

Victoria Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107851
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	309518
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jennifer Ward
Headteacher	Ms Pauline Ward
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
School address	Cornwall Crescent Wood Lane Rothwell Leeds West Yorkshire LS26 0RA
Telephone number	0113 214 6315
Fax number	0113 2889568

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Victoria is a smaller than average junior school. The school serves an area with pockets of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all the pupils are from a White British background. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although very few have a statement of special educational need. The school has received the Artsmark Gold Award. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

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 school. It is rapidly improving as a result of concerted action by leaders and managers, which has had a decisive impact on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. Good quality care and support sustain pupils' personal development well. This is appreciated by a large majority of parents. The view of one parent typifies that of many: 'my son enjoys school, it is very friendly and staff know all the pupils'.

Pupils enter Year 3 with a broadly average range of skills. They achieve satisfactorily and are now reaching broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards and achievement in speaking, listening and writing, however, are not improving as quickly as in other areas due to inconsistency in approaches to promote these aspects. Teaching is satisfactory and has some good qualities; for example, it is successful in capturing pupils' interest and motivating them to learn. However, the match of activity to pupils' needs and talents across all ability groups is not always accurate enough. As a consequence, the work set is not always sufficiently challenging. Regular marking provides praise but does not always supply sufficient guidance in terms of telling pupils precisely how to improve the quality of their work. The school now has enough good teaching from which to extract best practice and develop teaching skills further. Consequently, pupils' achievement is improving. The quality of learning support is also being enhanced through joint lesson planning sessions and well directed training.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well, know the difference between right and wrong and are acquiring the skills to successfully work together. They have good attitudes to work and are keen to participate in all school activities. Their satisfactory and improving attendance is a measure of their enjoyment. Pupils display a good understanding of different cultures and what it is like to live in a diverse community. Work that has been done to provide greater variety in the curriculum is contributing well to the improvements in pupils' progress and to their enjoyment. Provision for personal, social and health education, with an emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning, supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils are well cared for and they say they feel happy and safe in school. Effective mentoring for pupils with behaviour and attendance issues is helping them to meet the school's expectations. Successful partnerships with local schools and agencies create extra opportunities to engage pupils and their families, for example, through the recently completed on-site Sure Start funded centre. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities especially appreciate the determination shown by staff to include their children fully in the life of the school.

Leadership and management are good. The school was well looked after whilst there was an acting headteacher. This successfully prepared the way for the recently appointed headteacher who has quickly established an atmosphere where staff feel valued and can contribute to school improvement. Accurate evaluation, though a little modest in relation to the impact of leadership and management, identifies the correct priorities for improvement. Governors' support and expertise is directed at school improvement. Everyone in the school shares the same ambitions and is working well as a team to help the school move forward. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and value for money, although satisfactory, is being strengthened as achievement rises. The significant impact school leaders have had on improving the quality of teaching, and achievement and standards demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in speaking, listening and writing.
- Ensure that all lessons provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all abilities and talents.
- Make certain that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

A small proportion of the school 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. However, pupils' speaking and listening skills are not well developed and this slows their progress in writing, including the ability to produce longer interesting pieces of work. In 2007, pupils' national test results revealed that they reached broadly average standards, although with weakness in writing and mathematics. Moreover, not enough of the more able pupils reached the higher levels. The school has responded very positively to initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress. Lessons now have a firm focus on raising achievement. Standards now are securely average in all subjects, with large gains in pupils' mathematical skills. More pupils are expected to reach higher levels in this year's tests, especially in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally progress at the same rate as other pupils. The school is on course to meet its challenging targets, although writing skills remain a weakness.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and being with their friends and this is reflected in their confident, considerate and friendly attitudes. They are given many opportunities to explore their own feelings and to consider the feelings of others. The result is that their behaviour is good. Pupils are aware of the consequences of failing to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the range of sport and recreational activities available and need no encouragement to participate regularly. Pupils thrive on opportunities to take responsibility, for example, managing the 'Fitbods' activity programme. The school council meets regularly and is actively involved in making decisions about how the school can be improved. Pupils' confidence, their satisfactory and improving literacy and numeracy skills and their commitment all contribute to their satisfactory preparation for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there are increasing elements of good teaching, which are accelerating pupils' progress. Teachers use a variety of strategies to make learning more absorbing, with pupils thoroughly enjoying these lessons, for example when role play is used to solve scientific problems. Improvements in teaching quality means that there

