure all groups of pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Governors make sure that resources are allocated well and that pupil premium funding makes a positive contribution to the excellent achievement of the pupils.
- The partnership with parents could be closer, especially in recruiting a full complement of parent governors.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 20 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed teaching assistants working with pupils.
- Discussions were held with pupils in lessons and their work was discussed with them.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, teaching and classroom support staff, pupils and a member of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records, including home-school diaries.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including national assessment data, the school's information about pupils' progress, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils and the school improvement plan. In addition, the minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and external reports from the local authority were reviewed.
- Twenty-one responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Members of the inspection team also spoke to parents while they were bringing their children to school and reviewed other responses from parents gathered by the school.

## Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has an additional resource base for up to 10 young children with speech and language difficulties from three to five years. The unit supports pupils from within the local authority who need specialist support. At the time of the inspection there were three reception-aged children and seven nursery-aged children within the unit.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to build on the outstanding progress made throughout the school since the last inspection.
- Improve the school's partnership with parents further by:
  - consulting with all parents, including those who are harder to reach to get their ideas and views about how best to work together as partners
  - recruiting parent governors so that they are fully represented on the governing body.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter the school with skills that are below the levels expected for their age. In some areas, they are well below. They go on to make excellent progress throughout school so that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good and outstanding progress because staff use information about how well pupils are doing to plan appropriate and exciting learning activities in an outstanding learning environment both indoors and outdoors. They are very well prepared for entry to Year 1. Younger pupils supported through the speech and language resource base make outstanding progress because of strong teaching and support.
- Attainment has risen significantly since the last inspection, and over the last two years. Year 2 national assessment results in 2013 show pupils ahead of pupils nationally, especially in writing. Results have risen consistently so that they are now above average by the end of Year 6.
- Inspection evidence and school information show that the achievement of most-able pupils throughout the school is above the national average and is set to continue. These pupils demonstrated the development of higher order thinking skills in a Year 6 writing lesson where they were challenged to use different types of question in their writing. The teacher probed them to consider rhetorical, interrogative and a range of other types of question which led to well-structured and imaginative writing and moved the learning forward at a fast pace. Probing and in-depth questioning by the teacher led to a clear understanding by the pupils of the technical features which they used to enhance their writing.
- Excellent teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, gives pupils the early boost they need to read with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils achieve very well in reading, they are fluent and accurate when they read and use good expression. They have many opportunities to read from a wide range of books which are challenging and reflect their interest in reading well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make excellent progress. This is a result of motivating classroom activities and well-tracked learning which is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. These pupils develop well according to their individual needs.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support the pupils who are entitled to free school meals by providing extra teaching staff and extra-curricular activities. These pupils make accelerated progress across the school, so that their attainment is in line with their peers in both English and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2, the gap is closing rapidly for the most-able pupils.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Decisive actions taken since the previous inspection, including the careful checking of teaching and information about how well pupils are doing, have led to rapid improvements in achievement.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding, because teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils learn and develop their skills rapidly because teachers track their progress regularly and accurately and move them on to what they need to learn next quickly. Pupils are encouraged to check their own learning by talking to their partners. Marking in pupils' books is excellent and pupils are given clear guidance about how to make their work even better. They also feed back to their teachers after their books have been marked.
- Teachers and pupils have responded well to the challenge of the very high expectations for achievement set by the headteacher. Lessons are planned to ensure that all pupils progress quickly, including the most-able.
- Pupils learn at a very fast rate because teachers know pupils' abilities very well. They plan activities to encourage pupils to think carefully and develop a better understanding of their

learning. Time is not wasted in lessons, which creates the maximum opportunity for learning. This helps pupils learn very quickly.

