

Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 7HQ

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and teachers both ensure that Victoria Road is a happy and welcoming school. It is well ordered and this helps to generate a calm and purposeful environment.
- The headteacher's determined leadership and focus on improving teaching have rapidly raised standards since the last inspection. The governing body is effective; governors and staff share the headteacher's ambitions for pupils' success.
- Senior leaders work together and in collaboration with other schools to plan carefully and implement effective practice.
- The majority of pupils achieve well because teachers plan suitable work for them. Pupils who find learning difficult receive carefully organised support.
- Senior leaders communicate high expectations and ambition which ensures that pupils are supported to make progress.
- Senior and middle leaders check pupils' progress frequently and put in place targeted support to ensure all pupils keep on track.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised and activities are carefully planned. Children settle quickly and respond well to adult support.
- Teaching is good, and in some cases, outstanding. Teachers' outstanding marking helps pupils to know exactly how well they have done and what they can do to improve.
- Subjects are linked imaginatively across the curriculum and to additional activities such as school trips. This results in enjoyable and stimulating lessons.
- Pupils feel safe, are proud of their school, like their teachers and enjoy learning. They behave well and are caring and considerate towards each other.
- The school's leaders monitor the quality of learning, follow pupils' progress carefully and ensure that extra support for pupils is effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always give pupils work which is hard enough. This is particularly the case with some of the most-able pupils. As a result they sometimes do not achieve as well as they should.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers do not make it sufficiently clear to pupils what they are expected to learn in the lesson and how much they are expected to complete in the time available.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, including two which were seen together with members of the senior leadership team. They looked at pupils' work, and an inspector listened to pupils reading and discussed their reading habits with them.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other school leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils, and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors examined several of the school's documents. These included: the school's evaluation of its own performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils' progress; documents relating to the support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs; and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the views expressed by parents as they arrived at school with their children. Twenty two questionnaires returned by staff were also analysed.

Inspection team

Josephine Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Garrett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Victoria Road is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- Most of the school's pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder have a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. There are fewer pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is a member of a collaborative local hub of nine schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment and progress of pupils further by:
 - making sure that all pupils, including the most able, are challenged to reach their full potential
 - ensuring that assessment information is used to plan tasks and activities which match all pupils' needs
- Continue to improve teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - always make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and how much time they have to complete the work

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Victoria Road is led and managed well. Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their school, and development planning is highly focused, accurate in its identification of priorities and effective in its implementation.
- The headteacher's determined leadership and sharp focus on improving teaching, supported by well-thought-out short-term plans, have brought about significant improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection and improved the quality of teaching. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders act as good role models for staff and pupils. They ensure that the school is orderly and that there is a friendly, caring and purposeful atmosphere.
- Good leadership and management make sure that arrangements to keep pupils safe are robust, that no one is discriminated against and all have equality of opportunity.
- Middle leaders provide focused support which is closely matched to the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and has a good impact on their progress.
- Senior and middle leaders check on pupils' progress closely by regularly looking at pupils' work observing teaching and analysing assessment data. Those pupils identified as falling behind are given support and helped to get back on track.
- The headteacher and his senior team hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make. Teachers at early stages in their careers are given good support and the expertise of all teachers is increased by regular opportunities to observe effective practice, both within their own school and in other schools in the area. Appropriate training is also available through the local hub.
- Links across subjects, all of which place an emphasis on literacy and mathematics, help to make learning interesting for pupils. For example, inspectors saw a literacy lesson taught through physical education which included links to the natural world and music. This captured pupils' interest and secured their concentration so that they made good progress.
- Pupils benefit from the way in which the broad and balanced curriculum is enhanced by trips and extra-curricular activities which increase their knowledge and skills. The schools in the local hub are collaborating to produce a new curriculum which draws on identified effective practice from within the hub.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted well and they are provided with a wide range of opportunities to help them to appreciate the values of British society. In a Year 4 religious education lesson, pupils learnt about the Jewish faith which used artefacts to help them to understand. In the process, they also learnt about the value of teamwork and the importance of respecting the property of others. 'Making the right choice' was the focus of a Key Stage 1 assembly where pupils were helped to remember that they have a range of choices open to them and must always apply themselves to reach their full potential.
- The school has used its primary school sport funding to support a wide range of sports clubs and to give talented pupils the chance to be involved in competitive sports. The funding has also been used for staff training, equipment and specialist coaches. These initiatives have increased pupils' participation so that all pupils are now developing more healthy lifestyles and doing better at sport.
- Leaders communicate with parents effectively and as a result there is a strong sense that this is a local school. Parents' views are positive and most agree that they would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority has provided support and challenge and worked with the school to raise achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a wide range of relevant skills. They have had further training, for example in understanding data and school performance. They know about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. Governors are kept informed by regular reports from the headteacher. They also meet with senior leaders regularly, and this allows them to learn about the quality of the school's work and its impact on pupils' achievement. They carry out their role well and ask challenging questions.
 - The governing body ensures that sound financial decisions are made. They check, in particular, that pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise achievement by reviewing the impact of interventions and outcomes. They are involved in setting challenging targets for the headteacher, and they make sure that teachers are rewarded appropriately for meeting their performance management targets, which are closely linked to raising pupils' achievement.
 - Governors engage with parents through their learning and development group. They ensure that parents are kept informed about all aspects of the school and promote good relationships within the

