



Vale View Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118494
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280327
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Heather Yaxley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Vale View Road
School category	Community		Elmsvale
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Dover, Kent CT17 9NP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01304 202821
Number on roll	229	Fax number	01304 202821
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Allen
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Ian Geddis

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector during the penultimate week of term. During the inspection it was healthy schools week, open afternoon, Years 5 and 6 were performing their production and Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 had school visits.

Description of the school

Vale View has seven classes and a designated nursery. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds and the vast majority are of White British heritage. Over 25% have been identified as having a learning difficulty, which is higher than expected nationally. One pupil is looked after by a local authority. At the time of the inspection, in the absence of the headteacher, the school was led by the deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Vale View provides pupils with a satisfactory education. Value for money is satisfactory. This is also the school's view. The enthusiasm and excitement of staff and pupils are clear to all who visit Vale View. The school provides pupils with an environment that is calm, bright, welcoming and promotes a positive atmosphere in which pupils want to learn. Pupils love coming to school and their families are overwhelmingly pleased with what the school provides. Their comments include 'this is a great school', 'we could not wish for a better school' and 'the team at Vale View are excellent, always striving to improve'.

Leaders and managers are successfully steering the school through uncertain times, ensuring that provision for all pupils remains good and that the positive ethos of the school is maintained. The quality of the teaching, the curriculum and the care and guidance that pupils receive are good and this makes a positive difference to pupils' personal skills, which are also good. The youngest pupils are given a good start to their education and make good progress in relation to their starting points. The progress that pupils make throughout the school is generally satisfactory and recent results show improvement, especially in areas of work which have been given priority for development. The current drive on improving writing and the difference that this is beginning to make is evident to all who walk through the corridors and classrooms. The school is also developing systems to track pupils' progress more effectively, but it is too early for these to have made enough impact, particularly to standards in Years 1 and 2.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall but with many good features that give the school good capacity to improve further. Areas of strength and priorities for development are accurately identified and issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. Governors provide satisfactory support and, together with the senior leadership team, are developing their roles and responsibilities so that there is a clear focus on raising standards further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Track carefully the progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 and the progress all pupils make in writing and use the findings to raise standards.
- Continue to ensure that all leaders, including governors, rigorously engage in the processes for judging how well the school is doing and use the findings to improve the progress pupils make and the standards they reach.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement and standards are satisfactory. When pupils start in the Nursery or Reception class, they generally have knowledge and skills that are lower than expected for their age. However, as a result of the good provision and support that

they receive throughout the Foundation Stage, pupils reach standards that are in line with age-related expectations by the end of Reception. This represents good progress. Satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 maintains average standards. This satisfactory progress continues throughout Years 3 to 6, again leading to average standards overall but the rate of progress accelerates and more pupils reach or exceed the challenging targets set for them. Progress is good in science and results for Year 6 in 2006 show even greater improvement. In mathematics standards also improved this year. By contrast standards in English have been slow to improve. Although there is more work to be done, steps taken to develop writing are beginning to take effect, with most pupils of all ages making good progress this year. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they are given the support that they need to do their best.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The progress that pupils make in their personal skills is good. They clearly enjoy coming to school and speak enthusiastically about what they are learning. One boy commented that the only thing that he did not like about school was having to leave at the end of the day! Pupils are keen to take advantage of all the opportunities presented to them, particularly in relation to keeping safe and healthy. This was demonstrated during healthy school week when pupils tasted exotic fruits, took part in special sports activities and learned how to give First Aid. The way in which pupils move between classrooms and play areas is very impressive. This not only helps to keep one another safe but is also an example of their good behaviour.

Pupils develop good spiritual and cultural awareness throughout the curriculum. Moral and social development is a strength, as seen in pupils' positive relationships with one another at play and in the classrooms. Pupils in Reception and Year 6 value the friendship and responsibility that they get from the buddy system. Through questionnaires, circle time and the student council, pupils of all ages have opportunities to say what they think. They know that what they say makes a difference, giving examples of changes to the playground and school lunches. The student council is invited to governing body meetings to raise issues that are important to it. All of these skills ensure that pupils are prepared for the next stage in their schooling, except that their basic skills in numeracy and literacy require development. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because teachers are enthusiastic and excited about their work. This rubs off on the pupils, making them enthusiastic, excited and active learners. Sometimes, the pace of lessons can be a little slow, and therefore fails to

stimulate pupils sufficiently. Effective monitoring systems enable senior managers to have a good understanding of the school's teaching qualities, and then to put in place activities to improve practice. Planning is thorough and indicates how a lesson will challenge pupils of all abilities, enabling them to make progress. Clear learning objectives are made known to pupils at the start of the lesson and checked for achievement at the end. Assessment is beginning to be used well to determine pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and then to provide work to overcome those difficulties. Targets, which are known to pupils, are set for individuals or groups, enabling them to know what they are aiming to achieve.

Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well in their learning by class teachers and skilled teaching assistants. Pupils are managed well, creating good relationships and good attitudes and behaviour. Class routines are well established and consistently applied, giving pupils a sense of security. There are good opportunities for pupils to be engaged in independent learning and this is done particularly well in the Foundation Stage.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Although the school judges its curriculum to be satisfactory, the inspectors consider it to be good. It is well planned and monitored, and covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a good curriculum in the Foundation Stage, preparing pupils well for entry to Year 1. The curriculum is innovative, with a successful 'Creative Curriculum' having been trialled in Year 3 that is now to be extended to other years. There is an effective programme for personal, social and health education encouraging pupils to stay safe and healthy. The election of the school council and house captains are two of many ways the school develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship. Information and communication technology has developed well, with the addition of interactive whiteboards in every class, and a good supply of laptop computers. These are all used frequently and effectively.

The curriculum is enhanced considerably with a planned series of visits and visitors, including a residential stay for Year 6, to give pupils first-hand experiences. A visit to London's Maritime Museum and to the local lifeboat station took place during the inspection, with pupils displaying good knowledge and enthusiasm on their return. There is only a limited range of extra-curricular clubs and activities to enable pupils to extend their skills and interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good. The school appreciates the importance of every pupil and, as a parent said, 'they make the children feel wanted, mattered and very special'. There are thorough induction arrangements in place before pupils start school so that, when they do start, teachers know them well and they are able to settle quickly. Pupils have a good knowledge of the targets that have been set for them in literacy and numeracy, and work conscientiously towards them. The system for tracking

pupils' progress is good but only recently has it been used effectively to show the rate at which pupils are reaching the expected level of work throughout the year. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities are provided with appropriate work and adult support through their provision maps. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices through a good health education programme including sex education and the dangers of the inappropriate use of drugs. The expertise of outside agencies, such as the psychological service, social services, school nurse and police liaison officer, is used well.

Child protection arrangements, including the required checks, are all in place and pupils feel safe and secure. Robust risk assessments are in place for all in-school and out of school activities and are conscientiously observed. There is a calm and orderly environment, ensuring that risks in potentially hazardous environments are minimised. Good care is taken of pupils at all times, including lunchtime and breakfast club, where they have good facilities and supervision for play.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in raising achievement and supporting learners is satisfactory overall, but there is much that they do which is good. In particular, the senior leadership team is successfully managing the school through a period of uncertainty. They are steadfast in their determination to maintain the positive learning ethos of the school and pupils respond very well to this in their attitudes towards work and towards one another. The senior leadership team is enthusiastic, forward thinking and entirely focused on improving standards. They know their school well and accurately evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is good. Systems to monitor and evaluate pupil progress over time have not always been used effectively. Current initiatives to raise standards are beginning to make a difference, particularly to the quality of writing throughout the school but more time is needed to consolidate this work and to build on the improvements and skills of senior staff. However, the successes, together with the professional quality of the team, demonstrate good capacity to improve the provision even further.

Governors give satisfactory support and are mindful of the need to give greater challenge to the school. There are several vacancies within the governing body and this makes it difficult for the full range of monitoring activities to take place. Governors encourage parents and carers to come and express their views at monthly surgeries and the school regularly asks pupils and their families for their views, taking their comments into account when changes are made.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that we came to inspect your school at the end of term during the week when you were very busy with healthy schools week, the school production and school trips. It was a pleasure to meet so many of you. We have thought about what you said and have also listened to the comments that your families made to us.

We found that Vale View is giving you a satisfactory education and that it provides you with many good things including a good curriculum and good teaching. You told us that you love to be in school and we could see how much you enjoy lessons. We were very impressed with your behaviour and the way in which you know how to help one another stay healthy and safe. Many of you told us how much the 'buddies' help you.

We have written a report and hope that many of you will read it with your families (it is not too long!). We have asked the staff to think about how they keep a check on how well you are doing so that you can make even more progress. I am sure that they will want to talk to you about how you can help with this too.

We wish you well in your new classes for September.