

Victoria Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106328
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	309098
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Miss S Vrlec
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Henshaw Street Stretford Manchester Lancashire M32 8BU
Telephone number	0161 8654778
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant and nursery school which serves a diverse community. Most pupils are of White British, Asian or British Asian backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils uses English as an additional language. The school has gained the Activemark, Anti-Racism and Healthy School awards. It has Investor in People status. There has been a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Victoria Park Infant School provides a good education and fosters pupils' personal development well. Standards overall are above average. In national teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards have been above average overall since the last inspection. This is because of good teaching and effective leadership and management. However, in the 2007 assessments, standards in writing were below those in reading and mathematics. Currently, pupils' overall achievement is good, but only satisfactory in writing. Parents are very appreciative of all the school does. Typical comments include, 'a lovely warm family atmosphere' and 'very pleased with both the teaching and the pastoral care'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of importance with staff and with other pupils help to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates have improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils respond well to the positive care they receive. They feel very safe. They know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the nutritious lunches and after-school sporting and cookery activities. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom and at playtime is exemplary. All pupils work and play together extremely well. They are well prepared for their future learning because of the thorough grounding in basic skills and their exemplary behaviour and attitudes to work.

The curriculum is well planned and enables pupils to make good progress. Activities, such as school visits, broaden pupils' experiences and eagerness to learn. Lessons are planned well and help to speed up pupils' progress. Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers provide appropriate support for all groups of learners. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. Relationships are harmonious throughout the school.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are building on the strengths of the previous leadership. Increasingly, leaders check on the progress pupils make and on the quality of teaching and learning. However, much still needs to be done to effectively track all pupils' learning. The school is well placed to continue to improve because of the success of recent initiatives and the good improvement since the last inspection. Parents and the community continue to hold the school in high regard.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good, as are leadership and management. Overall attainment on entry is below that expected for children of this age. Progress in the Foundation Stage is good because of effective teaching. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and children receive a thorough grounding in early reading and in the basic skills of numeracy. By the end of Reception, most children's skills are broadly average, although standards in writing are lower than those in other areas of their learning. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children respond well to good teaching. Children are happy and secure and settle into school routines quickly because of effective induction procedures. The pre-school toddlers' gymnastics club provides opportunities for children and parents to be introduced to the school surroundings, as well as appreciating the importance of exercise. When children work with adults they make rapid progress. However,

in some less structured activities, the pace of learning is slower. Although improvements have been made to the outdoor accommodation and resources, staff are not making the best use of these to promote children's learning. Inside, children enjoy a well organised, wide range of activities. Role play areas are linked to a theme, but these could be more attractively constructed to stimulate further children's interest. Although the assessment of individual children's learning is thorough, the information gained is not always used effectively to track their progress through the Foundation Stage. Parents appreciate the good start their children receive to their schooling.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards and achievement in writing.
- Improve systems to check on pupils' learning, especially in the Foundation Stage and Year 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average. Differences between subjects have been minimal, but in 2007, standards in writing dipped to broadly average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in writing was much lower than the proportion in reading and mathematics.

Pupils make good progress overall in Years 1 and 2, but progress is more rapid for older pupils than younger ones. In Year 2, pupils make brisk progress because of good teaching. Fewer pupils are working at the higher levels in writing than in reading and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are proud to have achieved the Activemark and Healthy School awards. They are curious and keen to find out about different foods. The Eco Council has a superb knowledge of environmental issues. Pupils report they feel very safe and their behaviour is outstanding. Bullying is very rare. Attendance rates have improved from below average to average since the last inspection. Illnesses and parents taking their children on extended holidays during term time prevent attendance improving even further. Positive relationships and harmonious racial understanding contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils play very well together because outdoor playtimes are organised very well. They have a very good awareness of how they can contribute to society. For example, they were pleased to help establish a wildlife garden in the local park and visit a local senior citizens' home. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of their progress and what they need to do to improve their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. However, it differs between year groups. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and as a result lessons proceed in an orderly and positive manner. Generally, work is well matched to individuals' needs, particularly when pupils work with adults. But in some lessons tasks are not challenging enough. In most lessons, thoughtful questions check on pupils' knowledge and extend their understanding. However, on occasions questions are asked mainly of those who show they know the answer rather than being

specifically directed to individuals to extend their learning. Teaching assistants make timely and productive interventions to support pupils' learning. Targets are used effectively to challenge older pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well and meets requirements. The strong emphasis on personal development results in extremely well behaved and highly motivated pupils. The recent initiatives to group subjects together into themes add interest to the curriculum and to pupils' enthusiasm. However, opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects are currently limited. Visitors, such as a group of senior citizens, from a organisation called Intergen, provide superb assistance to pupils, particularly in helping them to read. A wide range of visits in the local area, to a museum and to places of worship, add purpose to pupils' learning and broadens their cultural development. The ample out-of-class activities encourage pupils to develop sporting and cookery interests and enable them to learn Spanish.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The caring ethos of the school helps pupils to blossom in a calm and well ordered community. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Health and safety arrangements and risk assessments promote a safe environment. Parents and pupils agree that children are looked after well. Members of staff know their pupils well and there are good measures in place to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are met. Support for pupils learning English as an additional language is effective. The marking of Year 2 pupils' work, together with effective assessment procedures, helps these pupils to understand how well they have done and what is the next step in their learning. This good practice, however, is not established for other pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked with staff and governors to successfully move the school forward towards the next phase of development. Increasingly subject coordinators take responsibility to improve standards and learning as part of their role. The outdoor environment and resources have been successfully enhanced. This has resulted in superb provision at playtime that encourages pupils to join in physical activities, to recycle and to grow plants. The school has achieved a variety of national awards, including Investors in People. The professional development of staff is good. For example, two teachers are taking part in a British Council visit to India to gain a better understanding of Sikh culture and beliefs to develop further the cultural development of both staff and pupils. Leaders have successfully improved attendance, which was a key issue at the last inspection. Close working relationships with the education welfare officer, clear procedures, implementation of a reward system for good attendance and the appointment of a lead attendance officer have all contributed to this improvement.

The school's knowledge of its strengths and areas for development is restricted because it does not fully use the assessment information it has about individual pupils. This has led to some overestimation in the school's view of its performance. Although managers know the needs

and standards of individual pupils well, there is no whole-school system in place to enable them to efficiently and effectively track the progress of specific groups of pupils through the school. This priority for improvement has been identified by the school. A start has been made on developing a robust system linked to more rigorous checks on pupils' standards and the quality of their learning.

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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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	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?	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	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	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

Inspection of Victoria Park Infant School, Manchester M32 8BU

Thank you for welcoming the team of inspectors to your school and being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit and we want to share with you what we found out. Your school gives you a good education. You told us how well you are looked after, that you enjoy school and particularly like your lessons. We know that you are proud of your school and all get on well together. We were impressed by your really good behaviour in lessons and at playtimes. You know how to keep healthy. We were pleased that you feel safe in school and you have someone to talk with if you have any concerns.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher know how to improve your school and they are helped well by other teachers and governors. However, we have asked them to make your school even better by checking on what you know more often and helping you all to improve your writing. You can all help by trying your very best all the time and coming to school every day.

We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you well for the future.