

# Vernon Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135327
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	329079
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Jones

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	330
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>	Mr Jack Hutchcroft
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jo Glimmerveen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 January 2006
<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>	Bulkeley Road Poynton Cheshire SK12 1NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 872556
<b>Fax number</b>	0

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Of the small proportion of pupils from other ethnic heritages none are at an early stage of learning English. There are a few Traveller and looked-after children. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well below average. The school has a resource unit to help a small number of pupils with statements of special educational need who have complex moderate learning difficulties. Reception age children are provided for in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This is a new primary school resulting from the amalgamation of an Infant and a Junior school in January 2008. A new headteacher was appointed at the time of the amalgamation. A significant number of Key Stage 2 teachers were appointed to start in September 2008. There is pre-school and out-of-school care on site, which is provided by private providers and did not form part of this inspection.

The school is recognized as a National Healthy school and has gained the Activemark and the Eco Council silver, Dyslexia Friendly and Inclusion awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features and it uses its resources effectively to provide good value for money. The recent amalgamation of the Junior and Infant schools has ensured that strengths are capitalized upon and Key Stage 2 pupils, in particular, have benefited from changes made. The majority of parents say that they are fully in agreement with the measures taken to improve the quality of education that have been put in place. Parents appreciate the time and care taken to ensure good personal development and the emphasis the school places on developing pupils' sense of responsibility towards themselves and others. They see this reflected in pupils' eagerness to go to school, their positive attitudes and their exemplary behaviour.

Achievement is good across the age range. Standards are significantly above average in Year 2. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. However, these pupils are making good progress after a period of significant underachievement in their earlier years in Key Stage 2. Standards in writing are lower than they should be in Years 4 to 6, mainly because of weaknesses in sentence construction, spelling and punctuation. Throughout the school, standards in mathematics are generally lower than English and science, primarily because of weaknesses in pupils' calculation skills.

A strength of the school is the good quality pastoral and academic care and guidance that all pupils receive, particularly the more vulnerable such as Traveller children and looked after pupils. This results in pupils making informed choices about living healthily and by Year 6 they are mature and ready to move on to secondary education. Good academic support and guidance are in place, based on careful tracking of progress. Where pupils' progress slows, positive interventions are made that help to bring them back on track to meet their challenging targets.

The quality of teaching is good overall and includes some that is outstanding. Teachers use assessment well and are increasingly effective in helping pupils to understand the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Teachers manage their classes very efficiently so that there is a good atmosphere for learning. The curriculum is excellent and is extended and enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities. This is reflected in the achievement of external awards. Good links with local schools and the community further enrich the curriculum.

Leadership and management are effective and have ensured good provision and increasingly good achievement, resulting in an improving school. The headteacher makes an outstanding contribution in ensuring a clear direction for the school's development, based on raising achievement. The significant progress the school has made over its first year suggests that its leadership is excellently placed to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well because they receive good quality care, support and teaching. Some aspects of the provision are outstanding. For example, there are excellent links with the on-site nursery and induction procedures are very effective. Adults keep exemplary records of where each child is up to in their 'Learning Journey'. The excellent use of assessment ensures that children's progress is charted accurately and interventions put in place where necessary. Children enter the Reception class with levels of skill expected for their age. They make good progress

across all six areas of learning because the Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. A well-planned curriculum uses the excellent environment created both indoors and outside to provide good blend of child-initiated and adult-led activities. However, on occasion, activities are over directed by adults and this leads to some children becoming impatient. Children play well, are sociable with each other and readily share. For example, in building a swimming pool, made mainly from mud, children took turns to mix and level the area using spades, hoes and rakes. This also contributed well to their mathematical understanding and their physical development. Teachers' good use of letters and sounds makes a significant impact on their language and literacy skills, and ICT is used well to extend their progress in mathematics. Adults often use open-ended questions to help extend children's thinking and learning and they are given plenty of opportunities to take on responsibilities, which they relish. This contributes to children's outstanding personal development and well-being.

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

- Improve pupils' calculation skills in mathematics throughout the school.
- Develop pupils' writing skills in Years 4 to 6, particularly relating to sentence construction and improving their accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In Year 2 standards are well above average in reading and writing due to the impact of a well-structured approach to teaching these areas. However, mathematics standards are lower because pupils' skills in calculation are underdeveloped. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress overall. They started the year with standards below average in English, mathematics and science. They have made gains and now their standards are broadly average. However, pupils throughout Years 4 to 6 have not yet caught up in writing. Spelling and punctuation are too frequently inaccurate and sentence construction weaker than it should be. In mathematics, these pupils do not calculate as rapidly and accurately as they should. However, the good teaching and careful assessment now in place ensure that past underachievement is being successfully tackled. Year 6 pupils are mainly meeting the challenging targets set for them. In relation to their starting points their achievement is good. The school ensures that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well. Pupils with statement of special educational need receive excellent provision, through a separate resource unit that ensures their continued good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, personal development is good. There are some outstanding features, for example pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are thoughtful and respond very positively to things of beauty, such as music, works of art and story writing. They appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures through their work on global community and the school's link with Africa. Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is excellent and this ensures that in classrooms there is a good atmosphere and learning is valued. Pupils behave very safely and say that they feel safe and secure and that bullying is not an issue. They point out that there is always someone to go to if they have a problem. Attendance is currently average and improving. Pupils eat healthily and have a good understanding of the importance of exercise. They contribute to the community well. They are