community.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in and around the school. It is not yet outstanding as occasionally pupils do not concentrate as well as they should, especially when they are unclear about what they are meant to be learning.
- Relationships are outstanding between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Pupils are very kind to one another and courteous to adults. The older pupils model good behaviour for the younger ones. As a result pupils are kind and courteous.
- Pupils understand how the school manages behaviour and know that their behaviour affects their progress. Pupils cooperate well with one another in lessons. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils collecting descriptive phrases were helped by one of the more-able pupils to share ideas and explain meanings.
- No pupils have been excluded from school in the last three years and bullying in all its forms is rare. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying for two years. Minor incidents are carefully tracked, quickly followed up and resolved.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and their parents agree. Pupils are confident that, if they have cause for worry, a member of staff will help them. Pupils have an impressive understanding of how to deal with risks, especially when using the internet.
- Pupils know about a healthy diet and the benefits of regular exercise. There is a very high participation rate in after-school clubs and as a result many pupils are developing a wide range of skills.
- Attendance is above average due to robust systems for monitoring and the close working partnerships with parents.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have established outstanding relationships with pupils, and manage behaviour calmly and with little fuss. Pupils are engaged by the tasks that teachers set and persevere with them. They remain focused and engaged when teachers make lessons lively and interesting by selecting topics and captivating resources which interest the pupils. Pupils say that lessons are fun and that they love learning.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to work with small groups. In a Year 4 literacy lesson on using adverbs, a teaching assistant carefully supported a group of children who had a wide variety of special educational needs. The teaching assistant used resources and dialogue skilfully, so that each pupil made marked progress.
- In a year 5 mathematics lesson pupils made good use of mathematical dictionaries, referring to them frequently to check the spelling of technical vocabulary. They also were well-supported in their understanding of three-dimensional shapes, both in a presentation and in being provided with the objects they were learning about. Handling and seeing the shapes had a good impact on their understanding.
- Pupils have opportunities to practise reading each day and this improves their progress in literacy. In some lessons, where this is rushed, pupils are not able to become involved in the story and to remember what they are reading about.
- Teachers' marking is of an outstanding quality. This leaves pupils in no doubt as to how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. All teachers follow the school's marking system. In many cases, the feedback from pupils shows that they have a clear understanding of how to improve. They are given time to correct their work at the start of the school day. This helps them to make progress and to improve in their next piece of work. Pupils' work is neatly presented and they say that they like trying to make their work even better. Pupils know their targets, which are clearly displayed in each lesson, and work hard to meet them.
- The transitions into Reception and from Reception to Year 1 are smooth because information about children is shared between teachers, and children are given a taste of what school will be like before they start in Reception so that they can get used to unfamiliar routines.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs coordinator makes sure the planning of pupils' work is closely linked to the skills they need to develop and meets regularly with the teaching assistants who provide support.
- In a few lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged, particularly the most-able pupils. Sometimes, these

pupils are required to repeat work, which practises skills they have already learnt, or use resources that do not extend their learning. This slows their progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave school has been improving steadily in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years. In 2014, standards were well above average.
- Pupils start school in the Reception class with levels of knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. They settle quickly into the well-organised and caring environment, and make good progress. The proportion of children who reach the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Reception is high, although fewer gain the higher levels than might be expected.
- Pupils continue to do well in Year 1, and by the end of the year, they are achieving higher-than-average results in the national phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check. Pupils say that they enjoy reading, and generally read at home and at school. When reading to an inspector, they used phonics to help them with unfamiliar words. Pupils' good progress in reading faltered slightly in 2014.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra support for eligible pupils. Each class has two hours of classroom support each day, and the funding also gives these pupils access to enrichment activities, particularly trips. The school tracks the progress of eligible pupils closely to make sure that they continue to make good progress. In 2014, eligible pupils reached a higher standard in English and mathematics than all pupils nationally. The gap between eligible pupils and those within school in reading and mathematics has closed. The gap between these groups of pupils in writing is half a term.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make slightly better progress from their starting points than their classmates. Highly proficient teaching assistants, deployed effectively by the special educational needs coordinator, have had a good impact in all subjects.
- Except on the few occasions when they are not set work that is hard enough for them, the most able pupils achieve well. They reach higher standards in mathematics than in reading and writing. The school continues to support these pupils in order to help those who are capable to reach Level 6, for example by providing additional tuition in writing two days each week. The school works closely with other local schools, including a grammar school, to enhance its provision for the most able.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress. In 2014, a high proportion reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leadership of early years is good. Activities are carefully planned and targeted to the children's interests so that they settle quickly and are well-supported to gain in confidence and develop skills. This has a good impact on children's development and makes sure they are prepared for Year 1.
- Children develop a range of skills as they participate in the activities. Children experience a broad and balanced curriculum which includes art and other creative activities. They are motivated and engrossed in their learning.
- Children are encouraged to play cooperatively, with bicycles for two for example, and they quickly learn new routines and good classroom behaviour. They are taught to play safely and how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road.
- When the children are sitting listening to the teacher, adults give good support by providing stickers as rewards in an unobtrusive manner. This ensures the children are paying attention and know what they are going to learn. As a result they are encouraged to try their best and reach their potential.
- Liaison with parents and carers is strong and begins before children start at the school. Each child has a learning journey book and parents contribute to this, entering home experiences which might add to their child's learning at school so that the children are supported in their learning both in and out of school.
- Children's progress is carefully monitored and tracked. Meetings are held every five weeks to check their progress and interventions are adjusted when there has been little progress. A higher-level teaching assistant works closely with all adults providing support, ensuring that there is consistency and that praise is used appropriately.

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	118369
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	449267

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	L Charnley
Headteacher	Simon Way
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 June 2013
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