are a growing number of pupils making good rather than satisfactory progress. This reflects the school's drive to maintain a firm focus on achievement, assess work accurately and check progress regularly. Some teachers make good use of accurate assessment to set demanding targets. In these lessons pupils thrive on the challenges, enjoy success and value their achievements. However, this good feature of teaching is not consistent. Assessment and progress information is not always used well enough to plan activities that are carefully matched to pupils' abilities and this limits their learning. Teachers make satisfactory provision for the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. However, not enough emphasis is placed on extending pupils' aptitudes in speaking and listening in order to provide a firm base for the acquisition of writing skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good provision for enrichment. Currently, it meets the needs of all pupils adequately, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum is being steadily adapted to include more variety and more activities to speed up pupils' learning, especially the more able and those with gifts and talents. This is beginning to support rising achievement. Effective use is made of visits and visitors to provide first-hand learning experiences and broaden approaches to learning. Good links with the local secondary school increase opportunities for sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care for pupils and support for their personal development and well-being is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that staff will help them overcome any worries or concerns. Staff take good care of pupils and good use is made of mentoring and agencies to provide specialist support. Consequently, pupils are confident and settled in school. Procedures to safeguard pupils, with established routines for child protection and health and safety, are in place. The quality of academic guidance is satisfactory and improving, for example, it has contributed to rising standards in mathematics for more able pupils. Although pupils' books are marked frequently, the guidance provided does not always spell out exactly what pupils need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because the new headteacher has established a very clear direction for the school and gained total commitment from the staff. Self-critical and reflective self-evaluation has accurately identified what needs to be done to improve. Effective action has been taken to resolve staffing difficulties and raise the quality of teaching and learning to bring about rapid gains in achievement. In the last two terms staff have worked diligently to tackle weakness. The result so far is that both standards and pupils' progress are rising quickly. In addition, the quality of the environment has been much improved to support learning. Effective use of local authority expertise has helped boost subject leaders' know-how and confidence. As expectations of what pupils can achieve have been shared, subject leadership has been strengthened. Governors bring a great deal of support and expertise to the work of the school. All school leaders, including the governors, are fully aware of exactly what needs

to be done to sustain and build upon the improvements made so far and are determined that the school will continue to make good progress.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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	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	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	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 Junior School, Leeds, LS26 0RA

The team and I really appreciated your friendly, warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you work. We were impressed by your enthusiasm to learn. The team also learned a lot about your views when talking to the members of the school council.

We judged that your school is satisfactory, but it is improving very quickly. Here is a reminder of a number of the good things that make Victoria Junior School such a rapidly improving school.

- You are making faster progress because your teachers are making more of your learning interesting.
- You have good relationships with staff and with each other, for example, when training and taking charge of 'Fitbods' sessions.
- The determination of school leaders to improve your school and make sure that you all progress really well.
- Your good behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.

To make your school even better and continue to improve the quality of your work, we have asked your school to do three things. First, we have asked the school to work even harder to improve your speaking, listening and writing skills. Second, we think that the work teachers plan for you could be more closely matched to your abilities so that you learn faster. Third, we have asked your school to make certain that you are told exactly how to improve the quality of your work.

You all have an important part to play in making your school work even better. You can help by continuing to listen carefully to staff, presenting your work more neatly and trying extra hard in lessons to produce the best work you can.

I hope the school will continue to build on its success.