

Victory School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100815
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307495
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr George McNamara
Headteacher	Mr Paul Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Victory Place Rodney Road London SE17 1PT
Telephone number	020 7703 5722
Fax number	020 7252 7363

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal starting and leaving points is very high. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than the national average, of which pupils with Black African heritage are the largest group. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language is well above that found in most schools. The school has achieved the Physical Education Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils join the school with a range of skills and capabilities, but generally attainment on entry is well below the expected levels for their age. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage because teaching prioritises personal, social and emotional development as well as basic literacy and numeracy skills. Nevertheless, many still have below average levels of skills by the time they transfer to Year 1. In the recent past pupils have underachieved and standards have been well below average. In 2007, standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 rose, particularly so in mathematics, but they remained below average. This improvement was due in part to developments in the monitoring and tracking of pupils' attainment, enabling the school to check how well pupils are making progress. Pupils' achievement is improving, and is satisfactory. There are examples of good progress. However, this is not yet consistent across subjects and throughout the school. Currently, more pupils who have been at the school for at least two years are on track to meet reasonably challenging targets and reach the expected level by the end of Year 6. However, few are on course to reach the higher levels.

School leaders have prioritised improving the quality of teaching and learning. For example, a new planning format is helping to give lessons a very clear structure. However, the quality of teaching and learning, though sometimes good, is still uneven across the school. This is the main reason why teaching promotes learning that is satisfactory overall. Some pupils are involved in assessing their work but this is inconsistent, as is the extent of guidance in marking on how pupils can improve their work. It is not always made clear to pupils what their next learning target is for them to move up to the next level in their work.

Pupils enjoy school. One pupil said, 'School allows you to be normal - you can have a laugh but still learn'. Pupils have a sound sense of what is right and wrong and understand the importance of friendship. Relationships are often good and pupils feel safe. One parent commented that the school community is 'like a second family'. Through the school council, pupils make a positive contribution, for example, in deciding school rules and improving playtime equipment. Older pupils are keen to take on roles which develop responsibility, such as monitors.

The school has a satisfactory curriculum. Some areas have improved well, such as where a focus on mental mathematics and problem solving has led to improvements in standards and achievement. However, it is only this year that pupils are making good progress in English. This is because of the introduction of new approaches to the teaching of literacy. Provision for sport is particularly strong which encourages pupils to have positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a shared commitment to improving provision and raising standards. Monitoring of the school's effectiveness, especially in terms of pupil performance, is supporting school improvement well. One parent commented, 'I'm pleased to see the school getting better and better every year'. At present, most of the monitoring of the quality of education is carried out by the senior leadership team. Other leaders are less actively involved and this has slowed the pace of improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

In 2006, an inspection of the Foundation Stage judged it to be inadequate. It has now improved and is satisfactory. As a result of changes to the way phonics is taught and by ensuring tasks appeal to children's interests, achievement is satisfactory. Established routines help children to settle. One parent of a child in Reception commented, 'She has really come on very well at Victory'. There is an appropriate balance between opportunities for children to select activities for themselves and adult lead tasks. However, opportunities to develop children's literacy skills are sometimes missed and the pace of learning slows when children spend too long listening to lengthy explanations. The school has taken steps to develop the outdoor area. Nevertheless, opportunities are limited for pupils to practise and develop their skills outside. Links between Reception and Key Stage 1 are becoming more effective in ensuring pupils are well prepared for transition to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise the standards they attain by ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Ensure all leaders are systematically involved in monitoring the quality of provision.
- Use marking and target setting consistently to make clear to pupils what the next steps are in their learning.

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

Although achievement is now satisfactory, standards by the end of Year 6 are still below average. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 were well below average, and reflected a high turnover of pupils entering the school other than in Reception. Current standards show some improvement, particularly in mathematics, though they remain below average. This year, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making at least satisfactory progress. There are examples of good progress. Pupils in Year 3, for example, are developing their reading and writing skills well. However, standards are low among the older pupils because of a legacy of underachievement.

