

Violet Lane Nursery and Infant Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124047
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	292871
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	247
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Arthur Goldstraw
Headteacher	D Barker
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002
School address	Violet Lane Stanton Road Stapenhill Burton-on-Trent DE15 9ES
Telephone number	01283 239778
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Violet Lane Infant School is much larger than average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. The school has gained full Dyslexia Friendly Status and permanent Eco-School Status.

The privately run Nursery and out-of-school club were inspected by a child care inspector at the same time and are reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school is good because pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. Achievement is outstanding in mathematics, good in reading and satisfactory in writing. The school is aware of this and is continuing to increase the opportunities that pupils have to develop their writing skills. Pupils enjoy writing about different things. For example, in Reception, children are keeping a diary on the life cycle of a frog. One child proudly pointed to the tadpoles in the middle of the table and said, 'I brought them to school - they are helping us to write!'

The quality of teaching and learning is good and ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. The children in the Foundation Stage Reception classes make good progress from an average starting point because they learn through an exciting range of practical and engaging activities. Teaching is particularly good when staff regularly discuss the progress that pupils make and use assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' different learning needs.

The good curriculum successfully promotes pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils play and work together in a happy and confident manner and enjoy coming to school. One parent commented, 'I feel the school gives the children a happy, positive environment led by a strong team of staff.' Through fund-raising for local and national charities, pupils show care and concern for others and know that their actions have an effect on their friends and families and on their community.

Almost half of the parents returned inspection questionnaires and most parents spoke highly of the school. One parent said, 'The headteacher and staff are fantastic and approachable.' The school works well with other schools and outside agencies. An example of good practice is the close working partnership between the private Nursery and the school. Nursery children have the opportunity to use the school's facilities and are invited to events, such as special assemblies.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils' health is promoted effectively and their academic guidance is good. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and know how to keep themselves and others safe. The school site is not as secure as it could be. While there is insufficient permanent fencing around the whole of the school site, governors have erected a temporary fence.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction to the work of the school. An outstanding feature is the careful monitoring of pupils' progress to identify areas for development and identify the pupils who need additional targeted support. This has enabled the headteacher and senior staff to maintain high standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. The school has a good capacity to improve because the headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to maintain high standards and to increase the rates of pupils' progress in writing. For example, providing pupils with the opportunity to develop their writing through a range of subjects is starting to accelerate progress in Reception. The headteacher and senior staff are aware that this good practice needs to be developed throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing.
- Further improve security of the school site.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children enter the school, their standards are close to the levels usually found. They make good progress in Reception and, by the start of Year 1 many exceed the levels expected of pupils of this age. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach high standards. The results of the 2006 teacher assessments show that standards were significantly above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school's assessment information shows that pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. As a result, the proportion reaching the higher levels in writing is not as high as in mathematics and reading. The more able pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics because of the targeted support they receive. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are cooperative, tolerant and polite and have good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. Their behaviour and attitudes are generally good although, on some occasions, they are inattentive, do not get on sensibly when working independently and do not listen well enough to their teachers. Attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and the Year 2 pupils show good levels of maturity when asked to give their opinions and share their views. The school's permanent status as an 'Eco school' is well earned and, under the enthusiastic leadership of the school council, pupils are developing a good understanding of how best to solve local and global environmental problems. Pupils support each other well. Some of the Year 2 pupils showed great sensitivity and tolerance when helping younger children talk to inspectors about their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils make good or better progress when they are set challenging tasks, take part in activities that capture their interest and teachers show them what they need to do to complete their work successfully. Pupils also learn well when they are actively engaged during all parts of the lesson and they do not have to listen for too long during whole class introductions. Teachers' marking helps progress when it is detailed and tells pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work. This good practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. The presentation of pupils' work is not always as neat as it could be. In some classes, the overuse of worksheets reduces the opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and their writing skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and it is enriched by a good range of after-school clubs, with activities such as sports, gardening, French and ballet. These are well attended and much appreciated by the pupils. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy and very good provision for

information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum has recently been amended to give emphasis to teaching topics, where pupils are encouraged to study the links between subjects, for example in the work on the Victorians in Year 1. This way of working is preparing all pupils well for the next stage of their education because they are acquiring good literacy and mathematical skills in different situations. The pupils' understanding and tolerance of cultures and faiths different from their own are developed well, for example work on celebrating the Chinese New Year and Divali, and cookery lessons where pupils have the opportunity to prepare and eat food from different cultures. This is helping pupils to know more about the world in which they live.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory with some good elements. The school ensures that pupils enjoy school and achieve well and promotes their health effectively. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet national recommendations and most risk assessments are carefully undertaken. The quality of academic guidance is good and most pupils reach their challenging targets. Almost half of parents responded to inspection questionnaires and most of them were overwhelmingly positive. However, a small minority expressed disappointment about a lack of consultation with parents, particularly about the school's recent decision to change the colour of the school uniform.

In recent years the security of the school site has been improved. In addition governors have been engaged in ongoing discussions with the local authority and adjacent secondary school to define the school's boundary. Until this has been resolved, site security remains compromised by a lack of permanent perimeter fencing on the eastern edge of the grassed area. This is recognised by the governing body and a temporary fence has been erected.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher gives good leadership. There is a strong team spirit and staff morale is high. Leadership and management are committed to raising standards and know what they need to do in order to improve further. The senior management team appreciate the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and support her well. An outstanding aspect of their work is the way that they all keep a close check on the progress that pupils make. They use this information well to provide additional targeted support for individuals and groups of pupils. The headteacher and senior management team provide staff with generally accurate feedback about what they need to do to help pupils make better progress. The governing body is supportive to the school and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are increasingly challenging and are holding the school to account for the standards achieved by pupils. Self-evaluation is good because it is based on a particularly careful analysis of assessment information and involves the headteacher and senior staff in checking progress and identifying where more needs to be done.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	2
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	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	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?	3

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we inspected your school. We would also like to say thank you to those of you who met us to talk about the school and the work of the school council. We are pleased to tell you that you go to a good school, which is what you told us!

Many of you said that you enjoy the after-school clubs, such as French and gardening. You also like to learn through projects and by using computers. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about your work. It was good to see most of you working hard, listening carefully and getting on well with each other.

We are especially pleased with the progress that you are making in mathematics and reading. We are glad that you like your teachers and the other adults that work with you and that you can talk to them if you have a problem. You know how important it is to keep healthy and you are very proud to be part of an 'Eco-school'.

We have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that you do as well in your writing as you do in mathematics and reading. We have also asked the governors and headteacher to continue improving the security of the playground.

We wish you all the very best in the future.