- When teachers are asking questions to the whole class, teaching assistants skilfully check pupils' understanding and provide quiet additional guidance where necessary. Teachers and teaching assistants, work well together supporting learning at all times during lessons, as well as with small groups or individuals. They involve pupils well, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium funding. Children who attend the Speech and Language Resource Provision are skilfully taught by specialists and as a result, children make outstanding progress.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is outstanding. Pupils reached scores above the national average in the Year 1 phonics screening. All staff are trained in teaching phonics and pupils are taught in small groups and make rapid progress in reading in all year groups.
- The teaching of writing is highly effective because teachers have received high quality training that has enabled them to make strong links between teaching reading and writing. Pupils are given exciting themes to write about which they explore through their reading. This approach means pupils understand fully how to write in different styles and has led to rapid progress in writing.
- Teachers are highly skilled at asking questions that make pupils think carefully about their own learning. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were investigating lines and intersections. The teacher's questions focused them on looking for different patterns and using a systematic approach to predicting any number of intersections. Pupils were prompted to evaluate and explain how useful their methods had been in order to help other pupils' learning.
- Relationships in lessons and throughout the school are very positive. The stimulating classrooms, corridors and the outdoors contribute to a very positive atmosphere for learning across the whole school.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They love learning and endeavour to do their very best whether working by themselves or with friends in lessons. In class, pupils are very keen and excited to learn and teachers are highly skilled in using different ways to keep pupils engaged and yet fully focused on their learning. These exemplary attitudes to learning are evident in all classes and enable pupils to make outstanding progress in all subjects.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. Pupils of all ages play together happily and safely on the playground. These excellent relationships are evident in the whole school.
- They act very responsibly and take on a range of roles within the school, including the school council. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils were involved in Enterprise Week where they planned a commercial venture for pupils in the school to purchase snacks and drinks each playtime for a week. The pupils planned and organised the event very effectively so that it ran smoothly. Pupils took full responsibility for supporting and encouraging one another, resulting in making a profit and providing a quality service for the rest of the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel safe in school. They share trusting relationships with the adults who care for them.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying in school and well-kept school records support this view. Misbehaviour of any form is extremely rare and swiftly tackled. This is because pupils are confident that adults will help them when needed. Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They agree that bullying and offensive name-calling are rare in the school and are always dealt with sensitively by staff before becoming too serious. There are clear rules about how to keep safe on the Internet.
- School leaders have tackled previous low attendance effectively so that this has increased year on year and is now in line with the national average. This helps pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils arrive at school on time every morning excited by the challenges that await

them.

## **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Senior leaders drive improvement throughout the school. They provide excellent role models for all staff through their positive attitudes, strong team-working and sharing their expertise.
- The procedures to manage the performance of teachers and their progress up the salary scale are excellent. Where performance has been found to need improvement then pay awards have been withheld. Staff are set ambitious targets to improve pupils' achievement with clear advice and high quality training to help them improve. Teaching assistants have also had exceptional training in supporting the teaching of writing very effectively.
- Senior and middle leaders analyse systematically how well pupils are doing in their subjects and provide targeted support to improve areas that need to be worked on so that all pupils are constantly learning and improving. This process has directly led to the outstanding progress pupils make in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is allocated effectively to focus on improving standards for eligible pupils through a range of support, such as, individual and small-group support or extra staffing in classes. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is excellent.
- The school is committed to working with parents to be partners in their children's learning and there are two members of staff with responsibility for developing this still further. There have been a number of initiatives including curriculum workshops, parent forums and consultations with parents about developing the school grounds, which was very successful and has resulted in outstanding outdoor provision for pupils. Most parents are supportive of the school. School leaders and governors see the development of parental partnership as a key priority for further improvement, especially when working with parents who are harder to reach.
- The curriculum is a key strength of the school and is planned and organised exceptionally well by all teachers. The school ensures that all elements of spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning are taught through a range of activities. The curriculum adds richness and enjoyment to pupils' learning and enables pupils to foster interests in music and sports. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of clubs and visits that help them to develop their personal qualities.
- The school has used the new primary school sport funding effectively to enhance and improve the participation of pupils in competitive sport. This is linked well to the physical education (PE) curriculum and is resulting in better physical well-being for pupils as well as improving their performance levels in PE and a range of sporting activities.
- Equal opportunities are embedded in every aspect of school life. All groups of pupils achieve well, and all staff are supported to perform at their best. Safeguarding practices meet the statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school, including a series of visits and reviews of teaching and learning which validated the school's own view of its performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is a highly professional body, fully focused on doing the very best for pupils. Governors have an outstanding understanding of information about how well pupils are doing and use this to make sure funds, including the pupil premium, are spent wisely.
  - Governors are fully committed to their own development so they can be of best service to the school. Since the previous inspection the local authority led a review to evaluate their effectiveness and the governors swiftly acted upon its advice. In addition, each governor has undertaken a skills audit to identify individual strengths throughout the full governing body. As a result, they are in an excellent place to continue to challenge and support the headteacher to improve the school further. There are currently some parent-governor vacancies.
  - Governors play an active role in writing and reviewing plans for school improvement. They monitor the impact of the quality of teaching and have made sure the pay policy reflects how better teachers will be rewarded financially. They know what to do in the event of any underperformance.

- The governing body has a clear programme of policy review and it makes sure that all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106082
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	434099

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Walter Brett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Mastrotonardo
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 480 4378
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