

Victoria Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124040
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292869
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Symmons
Headteacher	Yvonne Fearn
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002
School address	Victoria Road Burton-on-Trent DE14 2LU
Telephone number	01283 239146
Fax number	01283 239153

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Victoria Community school is an average sized primary school serving an area of significant disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. Just over 90% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and approximately three quarters are at an early stage of learning English. The school has a speech and language unit on site and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is much higher than that seen nationally. A higher than average number of pupils enter or leave the school part way through the year. The headteacher took up her position in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Victoria Community Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils and has some significant strengths. Parents are very happy with the quality of care provided and pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school. Provision for those pupils attending the speech and language unit is good. Good support and guidance help these pupils to take a full part in all aspects of the school.

By the end of Year 6, standards attained by pupils are significantly below average although, considering their very low starting point, they achieve satisfactorily overall. The children are provided with a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage, although few attain the goals expected for their age on entry to Year 1. Progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties do well because they are provided with well-targeted and good quality support. Similarly, those pupils at an early stage of learning English make good gains in their acquisition of the language. However, their limited vocabulary and comprehension skills, and for some, extended holidays abroad, inhibit their overall attainment. A small minority of more able pupils do not do as well as they should in their writing and mathematics. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well to help pupils to do well. However, their vision of what the most able pupils can do is not always sufficiently high and the school recognises that there is a need for teachers to consistently challenge these pupils further.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their social development, are good. Improving attendance, which is now good, is an indicator of the pupils' enjoyment of school. Children's personal and social skills are promoted well in the Nursery class, where they get on well together, follow instructions and behave well. There are well-structured programmes through which the pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Many eat healthily and take part in the good range of physical activities on offer. Pupils are keen to talk of their involvement in fund raising activities and their participation in many community activities. Pupils enjoy school because the good curriculum is well matched to their cultural backgrounds and is enlivened by a good range of visits and visitors. The arts are promoted well with pupils producing some very good art work. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pupils with learning difficulties are given a good level of support and this enables them to make good progress throughout the school. The school is right to recognise the significant contribution made by bilingual and learning assistants in the support they provide for pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The judicious use of 'booster classes' and additional support has helped to raise standards by the end of Year 6. The tracking of pupils' progress is detailed and staff know exactly how well pupils are doing. However, subject leaders are not yet sufficiently proactive in ensuring all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, make consistently good progress in all year groups. The school has an accurate picture of what it needs to do to get better and is rightly focusing on eliminating the inconsistent progress made by some of these more able pupils. Links with parents are good and questionnaires returned prior to the inspection show parents are appreciative of the way the school looks after their children. There is no complacency and staff are working hard to raise standards further. There is a clear capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by ensuring teachers challenge the most able pupils sufficiently and consistently in all year groups.
- Ensure subject leaders become more proactive in identifying how well pupils are achieving and in supporting teachers to ensure the most able pupils achieve as well as they should. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the 2006 national tests at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards were significantly below average. However, based on their very low starting points, pupils achieved satisfactorily. Many children start Nursery with little or no English language knowledge so attainment on entry is very low. They make good progress in basic communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills but on entry to Year 1 their skills are still significantly below those expected for their age. Pupils' progress in writing is inhibited owing to their limited vocabulary. An intensive support programme to improve pupils' scientific vocabulary has been implemented but it is too recent to evaluate the outcome in terms of raising standards. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills are satisfactory but their ability to respond to written problems is insufficiently developed.

Pupils with learning difficulties and those using the speech and language support facilities make good progress throughout the school. A small minority of the more able pupils do not progress as well as they should because they are not challenged sufficiently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic, happy learners who behave well. They concentrate hard even when work is insufficiently demanding, especially for more able pupils. Foundation Stage children, most with home languages other than English, get a sound start because basic skills are taught well. This continues through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties, including in speech and language, make good progress. Adult help is readily available and pupils say, 'We feel happy and safe because the teachers care for us so well'. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their independent skills are too limited.

Many pupils try to follow guidance on safe and healthy lifestyles, for example they know that medicines are good but some drugs are not, and go swimming and play sports such as football. Occasional incidents are quickly addressed, often by playtime buddies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are tolerant and honest. They enjoy the many art and music activities, like signing songs in assemblies. The school council manages its budget carefully and pupils enjoy helping others by taking part in charity fund raising. The pupils' relatively weak basic skills inhibit their preparation for the future although their good computer skills will equip them well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Children learn well in the Nursery because staff engage the children in a wide range of interesting activities. Throughout the school, teachers manage classes well and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Teachers make good use of bilingual and learning support assistants, helping those at an early stage of learning English and those with learning difficulties progress well. Teachers make good use of computers and interactive whiteboards to generate interest amongst the pupils.

Whilst work is generally well matched to the needs of most pupils, teachers occasionally underestimate what the more able are capable of achieving and, as a result, these pupils do not always do as well as they should. There is an overuse of uninspiring worksheets which restricts opportunities for the development of pupils' writing and also inhibits the presentation of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The very inclusive curriculum adapts well to pupils' needs, particularly those with home languages other than English and those with speech and language or other learning difficulties. Subjects are well planned, enjoyed equally by boys and girls, with particularly good provision in art and music, including national competition success. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills in other subjects. Booster, early and additional literacy support from good, trained teaching assistants is starting to impact well. Pupils enjoy the many clubs on offer, including homework and computer clubs. The breakfast club has significantly improved attendance. The curriculum is richly enhanced by family learning activities like shared reading and the innovative, one-night residential visit to Pendrell Hall, allowing busy parents the opportunity to develop their learning interests and skills. Pupils enjoy residential experiences at Shugborough Hall, thereby developing social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff have an impressive knowledge of pupils and families stemming from living in the local community. This ensures support is readily available and the provision of positive role models has a good impact on learning. Challenging behaviour is unobtrusively managed. Safeguarding requirements are robust and all risk assessments fully implemented. Good provision and expert support for pupils at an early stage of learning English and for those with learning difficulties, including pupils in the speech and language unit, aid good progress. Strong teamwork, making effective use of pupils' first language, is a key feature of the good support. Academic support is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are used well to identify how well pupils are achieving, but not always sufficiently enough as to plan work for the most able pupils. Target-setting is not fully embedded and some pupils are unsure of how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher knows the school well and the school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has brought a new dimension to the strengths of the previous leadership and this is seen in improvements made since her appointment. For example, separating the Nursery and Reception classes has enabled the youngest children to be given more attention to accelerate their progress. The headteacher is providing a clear direction in raising standards. Participation in a local project is providing pupils at an early stage of learning English with good external guidance on improving their science vocabulary. Subject leaders are keen to embrace new approaches to enhance the pupils' learning. They have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing through the use of the school's detailed tracking procedures. However, they have not been sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, are doing as well as they should. Governors are very supportive. They are regular visitors and know the school well. They recognise the need to challenge the school to raise standards further.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	3
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

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Community Primary School, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 2LU

- Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. The school is providing a satisfactory education for you.
- These are some of the things we found.
- The youngest children are provided with a good start to school in the Nursery class.
- Your attendance at school is getting better and is now good. You behave well and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school.
- You are provided with a good range of interesting activities, including visits, visitors and clubs, in which many of you enjoy taking part.
- The staff look after you well and give you good support. Those of you who find work a little difficult are given good support to help you do better.
- You understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy, try to eat healthy foods and thoroughly enjoy taking part in the range of sporting activities.

These are the things we have asked the school to do now.

- Ensure those of you who find work in mathematics and writing a little easy are given work by teachers that is more challenging.
- Help those in charge of subjects to check up on teaching to make sure it encourages you all to do your best.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours faithfully

Mr Paul Edwards Lead inspector