



Victoria Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103921
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 286809
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Watters HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Silvertrees Road
School category	Community		Tipton
Age range of pupils	3–7		DY4 8NH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5571923
Number on roll (school)	310	Fax number	0121 5224881
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	C A Evans
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–7	4–5 October 2006	286809

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors (AI).

Description of the school

The school is situated in Tipton in the West Midlands and serves an area of high social deprivation. Most of the pupils come from the immediate area and live either in privately owned or local authority homes. Just over half of the pupils are of White British origin and almost half are from other ethnic groups. The majority of these are Asian or Asian British and are of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins. A small group of pupils are from Black or Black British origins, either from the Caribbean or Africa. Almost 40% of the pupils speak English as an additional language, the most common being Bengali (Bangladeshi), Panjabi and Urdu. Almost 12% of all pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where high expectations, enjoyment, teamwork and a passionate belief that all children can achieve well are the hallmarks of its undoubted success. Starting from a very low base, the children make very good progress and by the time they leave the school, standards are in line with the national average. Some children do even better and reach standards above the level expected for their age. The achievement of many children in the Nursery, those who have learning difficulties and disabilities and those from Asian and Asian British heritage is exceptional. The provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent.

Children receive a high quality of care, support and guidance. Their behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They gain immense enjoyment from their work. In many lessons and around the school, laughter and good humour play an essential role in accelerating the children's achievements. Work is interesting and stimulating. The children's self-esteem and confidence are high. The school skilfully and successfully ensures that raising standards and achievement go hand in hand with improving the children's personal, social and emotional development, which is outstanding. The curriculum is carefully constructed to meet the children's different learning needs and is enriched by a range of stimulating activities.

This is a welcoming community where children clearly come first and adults are determined to make a positive difference to their life chances. Children and adults respect each other and there is a common sense of purpose about what the school is aiming to achieve. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is outstanding overall. A relentless pursuit of high standards and achievement and the development of well-rounded, confident young people are shown clearly and consistently in the school's day-to-day work.

There is a positive focus on improving parents' involvement with their children's learning. Small numbers of parents have begun to attend curriculum workshops but this is not a strong feature of the school's work. Attendance rates are below the national average for primary schools.

The quality of collective leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She has a clear vision for success and makes sure that everyone knows what it is. She is a skilful communicator, successfully combining support and challenge to motivate all staff. There is an overriding determination to ensure that children leave the school with the skills and personal qualities needed to make a success of their continuing education. This is achieved extremely well.

The headteacher receives exceptional support from the senior leadership team, who are excellent role models for other teachers. The deputy headteacher is taking a strong lead in analysing assessment information and making sure that the outcomes of tests and assessments are used to inform teachers' planning and drive up standards further. A good example of this is the initiative to raise achievement in reading. Governors are very supportive but also understand their role in holding the school to account for the

children's achievements. The chair and vice chair of governors form a strong partnership, making sure that the governing body keeps a watchful eye on the school's performance.

Strategic planning is very secure and based on a detailed and accurate view of how well the school is doing. The school improvement plan is a good framework for further improvement. Whole-school self-evaluation and the monitoring of performance are rigorous and having a positive impact on raising achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding and the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the children's attendance rate and further develop the parents' participation in their children's learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter the school with poor academic and social skills and their attainment is well below average. Communication and language skills are particularly weak. Nevertheless, as a result of some outstanding teaching and high expectations, they achieve extremely well and many make exceptional progress. By the time they leave the school the majority of children reach the level expected for their age and some do even better than this. The results of national tests show a steady upward trend in improvement and compare very favourably with the national average. Standards and achievement in writing are particularly strong. The progress made by Asian British groups is very good and consistently outperforms the local authority average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children's personal development is outstanding. Their enjoyment of lessons and their consideration for others are exceptional, and this helps them make such rapid progress. They are very happy at school and are growing in confidence. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They feel safe and secure in their surroundings because relationships are very supportive. They know that they can turn to other children, such as the playground buddies, or to any adult if they have a problem. Racial harmony is very strong. Children are very enthusiastic and keen not to miss anything! Those in the Foundation Stage settle very quickly into school routines and are soon working and playing together well. Many children are developing a good awareness of how to be healthy, and their excellent achievement in literacy and numeracy is giving them a good start to their education. Their attendance is below the national average, mainly because many families take their children away for holidays during term-time. The school is working hard to resolve this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is outstanding because of its significant and positive impact on the children's learning. Teachers' high expectations of children's behaviour and of their academic progress ensure that achievement over time is excellent. Children's different learning needs are catered for well. Activities engage their interest and motivate them to work enthusiastically. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use assessment information well to set challenging targets for improvement. Some of the teaching in small groups and on a one-to-one basis is outstanding. Teaching assistants make a valuable and effective contribution to raising achievement and work well with teachers in a good team spirit. On a few occasions in a minority of lessons the pace of learning was slowed when children spent too long listening to lengthy introductions and not enough time actively engaged in learning new skills and knowledge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned extremely well to ensure that the children not only achieve highly but also enjoy their work. There is a strong and successful focus on improving basic skills in literacy and numeracy, which is having a positive impact on raising attainment in all subjects. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance children's learning. A range of stimulating activities, including role play and drama, encourages the pupils to develop their personal and social skills as well as improving their achievement in speaking and listening. The provision for children who have learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding and the curriculum is adapted effectively to meet their particular learning needs. Many of the children who speak English as an additional language make exceptional progress because the focus on improving communication, language and literacy skills is given such a high priority. The provision for these children is also outstanding. Activity afternoons, the celebration of cultural festivals, visits to places of interest and visitors to school enrich the curriculum further and add further to the children's enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is exceptional, providing children with an environment in which they can flourish, both academically and socially. The majority of children know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work. Most meet and some exceed their challenging targets. Parents are very pleased with the provision for their children: 'I find it an excellent well-run school,' said one. However, many feel unable to get involved with their children's learning and the school would like to find ways of encouraging them to do so. Procedures for child

protection, risk assessments and safeguarding children are very thorough, carefully organised and well known to staff. The school works very closely with support services and community organisations to help children and their families where needed. The school council and senior staff have been working productively together to develop facilities in the playground, and have already made some welcome improvements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The exceptional quality of the school's collective leadership is shown clearly in the high expectations of all staff, the outstanding achievements of many children, the strong sense of teamwork and overriding commitment to providing a high quality of education for all children. The headteacher's inspirational example clearly shines through her impressive personal characteristics. She has a strong belief that all children can achieve well; she is consistent and clear in letting staff know what she expects, listens well, takes time to consider other points of view and has a thoroughly professional style of management. Above all, she knows her school extremely well. The senior leadership team complements the headteacher well. The deputy headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and Foundation Stage leader each provide a high quality of leadership in their areas of responsibilities. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and no stone is left unturned in the drive to raise achievement in a positive and supportive ethos.

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We have really enjoyed our time with you and talking to you about your work. It's been great to see how much you enjoy coming to school and how well you get on with your teachers. You are all very friendly, cheerful and polite and helped us feel at home in your school. Thank you for sharing your work with us. When we visited your lessons we were very impressed by all the good work that you are doing and how much fun you were having. We were also very pleased to see how much you help each other. Well done!

I am very pleased to tell you that you are really lucky to go to a very good school, which is among one of the best in the country. The headteacher, your teachers and all the other adults who work with you take great care of you and want you to do your very best. Some of you are doing so well to learn new things and get better with your reading, writing and numbers. You are also doing very well in learning how to play together, help each other and keep safe.

I have asked Mrs Evans and the teachers to spend a bit more time talking with your families so that they can find out more about what you are doing in school, how they can help you with your school work at home and how important it is for you not to miss any time at school.

We will take away lots of good memories about your school and have really enjoyed the time we have spent with you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.