

Victoria Dock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131510
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	293771
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Sutcliffe

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin McNicol
Headteacher	Mr Denham Kite
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001
School address	Southbridge Road Victoria Dock Hull HU9 1TL
Telephone number	01482 331998
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Victoria Dock is an average sized school serving the recently regenerated Victoria Dock area to the east of Hull city centre. The proportion of children eligible for free meals is below average as is the number identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the whole school. A broadly average number of pupils have a first language other than English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It gives its pupils a good standard of education and helps them to achieve well and reach above average standards. The school provides good value for money. This is how the school sees itself and it is right to do so. One parent's comment echoed the views of many 'I feel this is a very good school where every child matters'. Pupils' personal development and their care, support and guidance are excellent. All staff promote pupils' safety and well-being and pupils reflect this by showing care and consideration to each other. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school. They have positive attitudes to their learning, their behaviour is exemplary and they thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They gain an exceptionally good understanding of how to make positive choices and how to develop healthy lifestyles. They make a strong contribution to their school and the wider community. Their outstanding personal development and secure skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for the next stage of education. Pupils are very well looked after and there is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English. Pupils are interested in their work and want to do well because the good curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of additional activities that extend pupils' experiences and skills. Outdoor provision in the playgrounds and environmental areas is outstanding and provides pupils with many exciting opportunities to develop their creative and social skills.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the age of 11 they achieve standards that are consistently above the national average. Overall, teaching is good and there are some outstanding lessons particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. However, there has been a fall in standards in Year 2, particularly in reading and in recent tests not enough pupils reached the higher levels in writing and mathematics. This is partly due to a higher number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in these groups, and the school's focus to target writing rather than reading. Standards are improving again this year, although tasks that match pupils' capabilities and challenge the more able are not always provided. By Year 6, standards are consistently above average and most pupils achieve well, especially in mathematics. This is because of good curriculum provision, excellent academic guidance and particularly good teaching in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English are well supported and make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, together with a committed staff, has been successful in promoting the 'family atmosphere' at the school, an ethos which is highly valued by the parents. There is good management at all levels and a good climate for learning has been established. There is a strong drive for further improvement and providing learning that is matched to each child's academic and personal needs. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate and matches the findings of the inspection. The school has developed well since its last inspection and has good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are effusive in their praise of the Foundation Stage and children are given a good start to their education. Although children's attainment when they start the school varies

year-on-year, most start with skills that are typical for their age. A few have good skills in personal, social and emotional development and a minority are weaker in mathematical development. They come on in leaps and bounds and behave well because teachers make the learning fun and personal development is a priority. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution. As a result, children made good progress and the majority reach and many exceed the goals expected for their age in many areas of learning. The curriculum is presented vibrantly and the standard of teaching is high, making full use of the first-class outside and inside areas. Plenty of opportunity occurs for the children to think for themselves. Excellent assessment systems are used well to lead the next steps of learning so that all abilities make commensurate progress. Good leadership ensures that the classrooms are organised very well to make an attractive environment in which the children can really enjoy learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring greater consistency to the effectiveness of teaching in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that learning activities match pupils' different capabilities so that they are fully challenged, especially the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress as they move through the school. By the time they leave at the age of 11 standards are consistently above the national average. There are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English make good progress because they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants.

Although standards over time have been mainly above average by the end of Key Stage 1, they have fallen recently to below average. This is due in some measure to the higher number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English in these groups. In 2007, results in reading fell and the number of pupils achieving the higher standards in writing and mathematics fell below the national average. Indications are that standards this year are improving, although pupils are not always set work that matches their capabilities and more able pupils are not fully challenged.

Standards in Year 6 are consistently above average and pupils achieve well. Results over the last three years have risen consistently in mathematics and science, and significantly so in English in 2007. The school's strong focus on developing pupils' knowledge and skills in writing has seen an impressively high proportion reach the higher standards in English. Progress in mathematics through the key stage is consistently good regardless of starting points, gender or learning needs. Progress is good in science, although results are consistently closer to the national average than in English or mathematics. The school sets challenging targets for pupils at the end of Year 6 and these were met in 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The outstanding personal qualities pupils develop, and their excellent behaviour, assist them in making good and sometimes rapid progress in their learning. Attendance is above average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because staff look after them and keep them very safe. They feel that if anything goes wrong they are confident that the adults around them will take

care of it. They spoke enthusiastically about the clubs they attend and the trips they go on that enhance their learning. They say how much they had learned about healthy eating and good exercise; they especially enjoy the cycling proficiency programme. They contribute well to the running of their own school community. The democratically elected members of the school council mentioned many examples of the school acting on pupils' suggestions. Charitable fundraising activities locally and in the global context help to develop pupils' awareness of the richness of cultural diversity in Britain today. Good basic skills and excellent computer skills prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is all strong. Pupils understand right and wrong and demonstrate a very high level of care and consideration for others. They are well-mannered and polite. They take responsibility very well, for instance by being 'buddies' for younger pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers plan well and use a variety of stimulating strategies to assist pupils' learning. These include questions that make pupils think for themselves. Expectations are high in the best lessons. Pupils respond well, enjoying the challenge and making rapid progress. In these lessons, excellent use of resources makes learning exciting.

The school's focus on improving writing has made a strong but inconsistent impact. This is because tasks are not always sufficiently matched to pupils' different abilities and occasionally subject knowledge does not always match some of the searching questions pupils ask. This is particularly the case for the more able pupils. As a result, too few Key Stage 1 pupils achieve the higher levels, though by the end of Key Stage 2 they achieve well because much of the teaching there is excellent and full use is made of rigorous assessment arrangements. Marking is effective.

Good support in class is offered to pupils with English as an additional language, and they make progress that matches other groups, as a result. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also good and they make good progress. In all classes, teachers have successful strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, and relationships between learners and adults are exemplary.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It meets national requirements in its provision for all subjects and for the range of pupils' needs. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in their learning across the curriculum. The number of computers has improved significantly since the last inspection. The outdoor provision is outstanding. The purpose built theatre promotes drama well, and a garden area, meadow and pond provide opportunities for environmental science. There is good curriculum enrichment through educational visits. The residential visit to Cober Hill near Whitby for example promotes initiative and team building. There is an excellent range of additional activities offered to the pupils. These include a vast number of sports clubs confirming the school's strong provision in physical education (PE).

Pupils have the opportunity to study French which helps their cultural and international links. The frequently held curriculum theme weeks such as Europe, Brazil and Arts further enhance the quality of the curriculum. The school has identified music as a curriculum area to further develop.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for securing pupils' safety and well-being are meticulous. Stringent procedures safeguard them well. As a result pupils feel happy, very safe and well cared for. They say that no bullying occurs but are confident should any pupil be unhappy, things would be resolved very quickly by their 'buddies', who look out for them at playtime, and their teachers. Parents are very pleased with the school's work. Many typically say 'my child is very happy and well cared for at school.' Induction procedures are good and children in the Nursery and Reception settle into school life very quickly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good well-structured support which ensures they are included effectively in all activities and make the same level of progress as other groups.

Academic guidance is excellent and covers all subjects well. Marking is positive and clear, and points the way to improvements. Pupils are set challenging targets which are carefully and systematically thought out and this assists them to strive for the good progress achieved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision to provide individual opportunities in order to maximise the potential all-round development of each child in the school. Together with the recently formed leadership team, he has brought about a drive for continual improvement. As a result, pupils' personal development and care is outstanding. They achieve academic standards consistently above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.

Leadership at all levels is good. Curriculum coordinators for all subjects manage their areas well. They analyse pupils' work and make good use of assessment data to set challenging targets so that pupils do as well as they can at the end of Year 6. School governance is good. They oversee all aspects of the school's provision and are well involved with the school. They play an increasingly active role in finding out about the school's performance first-hand, and take more responsibility for ensuring its current success is sustained and advanced.

School self-evaluation is good. There is an accurate understanding of its own effectiveness and how it can be improved. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly by the headteacher, leadership team and subject coordinators. This ensures there is a good understanding of how well pupils are performing. The school improvement plan identifies correctly areas for development and how targets can be measured. However, these areas are not always clearly related to recent academic performance. For example, there is a need to identify the reasons for the recent fall in attainment in Key Stage 1 and to plan appropriate intervention strategies for improvement. Clear plans to address the recommendations from the last inspection have helped move the school forward at a good pace and ensure the school is well placed to improve further.

Parents are very positive about the school and make a good contribution towards their children's learning. They have good opportunities to share their views and to contribute towards the school's self-evaluation process. The questionnaires returned prior to the inspection commented overwhelmingly on the strong relationship between school and home.

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Dock Primary School, Kingston-upon-Hull,
HU9 1TL

As you know we visited your school recently to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to us about your school, the work you have done and how much you enjoy coming to school. You were very polite, friendly and helpful.

What we liked about your school.

- Your school is a good school because you make good progress.
- The youngest children are provided with a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You are very happy and enjoy your lessons.
- You get on well with each other and the adults in the school.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- All the adults in the school look after you very well and encourage you to make sensible choices about keeping fit and healthy.
- You have very good opportunities to do well in ICT and PE.
- You have lots of extra activities and clubs that make learning fun and give you new skills and experiences.
- The outside areas give you interesting and exciting things to do.
- You have good opportunities to take responsibility and you take them seriously.
- The school is well led and managed.

Many of you do well in Key Stage 1 but some of you could do even better. In order to help we have asked the school to make sure that all of you do work that is challenging, especially those of you capable of reaching the higher levels.

We thoroughly enjoyed listening to you and watching you learn. We wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Sutcliffe

Lead inspector