

Vernon Terrace Primary School

Vernon Terrace, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN1 5HE

Inspection dates

29–30 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher uses her deep understanding and commitment to the school's community to underpin a clear, shared school drive to give every pupil the best chance to thrive.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching across the school is good. Teachers assess and plan carefully for the pupils' clear progression and consistently build in challenge for the most able pupils. This is ensuring that all pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- There is a clear whole-school commitment to go the extra mile to help pupils overcome barriers to learning. The special educational needs coordinator and the leaders of the hearing impaired and social, emotional and mental health bases use their wealth of skills to provide every child with carefully tailored support to be successful.
- The early years leader ensures that children make a strong start to school. Children benefit from active and interesting activities that develop their language and basic skills to learn confidently.
- Governors ensure that they are well informed and use their range of expertise to support and challenge school leaders effectively. The use of additional funding is closely monitored to check the impact on raising achievement.
- Pupils are keen to learn because the school's curriculum interests and engages them. They enjoy a wide range of experiences and hands-on opportunities, particularly in art, science and outdoor learning. The school also provides many sporting opportunities within and beyond the school.
- There is a strong sense of harmony and mutual care and respect, as pupils follow the lead set by all adults in valuing and celebrating the diversity of culture and need represented across their school.
- Pupils behave well at all times of the school day. Pupils say that they feel safe, valued and well cared for. Parents also have a high level of confidence in the school's work.
- Safeguarding of pupils is highly effective, as leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate training and know that safeguarding is a priority at all times. Leaders are particularly resilient in pursuing support from wider services to ensure that children are safe and families are supported.
- Teachers do not consistently provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders do not fully use the information they have to refine actions to further improve the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by planning more frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills in tasks that require them to explain, prove and extend their thinking, particularly in mathematics.
- Further develop leaders' use of information about pupils and the school to sharpen the actions for improvement to secure rapid progress across all areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads by example in relentlessly pursuing the key school aim of ensuring that every child is valued and given the support they need to succeed. She works closely with her senior leadership team to ensure that staff have the skills and resources to be responsive to the diversity and complexity of need.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and leadership team have been successful in building a strong team ethic of pushing for progress for every child. Teachers now have a firm understanding of how progress data informs and supports effective planning for all groups and individuals. This has contributed considerably to securing consistently good teaching and progress for pupils across all key stages.
- Senior leaders have improved procedures for the management of staff's performance, and have used this successfully to address any underperformance and to promote priorities to move the school forward. However, the feedback and follow-up of areas for improvement is not always consistently clear.
- The school has been proactive in securing external support with its journey of improvement and working with other schools. Support has been used to help the school to develop effective wider leadership across the whole senior leadership team and the wider staff team. Sometimes models have been adopted without ensuring that they are coherently linked together with pupil and school information to give sufficient sharpness to actions for improvement.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to be language-rich, motivating and active, which is appropriate and responsive to the particular needs of a multilingual community. The pupils particularly relish the integral outdoor learning activities that the school gives prominence to, due to limited access to the outdoors in their community. Pupils develop their art skills through appreciation of a range of artists. They also enjoy meeting visitors and going on visits, including residential ones.
- Pupils celebrate the fundamental British value of democracy through elections to the school council, pupil questionnaires and opportunities to put forward their ideas. Pupils show tolerance and respect towards adults and classmates and appreciate service to others through charitable collections. They take on responsibilities such as lunchtime duties and buddying other children when they first arrive. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is evident in their positive attitudes to their work and how well they get on together, showing that the school is effective in promoting equality and respect for different beliefs, lifestyles and cultures.
- Special needs funding, including for the resource bases, is used highly effectively. Leaders have ensured that the specialist skills this brings to the school have a positive impact across the whole school.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding very effectively. Additional booster groups, individual support and direct support within class are carefully targeted to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. In addition to monitoring the performance of disadvantaged pupils rigorously, leaders have ensured that this group of pupils have every chance to participate and be successful in all aspects of timetabled and extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders use the additional funding from the physical education and sport grant to very

good effect. They have ensured that teachers have worked alongside expert coaches to improve their teaching and coaching skills. They have built relationships with organisations beyond the school, such as cricket and rugby clubs, to further widen opportunities. Pupils from across the school have opportunities to take part in a range of competitions and festivals, including activities to support less confident children.