very willing to take responsibility for themselves and for one another, by, for example supporting peers using the 'Buddy Bench' in the playground or by looking after the environment through the school 'eco' club. In lessons, pupils show a mature attitude to working together and discussing their work. Pupils gain good enterprise skills through the opportunities for teamwork and their involvement in the introduction of the healthy tuck-shop. These experiences help them to prepare well for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall standard of teaching and learning is good. Pupils also benefit from some provision that is outstanding. Consistently good quality teaching and a stimulating curriculum mean that pupils value and enjoy learning. Pupils like their teachers and respond by working hard in lessons. The mutual respect between all staff and pupils supports learning very well. Teachers vary the ways of introducing new work, which engages pupils and holds their interest. However, during whole-class teaching, opportunities are occasionally missed to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers use assessment effectively to keep pupils on target. Their own assessments are accurate and they encourage pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others, which reinforces pupils' learning. Classrooms are very well organised and excellent routines help lessons proceed smoothly. The high quality displays are testament to the hard work of teachers and pupils and ensure an interesting and lively environment for learning. Teachers prepare their work in great detail. However, in some of their written plans they do not show clearly what they expect different groups within their classes to achieve. Homework is used effectively, particularly to develop pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution, particularly in helping the lower attainers to fulfil their potential.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

An outstanding curriculum has been put in place, but in the short time since the school has been established it has not had its full impact on raising achievement. The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs of all learners and ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. It meets statutory requirements and is very well planned to make meaningful links between subjects. This is exemplified by beautifully presented study books in which pupils choose for themselves how to present their work. They take great pride in their books and include work from a wide spectrum of subjects. This creative approach, which focuses on the development of key skills, has proved to be a very effective way to foster in each child a love of learning. Pupils enjoy residential visits in each of the Years 3 to 6. These focus on different aspects of their development such as teamwork skills that boost self-esteem, and opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities and the creative arts. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by an excellent range of educational visits and visitors. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, music, art and French. These receive wide support and pupils benefit greatly from the additional experiences.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Levels of pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and frequently reviewed. Risk assessments are satisfactory and systems and guidance are in place to ensure pupils' safety. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. The school's staff work well with parents in supporting pupils' academic and social development. For example, parents of pupils who have learning difficulties are directly involved in the review of their children's progress. Parents appreciate these aspects of school and report the care and kindness that has been extended to their families. However, some parents express concerns that the recent arrangements for transfer from Year 2 to 3 were not helpful enough for some pupils. The school has reviewed their arrangements in the light of comments and they are now satisfactory. Challenging targets are set and assessments are effective in providing reliable information about pupils' achievement. This helps in setting pupils the next steps in their learning. Academic guidance is good and pupils in Key Stage 2 have recently been helped to understand what they need to do to improve in the core subjects and are now beginning to be actively involved in the setting of learning targets. However, teachers' marking of work, while conscientious and encouraging, is not consistent in helping pupils take their work forward.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher gives an excellent lead in establishing a clear direction for the school's development. The changes made in teaching and learning are recent and the full impact has not yet been realised, but there has been recent significant improvement in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 and high standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1. This reflects the school's excellent capacity to improve. Staff with management responsibilities and governors know what they need to do to improve the school further and are keen to do so. All staff have the necessary attitudes and skills to take the school forward and they give good support to the headteacher. Challenging targets drive the school's development. Planning is good, and priorities are appropriate to guide further improvement. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate. It is based on a realistic appraisal of its strengths and areas for further development. The monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and learning is regular and rigorous. It ensures a common purpose among staff to raise standards further by sharing strengths and tackling weaknesses. Provision for the promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils appreciate the importance of tolerance and understanding between different ethnic groups, cultures and religions because they receive effective teaching about the school's place in the wider community. They know about the importance of contributing in the school and wider communities and the importance of understanding global issues. There is a clear impact here, seen in the harmonious relationships between pupils.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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	1
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	1
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?	1
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**

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for taking the time to talk to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. We found your school to be good and some aspects are excellent.

You obviously enjoy coming to school and this shows in your excellent behaviour in classrooms and around the school. You told us that you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you and teach you to think of other people throughout the world. You all make good progress as a result of the good and sometimes excellent teaching you receive. Your school's link with the Uganda school is obviously much valued. We liked the way you take responsibility, for example the way you help each other using the Buddy Bench in the playground. You are taught well to take a pride in your surroundings. Classrooms and corridors reflect this with their excellent and vibrant displays. These displays also show that you study a wide range of subjects. We appreciate how well your school helps you in learning to live healthily and safely so that you develop into mature young people, ready to progress to your next stage at secondary school.

To make things even better, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to help all of you to develop your calculation skills in order to improve your standards in mathematics. Also, pupils in Years 4 to 6 need to improve their written English. In particular, these pupils should improve the way they construct sentences and take more care with spelling and the use of punctuation. You can help by continuing to work hard.