

# Victoria Park Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109757
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337367
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jo Curd

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>	2–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Swaffield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2008
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Thirteen observations of children's learning were made, which included the observation of 10 staff. The inspection team talked with parents, carers, children, representatives of the governing body, the school improvement partner and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning, assessment documents, policies, local authority reports and the school's improvement plan. In total, 104 responses to questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the school's judgement that behaviour, as outstanding, is evident in a range of activities throughout the Nursery
- the frequency, robustness and rigour of lesson monitoring
- the quality of extended care provision including breakfast, lunch and tea clubs together with the crèche
- the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation
- the effectiveness of all aspects of safeguarding.

## Information about the school

Victoria Park Nursery School draws children from a very diverse social community. It has just started taking two-year-olds who are eligible for funding. About three quarters of the children are of White British heritage. Approximately a quarter speak English as an additional language; these predominantly have Urdu, Polish or Hindi as their first language. About a fifth of the children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly linked with emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties. A very small minority of children are looked after by the local authority.

The Nursery was given a children's centre remit in 2007 and the building was extended to include an additional area for this aspect of its provision in 2009. The children's centre was not part of this inspection. The Nursery School manages the extended care, which includes a crèche and breakfast, lunch, tea and holiday clubs. As the extended care is managed through the governing body, it was part of this inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

This is a good Nursery where children thrive and do well in all aspects of their learning and development. Their outstanding understanding of how to be healthy is reflected in their daily lives, such as washing their hands before eating and enjoying 'Fresh Air Fridays', when they all work and play outside for the whole session. Children make good progress in their learning and development through participating in a wide range of stimulating activities and using an extremely wide range of equipment and resources. Teaching is good and all the children benefit from effective support.

The Nursery engages well with its parents and carers, who feel that their children are well cared for and safe. One parent, typifying the views of others, commented, 'Victoria Park Nursery has enabled me to leave my son in their care with absolute confidence of his safety, well-being and access to learning and play.' Staff support all children in a sensitive and nurturing way, especially those who are younger or more vulnerable. Consequently, children feel safe and behave well. All children, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, benefit greatly from effective support and consistent expectations and routines. All aspects of the school's extended provision contribute well to children's development and also provide additional facilities which are valued by parents and carers. While children are kept safe at all times, some policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding have not been reviewed regularly or implemented robustly enough by governors. This is now being addressed.

Leaders have been successful in maintaining effective provision and good outcomes for children since the last inspection. They help staff to identify their strengths and interests, encourage training to develop these further, and enable them to take valuable roles in local authority projects and to work with other schools and professionals. Leaders have a good, although slightly over-optimistic, understanding of the strengths of the Nursery and seek improvements where weaknesses are identified. Such improvements include increasing extended provision and implementing plans to refurbish the outdoor area. Leaders do not analyse the outcomes and provision for different groups of children as rigorously as they might, however, to ensure that all groups are doing as well as they could in all areas of learning. The governing body is very supportive of the Nursery but its role in evaluating its work and holding leaders to account is underdeveloped. Given the commitment of all staff and the positive track record of improvement, the Nursery has good capacity to maintain its improvement.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their

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statutory duties and that they use these effectively to challenge the school and hold it to account, particularly with regard to safeguarding regulations.

- Increase the frequency and rigour with which leaders analyse the outcomes for different groups of pupils to ensure that they are all doing as well as they can.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children start at the Nursery with a very wide range of knowledge, skills, understanding and experiences. Overall, these are broadly typical for children of this age. Most children settle very quickly and greatly enjoy their time in the Nursery. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Extensive activities and first-hand experiences indoors and out contribute well to particularly good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins their wider development and helps them to be caring individuals who are interested in the world around them. In particular, children develop independence, confidence and self-reliance due to the caring relationships, challenges given, well-organised support and resources. As a result, children enjoy learning new things, persevere and have fun. Children who attend the crèche, breakfast, lunch and/or tea clubs extend their learning and social skills further through a range of activities. For example, they continue to enjoy imaginative role-play outside in the tea club after others have gone home.

During the inspection, children were highly engaged in a photography project, initiated as part of a partnership with an independent arts group. Children had taken photographs in the Nursery and the adjacent park. They used their initiative to select and take interesting shots independently, using the Nursery's digital cameras. This led to good and meaningful learning when they printed the photographs and used them to make their own books. Creative, physical, social and literacy skills were successfully developed. Occasionally, progress is slowed because opportunities are missed to extend children's thinking and speaking skills. For example, during some activities linked to children's knowledge and understanding of the world and creativity some opportunities to extend language and communication were missed.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

**Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

2

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Relationships are warm and supportive, and staff are responsive to children's needs. Good partnerships with other professionals, such as health workers, social workers and speech therapists, contribute positively to the care and support of children and their families. A parent commented, 'I have found the school and the support worker have worked extremely well to help my son and myself in our situation.' Extended care, including breakfast, lunch and tea clubs, provides support for children and families beyond their half-day session.