The governance of the school

- Governors make frequent visits and check on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books. They link this with achievement and their good understanding of assessment systems, which allows them to ask challenging questions about the performance of specific groups of pupils.
- Governors are effective in checking school improvements in line with their specific roles, for example meeting regularly with middle and senior leaders and reporting back directly to the full governing body, to ensure that their understanding of the school goes beyond what they are told by the headteacher.
- The governing body has fully supported the school in reaching out and seeking participation from parents, including being available at parents' evenings, representing the school at community meetings, and recruiting governors with a range of skills.
- The link governors monitor the impact of additional funds to raise pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles through their involvement in sports. They were proactive in funding a school minibus to further expand the opportunities for pupils to participate in community sports.
- Governors monitor the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding to make sure that it is used effectively. They check that any differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing. Governors have supported the development of the 'Garden Room', led by one of the assistant headteachers, to accelerate literacy and mathematics support for disadvantaged pupils. Discussions with pupils, alongside information about how well they are doing, have helped the governors test the impact.
- The governors are all highly aware of the importance of their role in safeguarding and have received appropriate training, including 'Prevent' training on radicalisation and extremism.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have developed a culture of safety across the school. They work determinedly with external agencies and with the school's most vulnerable families to keep children safe. In line with the vulnerability of their school community, all senior leaders are trained designated leads. Leaders ensure that this is a stringent part of staff induction, as well as providing regular and up-to-date ongoing training, giving staff the confidence to report appropriately. Pupils say that the staff listen to them, care for them and protect them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. Leaders have successfully raised the consistency of staff's expectations of

what pupils can achieve across the school. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved over time.

- Teachers know their pupils' learning needs well. This is because they ask questions during lessons which check pupils' understanding effectively. This enables teachers to correct misconceptions quickly. As a result, in the vast majority of lessons pupils remain focused on learning and know what they need to do to improve.
- The school's rigorous development of how pupils' work is assessed and tracked ensures that teachers more accurately identify what pupils need to learn in reading, writing and mathematics. Most teachers have used this insight effectively to ensure that any gaps in key learning generated by previous staffing issues have been targeted and the topics missed have been taught thoroughly. Teachers' consistent focus on challenge for the most able pupils is now a feature of all lessons.
- Leaders have also worked closely with teachers to carefully plan a range of targeted extra support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or are at risk of falling behind. This includes support for their social and emotional development, as well as their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, current pupils are making good or better progress.
- Specialist teachers are particularly skilled in supporting the higher levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable pupils, in the hearing impaired base, social, emotional and mental health base and also in the internal support and nurture bases. These specialists also work closely with all other school staff, which means all staff have a high level of understanding and consistent commitment to effectively including all pupils and sharing responsibility for their progress.
- However, some pupils' workbooks do not reflect the highest quality of teaching with the right level of challenge. Where this quality is present, teachers plan learning that is ambitious to stretch all the pupils, especially the most able pupils, to deepen their understanding. The best learning seen in lessons was where teachers also skilfully ensured that lower-attaining pupils could independently tackle correctly pitched work. Sharply focused teacher guidance and marking then ensures that the pupils expand and improve their learning; hence, pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Leaders have not secured this quality of teaching across the school.
- In their writing and their reading, pupils use their well-developed knowledge of phonics to spell or pronounce tricky or unusual words. This helps them to write and read with accuracy from an early age. Pupils read confidently to the inspector from books that were appropriately matched to their ability. Pupils enjoy reading and those not supported from home receive timely additional help in school. Teachers use fascinating topics effectively, such as 'I am warrior' and 'Muck, mess and mixtures' to weave the teaching of literacy across the curriculum.
- Leaders have supported teachers and teaching assistants effectively in all years to build on pupils' reading fluency and improve their ability to infer and find supporting evidence; pupils make good progress in reading. School leaders recognise the importance of building on this further to meet higher national expectations, particularly through promoting pupils' love of reading. Teachers have designed some intriguing and motivational reading dens which tempt pupils in, such as a 'reading pyramid' and comfortable sofas and cushions in covered outdoor areas.
- In mathematics, teachers use their sound subject knowledge to check that pupils'

number and arithmetic skills are secure. In Year 2, pupils move from one-digit and two-digit addition at the beginning of the year to column addition and arrays at the end. By the end of Year 6, pupils tackle fractions, percentages and decimals confidently. Teachers are not consistently and frequently offering more effective opportunities for pupils to reason about and apply their skills.

