

# Victoria Park Primary

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103940
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	323929
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	441
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Cooper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Morrish
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Ballot Street Smethwick B66 3HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5588701
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 5656358

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This much larger than average primary school serves an area of high social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds of which the largest proportion is of Pakistani origin. Over 60% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is well above average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in two part-time Nursery classes and two Reception classes. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

The school provides and manages after school care for its pupils.

## 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. The good personal development and well-being of pupils are a high priority, and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes positive attitudes and good relationships between pupils. They know how to keep safe and how to stay fit and healthy. They show good levels of enjoyment in their lessons and are eager to complete their work. Pupils behave well, and respond with enthusiasm when they have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities in the school. The curriculum is satisfactory, and is improving as staff make relevant links between subjects in order to make the curriculum more exciting for pupils.

Standards by the end of Year 6 have been well below average in English, mathematics and science over the last five years. However, because of improved teaching and learning, standards are rising in all year groups and achievement is satisfactory. The recent National Curriculum test information for the current Year 6 pupils shows marked improvement, and this cohort has made good progress in their learning this year. In all other year groups, progress is at least satisfactory. However, although a range of strategies have been introduced, standards in writing are not rising as quickly as in other subjects. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good and outstanding teaching evident. A strength of teaching is the way teachers involve pupils in their learning, through sharing with them their intended learning and allowing them to talk through ideas with their friends. Teachers are aware they must plan work for differing abilities. However they do not always match work carefully enough to some group and individual needs, especially those of the more able pupils. Also, they do not have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation and, too often, simple spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors remain uncorrected. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

The headteacher and senior management team have worked well with staff and governors to create a positive environment where pupils feel well cared for and supported. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with strengths in pastoral care. However, it is only recently that the leadership has been able to improve the rates of pupils' progress and raise standards. This is because of limitations in monitoring and evaluation procedures. The links between teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and resulting standards and progress have not been sufficiently rigorous. This is now improving as staff are receiving clearer guidance about strengths and weaknesses in their work. The improvements made since the previous inspection, especially in the past year, demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Most children enter the Nursery with skill levels well below those typically expected for their age. Even though they make satisfactory progress through the Nursery and Reception years, few children are working at expected levels on entry to Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory. Children enjoy their learning, and behaviour is good. They use resources carefully and safely, and have a good understanding of the need for personal hygiene, for example washing their hands before making a cake. They willingly take turns and know the importance of class rules. 'Excuse me, you have to share and if you don't you should!' remarked one child when working with another. All welfare requirements are in place, but as yet the school does not work closely enough with parents of the children in this key stage. Although there is a good balance between

indoor and outdoor learning in the Nursery this is not as good in the Reception classes. Leadership and management are satisfactory but as yet the leader does not have a secure enough understanding of the requirements of the new statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, assessments for all areas of learning are not used carefully or flexibly enough to plan for future learning especially in the outdoor environment used by the Reception children. Also activities planned for the outdoors are not always appropriate and although writing is an identified weakness, opportunities to write are not maximised.

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

- Raise standards in English, particularly writing, mathematics and science by ensuring activities meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.
- Ensure assessment information is used to plan work that meets the needs and interests of Nursery and Reception children, especially in the Reception outdoor environment.
- Make certain monitoring information accurately evaluates teaching in relation to pupils' learning and that this information is used to quicken learning and accelerate pupils' progress.

A small percentage of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Although in the past standards by Year 6 have been well below average in English, mathematics and science, this is improving as a result of outstanding teaching in this year group. In other year groups, standards are also rising, and pupils' progress is accelerating. However, there is still some way to go before all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, especially the more able. Also, writing standards are not high enough. Although the school has introduced strategies to improve this aspect, staff do not always ensure pupils speak in extended sentences, hence increasing language and vocabulary skills. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities make satisfactory progress, as do those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. This is because of the carefully targeted support they receive from teaching assistants.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are polite and friendly. They have developed a clear sense of right and wrong and pupils from different backgrounds mix well together, being very tolerant of each others' differences. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the majority of pupils' good behaviour. Pupils work hard in lessons, and they enjoy school, commenting on how well everyone gets on together. 'This is a very friendly place where you can make lots of friends,' commented one pupil. Although the attendance of the majority of pupils is satisfactory, there are a minority of pupils who do not attend regularly enough. Pupils develop a good understanding of the need for leading a healthy lifestyle. They know to make healthy food choices, and the school council has been successful in obtaining a grant to help them promote healthy eating. Pupils know how to keep safe and who to talk to about any problems. They say incidents of bullying or racism are extremely rare. Pupils enjoy helping others and willingly collect money for different charities. Their good personal development, alongside their improving basic skills of literacy,

numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), means pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although good and outstanding teaching is evident, in the main, teaching and learning are satisfactory. A key strength of all lessons is pupils knowing the intended learning of the lesson, and how they might succeed with their work. Pupils want to learn and they enjoy the opportunities to talk to each other and share ideas. However, not all teachers ensure there is a good enough balance between the time they spend talking to pupils, and giving them time to discuss their ideas. Also work is not always consistently pitched at the right level, especially for the more able. Teacher expectations are not high enough and untidy, careless work is too readily accepted. Teaching assistants are used well to support those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are also used effectively to ensure those with difficulties in understanding English are included in all activities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Staff are working hard to make learning more meaningful and interesting for pupils. Links are made between subjects and this helps to promote pupils' enjoyment of lessons. For example, in the context of a history topic on the Second World War, Year 6 pupils very successfully developed the skill of expressing different points of view while learning about events in history. Although links are made between different subjects, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their ICT skills across the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of clubs and visitors. However, although pupils say they enjoy outside visits, there are too few such opportunities offered to them. The before- and after-school clubs provide good provision for pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good relationships throughout the school, along with effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour, ensure that pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school works hard to promote good attendance, but not all parents send their children to school regularly enough, and this affects their progress. The support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and links with external agencies are sound. All safeguarding procedures are in place. Academic guidance is satisfactory, and a good system is in place for tracking pupils' progress term by term. Termly pupil progress meetings also ensure that any underachievement is quickly identified and any necessary action taken. However, the school does not have a year-by-year tracking system, and therefore the leadership is unable to evaluate if progress is good enough in the longer term. The quality of marking is variable. Some good practice is evident, especially in English, where useful comments are given to pupils about how to improve their work. However, pupils are not always given time to respond to these comments, and therefore the impact of marking is limited.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

School leaders ensure the overall quality of education is satisfactory, with a high priority given to pupils' personal development. Extensive monitoring takes place through lesson observations and work scrutinies, for example. However, too often evaluations do not focus sufficiently well on how well the teaching contributes to pupils' learning. As a result, areas for improvement are not identified with sufficient precision, and although self-evaluation is satisfactory, the leadership has an over optimistic view of school effectiveness. However, the newly formed leadership team is becoming more critical, and recognises that the pace of improvement has not been fast enough in the past. This sense of urgency is reflected in the marked improvement in standards of Year 6 pupils in the recent National Curriculum tests. Governors are supportive of the school's work but as yet their role of challenge is insufficiently developed. The school has successfully placed emphasis on promoting community cohesion within the school, local community and international communities. However, provision for increasing pupils' understanding of different communities within the United Kingdom is less well developed. Therefore its promotion of community cohesion is currently satisfactory. The very few parents who returned the inspection questionnaire had positive views of the school's work and links with parents are satisfactory.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Victoria Park Primary School, Smethwick, B66 3HH

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when my colleagues and I came to visit your school. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and were also very friendly around the school. Particular thanks should go to everyone who spoke with us and who helped us to understand why it is you enjoy your learning. We think that Victoria Park Primary School is a satisfactory school and these are some of our findings.

- The school is improving and you are starting to make better progress in your learning. Keep up the good work!
- Teaching is satisfactory and you enjoy your lessons. We saw this in Year 6 when you were enthusiastically discussing the events of Pearl Harbour, from different people's points of view.
- The adults in school look after you well, and they make sure you feel safe and secure.
- Your personal development is good and this shows in your good behaviour and politeness and in the sensible way you carry out responsibilities in school, for example as school councillors.
- You know the importance of eating sensibly and leading a healthy lifestyle.

There is still work to be done to make your school even better, so we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following things.

- Help you become better in English, especially writing, and in mathematics and science by making sure you receive work that makes all of you think as hard as you can.
- Make sure the staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage use the information about what you can do already to plan activities that interest you and help you all learn. We have asked that they do this especially when those of you in Reception classes are learning in the outdoor areas.
- Check teaching carefully and make sure that all of you are making good progress with your work.

You can help by continuing to be happy, hard-working learners and attending school regularly. Thank you again for your help.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness

Lead inspector