Adults organise very varied, stimulating and relevant activities; they promote all six areas of learning well, for example helping children develop mathematical, language and scientific skills through the study of tadpoles. There is a good balance between activities which adults present and lead, and those that children choose and pursue themselves. Resources are well used, but some, particularly those outside, are rather worn. Plans to refurbish this area have begun.

The quality of teaching is good because most staff have a very strong understanding of how young children learn. Adults use assessment information effectively to plan and extend children's learning from day to day. They have successfully developed their teaching skills through leading and participating in Nursery and local authority courses. Planning is effectively based on all areas of learning and children's individual interests and experiences. Activities are well prepared and presented to engage children and maximise their independence. Nevertheless, some variation in the quality of teaching remains and sometimes opportunities to extend children's learning are missed.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

### **How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers are dedicated to the children and are keen to improve. They show clear vision and drive and have galvanised the support of all staff. This ambition is reflected in the Nursery's self-evaluation, although this is over-optimistic about the effectiveness of the Nursery in some respects. Leaders work effectively to improve learning where weaknesses are identified. For example, an analysis of children's attainment in communication, language and literacy showed that, although all the children progress well, they could perhaps do even better. Consequently, leaders have increased the frequency of small 'targeted support' and 'challenge' groups. Leaders value individual children and the diversity of the Nursery and their promotion of equal opportunities is good, even though they do not always analyse outcomes for all groups as fully as they could.

The whole Nursery has benefited from a senior teacher's involvement in a local authority project on community cohesion, which has aided evaluation of their work and development planning. As a result, the school has developed good links with local, national and international groups.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and is proactive in helping the Nursery and parents and carers. However, governors do not challenge the school sufficiently and until very recently have not been sufficiently robust in ensuring that the policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children are sufficiently robust.

Effective partnerships with parents and carers and other groups and professionals contribute well to the good quality of teaching and learning opportunities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with all aspects of the Nursery investigated. One expressed the views of most when they said, 'Victoria Park Nursery is everything a nursery school should be. Every day I am excited to collect my daughter and to hear and see what wonderful things she has been doing.' Although a very small minority of parents and carers did not feel well informed, inspection findings did not support this. During the inspection, staff were seen to be easily accessible to parents and carers at the beginning and end of sessions and are open to meet any at time other than this. Children's 'learning diaries', which parents/carers are invited to look at, take home and contribute to, are also very accessible. Additionally photographs of activities displayed in the entrance foyer, consultations and reports all serve to keep parents and carers informed of activities their children have done and the progress they are each making. A small minority of parents/carers expressed some concern about behaviour. The inspection found behaviour to be good. The majority of children behave very well; a few find this more difficult. Staff were seen to manage and support this effectively.



### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	84	13	13	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	83	14	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	54	36	35	5	5	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	49	44	42	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	70	67	28	27	1	1	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	55	39	38	1	1	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	66	29	28	1	1	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	50	42	40	1	1	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	63	31	30	1	1	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	53	36	35	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	54	38	37	2	2	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	69	66	29	28	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	76	21	20	1	1	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Victoria Park Nursery School, Newbury, RG14 1EH

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your Nursery recently. It was good to see you all playing and working so busily. I particularly liked the books you were making with photographs you were taking with the Nursery's digital cameras. You were obviously learning a lot in this interesting activity.

The Nursery is good and I can see why your parents and carers are so pleased with it. 'Fresh Air Fridays', when you all play and work outside, and your good understanding of how to keep clean, help you to stay very healthy. You all make good progress in your learning and development because you are taught and helped well and have so many interesting things to do. You usually behave very well even though a few of you sometimes find this difficult. Staff look after you well and the many adults who answered our questions are happy that you are kept safe. The way you move around the Nursery and play together show us that you usually feel safe too.

Nursery leaders, including some called governors, do not always write down or look quite carefully enough at all the things the Nursery does. This includes things to make sure you are all kept as safe as possible and to make sure that various groups of children all do as well as they possibly can. We have asked them to write what they know about the Nursery more thoroughly and more often so that they can all ask questions about this and make sure that things are always as good as they possibly could be for you all.

Perhaps you can all help by continuing to behave well and trying hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Jo Curd

Lead inspector

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