

# Victoria Park Nursery School and Children's Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109757
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310088
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernice Magson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Karen Swaffield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	Victoria Park Parkway Newbury RG14 1EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 41296
<b>Fax number</b>	01635 41296

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well children achieve; the quality of the school's provision in addressing the differing needs of children; and how leaders and managers at all levels determine the school's direction, measure its performance and evaluate its outcomes. Evidence was gathered from the school's records, planning and policies, from observing teaching and learning, from discussions with children, staff, parents and governors and in a scrutiny of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the children's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report.

## Description of the school

The Nursery is situated close to the centre of the market town of Newbury and serves a diverse social community. Most children are of White British or Asian heritage. A small number of children speak English as an additional language. Above average numbers of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and speech and communication needs. Children from a local special school are located on the same site and are integrated with the mainstream Nursery children. The school was designated a Children's Centre in January 2007. Extended services are now provided, including childcare and adult learning programmes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Children achieve well in this good school. Led by a dedicated headteacher, the school is successfully meeting its aim for each child to become an independent and confident individual who has an enthusiasm for learning. A cohesive staff team have developed a warm and reassuring environment in which children feel safe and secure. Parents confirm how well their children enjoy school and that they are eager to attend. One parent reflected the positive views of many commenting that 'her child wished she could go on Saturdays and Sundays!'

Children's personal development is excellent. They play happily together and take turns willingly, exemplifying the schools' focus on the development of respect for each other. Children with complex needs participate fully in all the school's activities and their contributions are valued. Relationships are outstanding. Children understand school rules and comply very well with established routines. Older children are seen guiding younger playmates in meeting teachers' expectations. For instance, unaided, they followed school rules by dressing in wellingtons and waterproof trousers, before going to play in puddles. Behaviour is excellent.

Learning is good because staff recognise each child as an individual with different needs, skills and interests. There is some outstanding teaching in child-initiated play, which is extremely well-planned and with excellent use of resources to help children explore the world around them. In these sessions, staff have high expectations; they work together very well and assess children's progress rigorously. Children have excellent attitudes to their learning and concentrate intensely for long periods. The quality of teaching in adult-led activities is good, although the purpose of activities is not always identified clearly and, as a result, progress is less rapid. Nevertheless, from broadly average starting points, children reach above average standards by the time they leave the Nursery. There is a need to provide a wider range of number tasks and practical calculations as children achieve less well in this area of learning. Children with learning needs and disabilities, the more able, and those speaking English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers, because their needs are identified early and additional support is introduced.

The curriculum is outstanding. Parents describe 'a wonderful range of activities' such as visits to the woods, park and circus. Children are introduced to an excellent range of first-hand experiences, which introduce them to their locality. They give excellent support to local charities and join in festivals and competitions, such as the 'Newbury in Bloom' competition in which they were winners. Children develop good basic skills and are prepared well for their next stage of learning. Regular assessments are undertaken to measure children's progress and targets are set to bring about improvement. Parents receive good information about the curriculum each term, and give the school good financial support. Opportunities for parents to meet with staff are early in the child's first term and do not meet the needs of parents. The school has rightly recognised that parents would like other meetings to discuss their child's progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have been effective in maintaining the school's vision and aims, during the recent changes to a Children's Centre. Leaders and managers at all levels prepare detailed annual plans to improve the quality of the learning environment and raise standards. However, the impact of their actions is not addressed sufficiently in planning and, as a result, there is not enough rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of children's learning and other developments. Moreover, some parents would

like more opportunities to offer their ideas for the development of the school as current arrangements do not provide them with sufficient opportunities to do so.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

As a Nursery school, the Foundation stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Assess progress more rigorously in number and calculation in order to provide a more challenging range of play experiences.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation by identifying a clear link to outcomes in children's learning and rigorously monitoring any developments.
- Review arrangements to seek the views of parents and inform them about their children's progress.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

23 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Victoria Park Nursery School and Children's Centre, Newbury, RG14 1EH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school a few days ago. I enjoyed meeting you and I had a lovely time. I can see why you enjoy going to Nursery each day. I think that you have a good school.

What I liked most about your school is:

- you enjoy school very much and work hard in all activities
- the staff plan many exciting things for you to do each day, such as playing in the new cafand;eacute;
- you go on some very interesting visits, such as to the woods and the circus
- you are very good at all times
- everyone takes very good care of you and this helps you to feel happy and safe.

I have asked your headteacher and teachers to do three things to help your school to get even better. Firstly, I think that the adults should look at new ways for you to practise your counting and playing number games. To help your parents and carers know how well you are learning, it would help if they could meet with your teachers after you have been in school a little longer. Lastly, I think that the staff and governors need to check more carefully how the school is doing, and ask parents and carers for their ideas about school improvements.

I know that your Nursery will continue to improve because your headteacher and the other adults are working hard to make things better all the time. I hope that you carry on enjoying your school and learn many interesting things.

Yours sincerely

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector