

# Victoria Park Junior School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 106327              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Trafford            |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 324372              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 10–11 February 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Steve Rigby         |

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>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 7–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School (total)                            | 240   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Paul Jameson   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs K Sutherland  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 26 April 2006   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Davyhulme Road East<br>Stretford<br>Manchester<br>Lancashire<br>M32 0XZ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0161 912 5005   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0161 911 8014   |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves a mixed area in which there is some significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage although there is a rich blend of pupils from a wide range of other minority ethnic groups. Very few of these pupils are at the first stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved the nationally recognised Healthy School and Activemark Gold Awards.

## 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 Juniors is a good school that is warm and welcoming. It cares well for its pupils' social and emotional needs and promotes their personal development and well-being most effectively. As a result, attendance and behaviour are good and pupils work hard and know how to stay safe and healthy. An overwhelming majority of parental responses tell of their positive support for the school and their high levels of satisfaction with the good pastoral care their children receive. One parent commented that, 'The school is friendly and approachable, very supportive and our children are happy and feel valued.' However, some parents believe that the partnership between them and school could be developed further to increase their involvement in supporting their children's learning.

Since the previous inspection, standards have varied but are now broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress from their below average starting points. Inspection evidence shows that the rate of pupils' progress has accelerated since the previous inspection. This is due to improved teaching and learning and a greater rigour in matching appropriate work to individual pupils' needs. Most pupils reach or exceed the challenging targets set by the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In the best lessons, pupils build on their previous learning well. Good relationships exist between pupils and staff and these allow the school to handle any inappropriate behaviour well. Recent initiatives to improve the monitoring of individual pupil performance are helping teachers to plan lessons more effectively and meet pupils' needs more closely, although the school recognises there is still more to be done in this area. Skilled learning support assistants provide valuable help for small groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and enable them to be fully involved in all aspects of school life. The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of well-planned lessons and after-school activities. Numerous visits and visitors from the local area enrich the provision and provide many opportunities for the school to work more closely with its local community.

The care and support pupils receive are good and pupils feel safe. Child protection and safeguarding systems are in place and fully meet requirements. The quality of academic guidance, through the marking of pupils' work, is not consistent and is not always linked to pupils' individual targets. As a result, pupils are not always fully aware of their next steps in learning.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by a team of hard working and committed staff. The school has worked closely with the local authority to introduce a system to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Subject managers are starting to evaluate the performance of their areas of responsibility more robustly. However, pupils' performance in all subjects is not closely monitored or rigorously evaluated to drive further improvements in achievement and standards. Governors are well informed, they provide good levels of support for the leadership team and challenge the school when appropriate. The school has improved well since the previous inspection; it demonstrates a good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that subject leaders monitor more closely and evaluate more rigorously pupils' progress towards meeting their targets.

- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work is more consistent and closely linked to pupils' individual targets.
- Increase the level of involvement of parents and carers in supporting their children's learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From below average attainment on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards. The school's decisive action to address a dip in standards has had a positive effect that has resulted in significant improvements in English, mathematics and science. The school provides realistic but challenging targets for its pupils. Pupils' progress observed during the inspection was good overall, highlighting the quickening pace of learning within the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils for whom English is an additional language are benefiting from a range of support programmes and small group working. The effective pastoral and academic support they receive in these small groups ensures that they are making the same good progress as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy attending school. Their attitudes in lessons are positive and they are keen to learn and want to succeed. Relationships are good and pupils show courtesy and respect for adults and each other. The strong personal, social and health education programme gives pupils the opportunity to reflect upon decisions, their consequences and the needs of others. They have an impressive knowledge of how to stay safe and are well aware of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy the many lunchtime activities on offer and the take up of the many sporting activities is high.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The cultural diversity of the school is celebrated. Pupils have a growing awareness of other cultures and the multicultural society in which they live. They thrive on being given positions of responsibility such as play-leaders, librarians, art monitors, eco councillors, water monitors or school councillors. These positions help develop self-esteem and allow pupils to make an important contribution to their school community. Outside school they take part in a range of activities in the wider community. For example, the choir sing at a residential home for elderly people and pupils raise money to support the education of children in West Africa.

Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education and the world of work by developing valuable life skills including punctuality, perseverance and team working.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers ensure that lessons are fully inclusive and provide equal opportunities for all. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and use the accurate pupil information provided by the school to prepare well-targeted lessons, with clear learning outcomes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, often in small groups, by support assistants. Pupils are fully engaged during lessons and work with confidence. Lessons are brisk and pupils' interest and enthusiasm are maintained

by teachers' good use of resources, including interactive whiteboards. In all classes, good relationships are evident and any challenging behaviour, when it does occur, is managed well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school offers a broad and well-planned curriculum, with a strong emphasis on improving standards in English, mathematics and science. For example, pupils are being given opportunities to reinforce their writing skills in history and information and communication technology (ICT). There is a wide range of well-attended extra curricular activities, including a chess club, choir and various sporting activities. Pupils enjoy visits to Dunham village and the local cinema. There is a residential trip to Robinwood centre for the older pupils. Many visitors are invited into school including authors, poets and a pop band, teaching social history. Teachers comment favourably on the beneficial impact these visits have on the quality of the children's work. The school works with a number of secondary schools and colleges to share expertise and equipment. Pupils benefit from these links as they provide them with specialist teaching in Spanish and enhance the teaching of ICT and music and the use of secondary school activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents are very positive about the way the school supports pupils' personal and social needs. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Health and safety of pupils has a high priority and all requirements are met. Pupils know who to turn to if they have any problems. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current guidelines. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and the school has strong links with external agencies to support pupils when necessary, enabling these pupils to make progress in line with their peers. Academic guidance has been improved since the previous inspection. Procedures for helping pupils improve their work such as target setting and regular marking are now in place. However, the style of marking is not applied consistently across the school or sufficiently detailed to help pupils and parents move towards meeting individual targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and management team work closely together and are fully committed to improving pupils' academic and personal achievement. The school runs smoothly, celebrates its own cultural diversity and promotes a strong sense of community. Self-evaluation processes are effective and the school has an accurate view of itself and the areas to be improved. The headteacher, following consultation with the local authority and external providers, has identified the right priorities to make this possible. Challenging but realistic targets are set in English, mathematics and science. Subject leaders need to apply greater rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance across all areas of the curriculum to ensure that pupils meet their targets. Strong links between parents, local schools and external agencies support the school and promote community cohesion and equality of opportunity well. The Extended Schools Initiative is tangible evidence of the school's response to families' concerns of local community issues that may affect their children. Governors support the school well, have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and challenge the leadership with rigour when needed.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

**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 capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

**Achievement and standards**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress                           | 2 |

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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  | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

## The quality of provision

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

## 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  | 2   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 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  |

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

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and sharing your work and opinions with us. We feel your school provides you with a good standard of education. Your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting. There are many adults in the school who care for you and help you when you find the work difficult. You make good progress by the end of Year 6. You are well behaved, polite and friendly and take your responsibilities seriously. You understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and told us how much you enjoyed your sports clubs and residential visit to Robinwood. You enjoy it when visitors come from other schools and colleges to work with you to improve your Spanish, information and communication technology and music. You also enjoy the many educational trips that your teachers arrange for you.

We have asked your school to make things even better by:

- making sure that your teachers check more often how well you are doing towards meeting your targets in every subject area
- making sure you know all your targets and are told exactly what you need to do to reach them
- providing more ways that your parents and carers can help you with your learning in school and at home.

I hope that you help the school to improve even further by trying your very best in every lesson and letting the teachers know when you find the work too easy or too difficult.

Best wishes for the future and keep up the good work.