Black African pupils generally make good progress and reach average standards compared with their peers. Pupils who find literacy and numeracy more difficult and those who struggle to settle to work make satisfactory progress. Some make good progress as a result of the support they receive. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language receive targeted support and as a result they are progressing well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Many pupils say that they have lots of friends and this helps them to enjoy school. Attendance has improved and is average. However, many pupils are often a few minutes late at the start of the day, and this can disrupt lessons. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning, although

a small minority are overly boisterous at playtimes. Pupils are confident that any problems are resolved by the school staff. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in sports activities and understand the importance of eating a healthy diet, but not all adopt these good practices. Pupils are learning at an increasingly fast rate the skills they need for their future so that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy the interesting work teachers often plan. For example, they learn about pirates, dress up in costume, hunt for buried treasure and write about what to take on a desert island holiday. Teaching assistants are usually involved well and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. A positive aspect of many lessons is the use of well chosen questions to develop pupils' thinking skills. Pupils appreciate opportunities to talk about their learning in pairs which develops self confidence as well as social skills. However, there is often insufficient time at the end of lessons to evaluate activities or to extend pupils learning. Teachers are generally using assessment information well to plan work for pupils of different abilities, although more able pupils are not always set suitably challenging work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Opportunities to explore a range of cultures, for example through international week, contribute to pupils' satisfactory personal development. Pupils are motivated by the developing links between subjects and increased opportunities for creativity. However, opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and computing skills across a range of other subjects are not yet consistently in place. There is a satisfactory variety of extra-curricular clubs and visits to local places of interest. Through good links with a number of outside agencies, pupils have opportunities to learn musical instruments, develop their computing skills and work with artists.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes appropriate steps to promote pupils safety. All current requirements for ensuring the pupils' healthy, safety and protection are in place. The school works closely with a good range of therapists and specialist agencies to meet pupils' needs. This is supporting pupils' achievement and the development of their personal and social skills. The induction programme for new pupils is well planned so that they feel welcomed and supported. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Improvements in the way the schools tracks pupils' progress are increasingly helping to ensure planning meets the pupils' specific learning needs and to identify appropriate support for those pupils who are falling behind. Pupils generally know their targets but they are not consistently clear about what they need to do in order to move to the next level in their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and his deputy have successfully established a learning culture that focuses on raising pupils' achievement, whilst maintaining the school's welcoming and positive ethos. There has been improvement in provision, and standards and achievement are rising. Given these improvements and the satisfactory pace of change since the last inspection, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Data gathered from assessment is not always used swiftly enough by leaders and managers to identify priorities for development. Subject leaders are taking on an increasing role but are not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating their area of responsibility. The governing body has improved since the last inspection. They are working hard to develop their expertise and are increasingly holding the school to account.

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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
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

27 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victory School, London, SE17 1PT

Thank you for your friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and we wanted to tell you what we found.

Victory Primary is a satisfactory school and these are its strengths:

- You feel safe and you enjoy coming to school. You told us that there is a strong sense of community.
- Most of you behave sensibly in class and around the school.
- Because you enjoy the activities in lessons your progress is satisfactory, and is improving. We saw that some of you are making good progress as well.
- Some of the teaching is good and your school is working to make sure that more of it is good.
- You have a good choice of sports clubs in addition to your lessons and you told us how much you enjoy these.
- The school works hard to encourage you to attend regularly.
- All the staff and the governors are working together as a team to make the school even better.

We have asked the school to make sure you know what to do to move up to the next level in your work and that when teachers mark your books they all give you more ideas about how to improve your work. The staff are helping the headteacher and the deputy to make the school even better. We would like the subject leaders to do even more to check up on the quality of all the work the school is doing. We have also asked the school to carry on working hard to make lessons even better so that even more lessons are good ones. This will help you learn more quickly.

You can help by coming to school on time and by continuing to work hard.

We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector