

Victoria Junior School

Cornwall Crescent, Rothwell, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS26 0RA

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved over the past three years. Most pupils make good progress and reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 2 in writing, and above-average standards in reading and mathematics.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils who reached levels above those expected for their age at the end of Key Stage 2 matched the national average in reading and was above average in mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and plan lessons that interest and enthuse them.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- They work well together. This epitomises the school's motto: 'Victoria Junior School, a happy place to learn.'
- This is a very caring school and parents particularly appreciate the way that teachers know their children well as individuals.
- The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides strong, influential leadership. Through regular checks on teaching and subsequent meetings to discuss the pupils in their charge, teachers are held firmly to account for increasing the rate of progress their pupils make.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to improving the school. They know the school well, are proud of its achievements and provide support and challenge in equal measure.
- The rise in standards and rate of pupils' progress, together with the way the school has strengthened writing since the last inspection, demonstrates the school's good capacity to continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress in writing is not high enough.
- In some classes, an unnecessary amount of time is spent planning written work. This means it can take too long to complete a full unit of work.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Middle leaders, new to their roles, do not yet have a full understanding of achievement in their subject. Hence their impact on whole-school improvement is limited.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight part lessons. One lesson was a joint observation with the headteacher. She also looked at pupils' workbooks, work on display and listened to pupils reading across the school.
- The inspector met with staff, pupils and parents. She held a meeting with a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 19 staff questionnaires. She also looked at the results of the recent pupils' own questionnaire to parents to ascertain their views, as there were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to publish.
- The inspector talked to pupils in the dining room, in the playground, in classrooms and around the school at different times of the day.
- She observed the school's work and considered a number of documents relating to behaviour and safety in the school. In addition, she studied the school's evaluation of its performance, its improvement plan and its data on pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is higher than in other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is high. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groupings is low, with very few pupils speaking English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several changes in teachers since the last inspection.
- The school has numerous awards including National Healthy School Standard and the Stephen Lawrence award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, in order to further improve pupils' progress, particularly in writing, by:
 - increasing the expectations and level of challenge in lessons so that pupils make better than the progress expected of them in all subjects
 - ensuring that time devoted to the planning of written work does not lead to the full unit of work taking too long to complete
 - improving the presentation of pupils' work in their books
 - ensuring marking in subjects other than literacy gives clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they have a better understanding of achievement in their subjects and so are able to play a much fuller role in whole-school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils settle well into the school thanks to the close links between the junior and infant schools and pupils and their families. Pupils have opportunities to visit the school before starting. This helps staff, pupils and parents to build positive relationships from the outset. Staff from the infant and junior schools work together to understand how well pupils learn, find out if additional support will be needed and promote a seamless changeover between the two schools.
- Pupils start the school with skill levels that are lower than average, particularly in writing. From their different starting points the proportion of pupils making expected progress is close to the national figure in reading and higher in writing and mathematics. The proportion exceeding expected progress is close to average and above in reading and mathematics, but well-below average in writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in 2013 was higher than the national average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. This represents good achievement.
- Standards have risen year on year from 2011 to 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics. From well-below average in 2011, attainment has improved sharply, outstripping the national trend in the three tested areas.
- Pupils generally do not do as well in writing as they do in mathematics and reading at the higher level. The school is looking for ways to improve this. Themes and topics are chosen specifically to motivate both boys and girls. Regular lessons teaching the craft of writing are beginning to improve pupils' written work and rate of progress across the school is accelerating. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were using the lyrics from a popular song to identify the different parts of speech. As the music was playing, pupils were engrossed in their learning, promoting excellent motivation and learning.
- In 2013, significantly more pupils attained the higher level in spelling, punctuation and grammar than is average. School data information indicates that almost twice as many pupils are on track to attain the higher level in writing in 2014. This is a significant improvement.
- Good teaching of numeracy skills, secure subject knowledge and programmes of study using information and communication technology has resulted in pupils' attainment rising from well-below average in 2011 to above average in 2013 in mathematics.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading. Through reading sessions, teachers, teaching assistants and well-trained volunteers are offering pupils many opportunities to read to adults in the school. Reading at home is a regular feature of the homework routine and parents are invited to comment on their children's skills through the home-school reading diary. Pupils who read to the inspector during the inspection showed good strategies in tackling unfamiliar words, were fluent and spoke about the authors and particular books they like to read.
- Although overall the most able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, they do not always make as much progress as they could, particularly in writing. Occasionally, activities devoted to planning and practising the different types of writing take several days. As a result, pupils do not always complete a unit of work quickly enough. This can slow the process of writing and, consequently, the progress they make.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to their peers. This is true, also, of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make the same good progress as their classmates and some do better, as a result of well-targeted, effective group and individual support for their learning. Their attainment in English and mathematics is below that of their classmates by around 12 months. This is a slightly wider gap than is seen nationally. However, many eligible pupils also have additional needs and, as a result, their individual starting points are much lower. Consequently, differences between the average attainment reached by this group of pupils and their peers can appear to be greater than average. Nevertheless, gaps in attainment are beginning to close. The school displays a genuine commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, with some examples of excellent practice; this helps pupils to make good progress. Pupils enjoy their lessons, work diligently at their tasks and behave well. Classrooms are bright and stimulating, with a range of displays to motivate pupils to learn.
- There is a whole-school approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The system for checking on how well individuals are progressing is now well established across the school. Regular discussions highlight pupils who need extra help and no time is wasted in providing well-trained highly effective additional support, according to pupils' needs.
- Effective teamwork by teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants guarantee that pupils receive a high level of support. For example, where pupils learn best, teaching assistants are used to work with groups of pupils while the teacher is explaining the lesson to others. This ensures no learning time for either the most able, or those who needed extra help, is lost.
- Work is well prepared and resourced. In almost all lessons equipment is available to help pupils complete their tasks and prompts are available to help less-confident learners to work independently. For example, in a literacy lesson, cards outlining what pupils needed to do also contained an example of how a finished sentence should look; in all classrooms there are prompts displayed around the walls to help pupils learn. These are much appreciated by pupils who say, 'There are always things to look at to help you if you are stuck.'
- Teachers use technology and a variety of learning styles to capture the interest of all pupils. Electronic tablets are available to them and video clips and games are regular features of lessons and help to ensure pupils remain enthusiastic about their learning.
- Pupils receive clear information about what they are expected to learn in the lesson and have agreed criteria to help them succeed. The most successful teaching adapts the criteria to include additional features according to the pupils' differing abilities.
- Marking in literacy is well developed. Pupils know how well they are doing and teachers' comments provide clear guidance on how they can improve their work. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt by marking and commenting on each other's work. This offers pupils opportunities to reflect on the quality of their own and others' achievements. However, in other subjects, marking is less developed and pupils are not as clear about what they need to do to reach the next level of learning.
- Some pupils' workbooks are well presented and indicate that pupils take a pride in the work they produce. This is particularly evident in topic work. However, the presentation in their day-to-day workbooks is much more variable. Pupils do not always take as much care as they should with handwriting and the setting down of work. As a result, books can look untidy and detract from the content covered within a piece of work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is generally good, both in lessons, around the school and in the more unstructured times of the day such as break and lunchtimes. Almost all pupils display good attitudes to learning. Inspection evidence, school documentation and discussions with staff, parents and pupils show that this is usually the case. Only when teaching is less engaging, or where pupils have been sitting for a long time, does attention sometimes wander.
- The pupils are open, friendly and polite to staff, visitors and each other.
- Clear rewards and sanctions are in place and are consistently and systematically carried out by all staff. Pupils are also very clear about the expectations of behaviour in the school. Older pupils take on the roles of 'Fitbods'. These pupils take their duties seriously in setting out equipment and organising games for pupils during break and lunch times. This helps pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility for their own and others' behaviour and learning.
- Pupils say their topics are fun. During a 'Survival' week, pupils engaged in den building in the school grounds. This develops the teamwork skills that are evident in the way that pupils work together in their lessons and help each other in their work.

- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that they can trust and turn to any of the adults in school if they are worried about anything. They have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying including verbal, physical and the types of bullying associated with computers and mobile phones.
- The school works hard to promote good attendance. It swiftly follows up absences and rewards good attendance. As a result, despite this being a relatively small school where there can be wide variations from year to year, most pupils attend regularly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Effective measures are in place to assess the risks of activities, trips and the premises. Gates and doors to school are locked and the site provides a safe, secure environment for the pupils.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Visitors talk to pupils about 'stranger danger' and the dangers presented by unsafe handling of fireworks. They also have the opportunities to learn about road safety and keeping safe when riding bicycles.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The whole-school reward system 'GEMS' (Going the Extra Mile) rewards pupils for doing the right thing and giving their best, whether academic, in behaviour or thought for others. Social development is encouraged through the many opportunities the pupils have to discuss their learning, work closely together in groups and pairs in lessons, while cultural diversity is promoted through religious education lessons and programmes of study, such as the 'Spirit Alive' programme, which explores diversity through the developing of art through other cultures.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an indomitable team. They have the full support of the staff and morale is high. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. Effective systems are in place to check on pupils' progress and regular discussions ensure teachers are held to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and this is closely linked to the management of staff performance and the training of teachers. There is a clear link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression. Targets set are closely linked to school priorities and relevant training opportunities are identified to meet teachers' individual needs.
- Middle leaders, some new to their responsibilities, are enthusiastic and are keen to develop their roles. They undertake some monitoring of their subjects. However, they do not, as yet, have a full understanding of achievement in their subjects across the school. Consequently, the part they are able to play in whole-school improvement is held back by this.
- The curriculum is good and pupils are given a range of opportunities through after-school clubs and sporting competitions. There is an appropriate focus on the teaching of English and mathematics, while topic work is used well to provide opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- The primary school sports funding has been used in a variety of ways. The funding has provided the school with professional coaches, enabling pupils to take part in a wider range of sports, at no cost to them. This has also offered teachers the opportunity to work alongside sports professionals in order to enhance their own skills in the teaching of sports and physical education.
- The local authority representative is a regular visitor to the school and does undertake some checks on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils during her allocated visits and offers support when required.
- The improvement in standards and progress over the last three years, combined with the effective way the school has strengthened writing since the last inspection demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve further.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and plans for future developments. It takes its role in driving improvement very seriously, through an equal measure of support and challenge to the school. It ensures safeguarding requirements are met, so that pupils are safe. Governors undertake relevant training and most of them have a good understanding of data about pupils' progress, to ensure they are able to ask pertinent questions on how well pupils achieve. Governors take part in many of the school's events, are regular visitors on parents' evenings, with their 'Talk to Me' table to maintain good relationships with parents and gather their views. The school budget is managed efficiently and the school is well-resourced. Governors hold the school to account for the way the funding for pupils supported by the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement. Governors know about the quality of teaching and ensure that any increases in salary are linked to this.

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	107851
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	440773

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Ward
Headteacher	Pauline Ward
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2011
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