- Teachers plan teaching assistants' work well. Pupils with complex special educational needs receive sensitive support which effectively promotes good academic and personal progress for them. However, when there is more than one adult supporting different needs for individual pupils with complex needs, they are not always clear on how targets link back to their progress in the classroom.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The strong ethos of respect and care for each individual is evident in all aspects of school life.
- The school places particular importance on pupils' health and emotional well-being. The school has a number of specialist staff with a range of skills and also works closely with specialists to support pupils who are most vulnerable. The on-site social emotional mental health resource base skilfully supports pupils at risk of failing from other schools to reintegrate and flourish. The wider school community accept and welcome these pupils into main school activities.
- Pupils play and work harmoniously together across the school day. Staff provide excellent role models; making sure everyone is included and that pupils understand and respect other cultures. A pupil told an inspector that there is 'every language from over the world', and another pupil introduced her friends by explaining 'we all have different languages, but we are all friends'.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in their school. They are keen to learn. They are starting to be more independent in using feedback from teachers to improve their work.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and they feel very safe. They know who to speak to in school if they have any worries. They understand the different forms of bullying and are particularly well informed about cyber bullying and how to keep themselves safe online. School records show that bullying is rare and staff vigilance is high when monitoring this aspect of behaviour.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors and responses to recent school questionnaires were very positive about the support that their children receive and are rightly confident that they are happy and safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and show their enjoyment when coming to school.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in class and around the school and interruptions to learning are rare. Pupils understand the school sanctions and accept that there are consequences when their actions fall below the school's high expectations of them.
- Pupils who find more difficulty managing their own behaviour are supported with a

high degree of success. Adults help them to develop appropriate strategies sensitively and all school staff take responsibility for supporting every pupil to be part of the class.

- Attendance has risen steadily since the last inspection and is currently in line with the national average. The headteacher has worked very hard to promote the importance of good attendance. Very few pupils are persistently absent. This shows the value which pupils and families now place on the importance of being in school and the school's proactive work in keeping a high profile on attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Overall, pupils now make good progress through each key stage. The school has maintained the good and often significantly better progress, from low starting points, compared to pupils nationally by their final year. This good progress is now consistent across the school because school leaders have improved the quality of teaching and set high expectations for learning.
- Leaders have made sure that all teachers are clear about the basic skills that pupils need to acquire to match age expectations and that these basic skills are promoted consistently across the curriculum.
- Pupils join the school with skills and abilities significantly below those expected for their age. Four fifths of the pupils speak English as an additional language. There is a high level of mobility and families often move on after a short time. Progress and attainment of those who have been in school for a sustained period of time is good for all groups. Published progress and attainment data does not always reflect this.
- Achievement in the Year 1 national phonics screening in 2016 has recovered from an apparent drop in 2015 to the highest level achieved by the school since the phonics assessment was introduced. The figure is above the 2015 national average. From low starting points, this is accelerated progress.
- Since the last inspection, outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have improved in reading writing and mathematics, although they are still below the national average. There has been a particular improvement in the percentages of pupils achieving secure middle and higher levels. Compared to the pupils' starting points, this represents at least good progress. Current attainment information in key stage 1 shows many pupils starting this school year with appropriate skills to be on track for age-related expectations, with a proportion of pupils working above the level expected in mathematics, reading and writing. Where pupils are not working at the appropriate level, tailored support is already in place.
- By the end of key stage 2, historical information shows that from starting points below national expectations at key stage 1 attainment has consistently improved to be in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Also, the number of pupils making more than expected progress and achieving higher levels has continued to improve. This is at least good progress. In writing and mathematics, pupils have been consistently making progress above national figures. Reading, although not quite as strong, was still in line with national expectations.
- The progress and attainment of groups of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is a continuing strength of the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good

progress to their classmates. This is as a result of receiving highly effective, tailored support, which is regularly checked and adapted so that pupils' needs are continuously met. There are many pupils receiving a high level of adaptation and intervention which are not recorded on the special needs register.

- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding are now making good progress. The number of eligible pupils is dropping significantly year on year, with only two to six pupils in each year group now eligible. Any difference between their attainment and that of others is diminishing due to the range of effective tailored interventions. Their progress from their different starting points in all subjects shows the positive impact of the use of the additional funding. Again, the school's analysis and tracking does not always accurately reflect the extent of the progress in relation to pupils with multiple needs.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in lessons, as well as the comprehensive range of pupil progress, monitoring, moderation and tracking information held by the school. This showed consistent and sustained progress for all groups of pupils including in wider curriculum areas, such as history and geography. However, opportunities for pupils to apply, prove and extend their understanding so that they secure rapid progress in higher national age expectations are not consistent and frequent, especially in mathematics.
- The consistent and progressive focus on the skills of reading fluency, arithmetic and grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as the school's strengths in pupils' personal development, mean that pupils are well prepared for the transfer to secondary school.
- The leadership's evaluation and reporting on the wide range of progress information does not accurately capture the actual progress of pupils with needs that overlap.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years enter with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception Year the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is close to national averages. This represents at least good progress from the children's starting points, so they are well prepared when they enter Year 1.
- Although teaching is good and progress is good overall in Nursery, this accelerates considerably in Reception, due to the inspirational and sharply targeted teaching in the Reception Year.
- Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment because the adults working in the early years provide an excellent variety of interesting, stimulating and well-organised activities which help them to acquire and practise new skills. The outdoor learning environment is particularly exciting and consistent with the school's drive on the importance of outdoor learning experiences, as most children have limited access to outdoor spaces at home.
- Adults encourage safe play and use of resources and all of the children learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Children are kept safe at all times and are well looked after by caring and nurturing staff. This ethos encourages children to be kind to each other.
- Adults' use of resources captures children's interests. All staff, in line with the whole-

school approach, are continually modelling and extending children's language, supported by visual and tactile objects. The enthusiasm of the teacher, coupled with skilful weaving in of frequent opportunities to use their phonics and to write, is being particularly successful in enthusing boys to tackle writing tasks. Adults regularly check how well children are developing and this enables them to direct additional help and support if required.

- Communication with parents is good. Parents frequently attend 'stay and play' sessions and can stay and work with their children at the beginning of each morning to find out what they are learning and how they can help their children at home.
- The early years is well led and managed. The highly skilled and enthusiastic leader involves the whole team in providing activities which engage children and purposefully develop their skills. The early years leader does not succinctly analyse information about pupil progress across Nursery and Reception to ensure that the whole early years team can sharply focus teaching equally effectively.

School details

Unique reference number	121920
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10019556

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Henderson
Headteacher	Jacqueline Lapsa
Telephone number	01604 633 894
Website	www.vernonterrace.net
Email address	head@vernonterrace.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Four fifths of the school's pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language, representing 42 different home languages, with the largest group being pupils from 'any other White' background.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The school is in an area of high mobility with families often staying for short periods of time before moving on.
- The proportions of pupils supported through an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs

and disabilities. The hearing impaired resource base (HRB) has eight places and is currently supporting six pupils using a 'natural aural' approach. This involves intensive use of spoken language and hearing aid technology to develop pupils' language skills and to support their inclusion and learning. The social, emotional mental health resource base (SEMH) has 10 places and is currently supporting six pupils from other schools who are at risk of exclusion.

- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons, including two joint observations with the headteacher and three with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and pupils were heard reading. The inspectors talked to pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons. They scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the headteacher and leadership team, to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors were unable to take account of responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as there were insufficient numbers available. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. In addition, the inspectors considered pupil and parent questionnaires from the past 12 months provided by the school.
- Inspectors talked to a range of staff, as there were no responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils and information relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
- Inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Mansell	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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