

Vittoria Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100426
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	285788
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John Collins

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Page
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Hamer
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001
School address	Half Moon Crescent Islington London N1 0TJ
Telephone number	020 7837 6063
Fax number	020 7837 8624

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is situated in an inner-city area with high social and economic deprivation. Higher proportions of pupils than in most schools join or leave at unusual times. A large majority have English as an additional language and a few of these are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils come from many ethnic backgrounds with the largest groups being White British and those with other White backgrounds (including Kurdish, Albanian and Kosovan), Black African, and Bangladeshi. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is average, although nearly half of all pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Vittoria Primary is a good, improving school. The school has been successful in tackling the weaknesses identified in its last inspection. As a result, standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is now good.

Significant improvements in the way the school checks on the progress of groups and individual pupils have had a major impact in raising standards and achievement. These excellent procedures enable the school to identify those at risk of underachievement quickly, provide them with the good support they need and set challenging targets for improvement. Along with the better quality of teaching and the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils, all groups of pupils, regardless of gender, ability or background, achieve well.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low. More than half are at an early stage of learning English and many arrive with little or no English. Good teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage mean that children get a good start, although standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are still well below those usually found. Many children arrive with limited social skills and currently their opportunities to develop confidence and make independent choices are not yet consistently established across all areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress. The school leaders have worked well with staff to increase the proportion of good or outstanding lessons, which means that the rate of progress made by pupils is accelerating. This is particularly so for pupils in Year 6, who achieve well. While standards are now broadly average, the school recognises that more remains to be done to ensure that they continue to rise, particularly in writing and mathematics. Many of the improvements to teaching are new and are becoming firmly established and the school leaders are striving to secure consistency, for example, in marking and the quality of handwriting and presentation of work.

Pupils have responded well to teachers' raised expectations. Their personal development and well-being are good. For example, they have an excellent understanding of healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. They work hard, concentrate well and their good behaviour contributes to purposeful and productive lessons. Pupils say that 'learning is fun' and that they have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults who support them. As one pupil said, 'It's the people in this school that make it special'. They enjoy their time in school and benefit from a good curriculum that offers an excellent, wide range of opportunities. Taking account of the new management team's accurate view of the school's performance, their success in tackling weaknesses, rising standards and pupils' good achievement, there is a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to make their own choices in their learning.
- Raise the quality of marking to that found in Year 6.
- Improve the quality of handwriting and presentation of work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage build well on their low attainment on entry but by the end of reception, standards are still well below those expected in language, mathematics and other

areas of learning. The whole-school focus on improving writing, particularly for boys, is showing indications of success by the end of Year 6. There is now a secure system in place that provides both individual and group targets for each pupil in writing and identifies where additional support will be most beneficial. However, more needs to be done to improve standards of handwriting and the overall presentation of pupils' work. School attainment targets are challenging this year but current analysis of the progress of pupils in Year 6 shows that they are on course to improve on results last year to standards that are broadly average. This maintains the good progress shown in all subjects across the school. The provision for those pupils with English as an additional language, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of special educational need, is good. These groups make progress equally as good others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' enthusiasm and interest for learning are supported well by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have good opportunities to become aware of, and develop respect for, world-wide communities through projects such as the effects of global warming. Pupils hold firm views about justice and fair play and this responsible attitude contributes well towards creating a happy school. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to each other, staff, and visitors. 'What is really special about our school', said one pupil, 'is we care about each other because everyone must have a friend'. Attendance has improved as a result of the school promoting the importance of attending school regularly and is now satisfactory. Pupils know about keeping safe and the school is working well with both parents and pupils to help them understand how to deal with any bullying or harassment. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy their healthy food options both in their packed lunch boxes and cooked meals. They eagerly participate in an extensive range of physical activities. The school council appreciates having a voice and influence. For example, they have made a considerable contribution to the school travel plan. When fund-raising they have used their mathematical skills to keep a financial record of the income and expenditure. This has made an excellent contribution to their future economic wellbeing. Pupils are now acquiring the average basic skills they need to succeed at secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The senior managers' accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching identifies where and how it can improve. As a result of actions taken there are many aspects of the teaching that are consistently strong. Pupils know the purpose of the lessons and what they must, should and could achieve. Teaching is lively and resources such as interactive whiteboards are used well to make learning interesting. Pupils want to learn because they are well motivated and speak of enjoying their lessons because teachers made them fun. Teaching assistants and learning mentors give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those with statements of special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. As a result, they are fully included in learning and make good progress. Checking on pupils' progress is consistent and rigorous. It is used effectively by teachers to plan activities that are well matched to the needs of the different groups. Standards of

handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work are sometimes unsatisfactory and not all the teachers deal effectively with this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all learners well. It is fully inclusive through the good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, statements of special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language. New Foundation Stage planning has improved recently to focus better on what children are learning. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities to promote independence by allowing children to make choices about materials and resources for themselves. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum has been developed well. This is reflected in pupils' creative work on displays around the school. Pupils took particular pride in telling how they designed and built a mosaic mural on the theme of litter that takes pride of place in the playground. The curriculum time is used creatively and covers all subjects very well. Basic skills are being developed and there are good links made between English and other subjects, such as art, information and communication technology and science. There are excellent opportunities provided for visits to places of interest to support learning. Pupils enthusiastically attend the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which are offered by the school and local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good levels of care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school's work. There are robust procedures for child protection, health and safety and risk assessments, providing a safe learning environment. There is good support for the many different groups within the school. Pupils' needs are identified promptly, and, where necessary, learning programmes are put in place involving specialist teaching and outside agencies. Detailed and thorough records of these pupils are kept. Parents are kept well informed of their child's academic and social progress. They are regularly invited into lessons to see how subjects are taught in order to help their child at home. Pupils' progress is tracked thoroughly. The teachers' marking has improved. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of how they are getting on through the setting of group targets and individual discussions with teachers. However, this is not yet followed through rigorously enough by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the leadership team provide a strong and clear direction. The school's performance is very rigorously monitored and evaluated and information is used very successfully to put in place detailed plans for improvement setting out challenging goals. In a very short time the school has developed effective systems to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and the quality of teaching has been improved. This has led to rising standards. In most respects, the school has been very successful in reaching its goals but standards in handwriting remain lower than they should be. The role of subject leaders has increased significantly since the last inspection. Through training and very useful partnerships the school now provides high quality opportunities for all groups of pupils to achieve well. The school has a very strong ethos of valuing all its pupils and ensuring that all

have equal opportunities. The governors have reviewed their role and are now increasingly effective in steering the work of the school and challenging its effectiveness. They are playing a more active role in the school's well established cycle of self review.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Vittoria Primary School, London, N1 0TJ

It was lovely to meet some of you when we came to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome even though Year 6 were busy with their SATs. We were impressed by your good behaviour and responsible attitudes. You worked hard and concentrated well. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school.

There are lots of things which you and your school do well:

- You are reaching much better standards in English, mathematics and science and reading than you did before and we feel you are making good progress.
- You told us how much you enjoy your lessons and we agree with you that you have good teachers.
- Your headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead and manage your school well and are helped by the governing body who are responsible for the way the school is run. They are all doing a good job.
- We agree with you that the teachers and other staff look after you.

These are the things that we think the school could do better.

- We have asked all the teachers to make sure that when they mark your work that they explain what you need to do to improve.
- We have asked the teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes to let the children make more choices.
- Help you to improve your handwriting and presentation.

You can play your part by asking if you do not understand. The teachers will be pleased to help you.

Good luck in the future

John Collins Lead inspector