

# The Vale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131991
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	341268
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Morris

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debra Beer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Jane Regnard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	84-92 Beaconsfield Road Epsom KT18 6HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01372 273639
<b>Fax number</b>	01372 279349
<b>Email address</b>	info@vale.surrey.co.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. 13 lessons were observed and nine teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. The inspectors spoke with a few parents and carers in the playground. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, planning information, school documents such as the school development plan, and health and safety information. They analysed the 97 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- how well teaching challenges pupils to improve their skills
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors in ensuring that pupils reach their full potential
- the quality of the curriculum and how it helps teachers to meet the needs of all the different groups of pupils in the school.

## Information about the school

The Vale Primary is an average-sized school. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the percentage that have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly emotional and behavioural difficulties or speech and language difficulties, are lower than in most other schools. The number with English as an additional language is low. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from the age of four. A private breakfast club runs on the school site from 7.45am daily and a private after-school club also runs daily. These are subject to a separate 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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It provides pupils with a sound education. After a turbulent period due to significant changes of leadership and other staff, the school is improving and has some strong features. Good care and support results in pupils' successful personal development. Pupils enjoy school. They play and work together well because of the strong emphasis placed on building positive relationships. Behaviour has improved and is now good and pupils are polite and friendly. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and they say that they feel safe and secure at school. Pupils come to school punctually and regularly, so that their attendance is rising and is above average. Safeguarding, including child protection procedures, are rigorous and fully meet current government guidelines.

Pupils' academic development is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress from their above-average starting points. Over the last three years, attainment in English, mathematics and science has fluctuated. It improved last year when attainment was above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils left school in Year 6. Current attainment is also above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of a well-planned programme for improvement, which helps them to achieve their targets. More able pupils do not always achieve their potential because there is too little challenge for this group in many lessons.

Some good teaching was seen during the inspection, in which pupils achieved well and made good progress. However, the majority of teaching is satisfactory and pupils are not always challenged as well as they could be. Lessons are calm and well managed but often lack the pace to encourage pupils to complete enough work in the time allowed. Although the curriculum provides appropriate tasks for most pupils, it does not support teachers sufficiently well in their planning for different ability groups. As a result, expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low and not all pupils do as well as they could, particularly those who are the most able. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start in the spacious and welcoming Reception class. They make good progress and achieve well, due to some exciting activities and skilled teaching.

Leaders are accurate in their assessment of the school. The difficulties of the past two years have resulted in limited improvement in provision and outcomes since the last inspection. Several subject leaders are relatively new to their roles. They have made a good start in monitoring their subjects and now know how well pupils are doing. Staffing has stabilised and the governing body has been strengthened. Strategic monitoring by the governing body in the past few years has been limited, particularly the monitoring of

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learning and progress. The new chair of the governing body and the new joint vice-chairs have a realistic understanding of the school and are effectively supported by the local authority. Leaders know that the monitoring of pupils' outcomes require improvement. Plans to introduce a new curriculum are well advanced. Assessment and tracking procedures have been successfully embedded and are beginning to have a positive impact on the work of the school. Most parents and carers are supportive of the school, although a small minority of parents and carers do not feel fully involved or feel informed well enough about their children's progress. The school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

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

- Improve the curriculum and its delivery to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are fully engaged in tasks that enable them to achieve their potential.
- Develop leadership roles, including those of subject leaders and governors, so that they are sharply focused on monitoring the schools' work to improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Engage parents more in the work of the school and keep them fully informed about the progress their children make.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils show their enjoyment by the way they come to school eagerly and regularly. They look after each other, older ones acting as buddies to help younger ones. Because they are well cared for, they develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. 'School is just like a large family,' commented one pupil. They have a good understanding of keeping healthy and regularly bring fruit to school. The well-attended after-school sports clubs ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to keep fit. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and they value fairness. They understand that the behaviour charts used in classes help pupils to manage their own behaviour well. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' links with the local community and particularly with local schools are good and they raise funds for different charities regularly. Because of their above-average standards, their positive behaviour and their good attendance, pupils are well prepared for their futures.

Most pupils make the progress expected of them from their above-average starting points. Some make good progress, particularly in English, because of the focus on literacy skills. Progress for the most-able pupils, though satisfactory, does not regularly ensure that they achieve their potential. This is due to the lack of extended learning opportunities in some classes, mainly in younger age groups. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They maintain their above average starting points as they move up through the school. Pupils do particularly well in information and communication technology (ICT) due to some high-quality resources. Even the youngest children are confident and accurate users of technology.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Strong provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps pupils to develop sensible, mature attitudes, which prepare them well socially for the next stage of their education. It helps them also towards leading healthy lives. Curriculum provision for the less-able pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is well planned and taught. Specific, individual targets for these pupils are regularly monitored. As a result, their progress is good. Planned tasks for other pupils, including the more able, often lack creativity, resulting in pupils spending too much time sitting and listening and not enough time actively learning. Provision improves towards the top end of the school because of some good teaching and focused tasks. For example, pupils in Year 6 were thoroughly involved and captivated by their hands-on learning as they made scale models to replicate coastal erosion. They said that they were really looking forward to a visit to the Isle of Wight to see coastal features in reality. In this lesson, planned independence in learning helped pupils, including the more able, to do well. In some other classes, there is often insufficient scope for pupils to develop their skills through taking the lead or planning their own learning. Teachers mark pupils' work

<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.

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regularly. Assessment is regularly used in daily practice and now ensures that teachers and pupils know how well the pupils are doing. Pupils have their 'next steps' clearly labelled in their books. This is successful in showing them the way forward. Additional enrichment activities such as the many good residential experiences are well received by pupils. After-school clubs are well attended and promote the health and well-being of pupils successfully.

Pupils are cared for well. Procedures to keep them safe are robust. Pupils say that there is always someone to turn to. Adults, including classroom assistants, take good care of them and monitoring, when pupils are outside, is also good. Induction procedures are effective and older pupils say that arrangements for transition to secondary school help them to feel confident about their futures. Additional guidance to enable the most-able pupils to achieve their potential is more limited, although partnerships with local schools are developing and are beginning to provide some effective extension activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leadership and management by senior staff and the governing body have improved recently. As a result, self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Assessment and tracking systems have been developed and are embedded in all areas of the school. These systems show how well each pupil is doing. Targets are being regularly checked and are helping leaders to monitor progress carefully. New leadership of the governing body has improved the management of the school. Governors understand the need to hold the school to account for any dip in standards and for its decisions. They are regular visitors to the school and meet their statutory duties. The quality of monitoring at the school has been too limited and some leadership roles, particularly in relation to monitoring, are underdeveloped. Leaders are aware of this and are beginning to rectify it. A sound strategy for community cohesion is developing. There is a clear action plan identifying the next steps, based on a thorough audit. Because pupils are learning to speak French, the school is forging links with a school in France. Links are also developing with schools in other areas of Britain. The school has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers. Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination satisfactorily. Good local partnerships are helping improve ICT in particular. Partnership working is helping the school to provide at least satisfactory value for money.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children enjoy coming to the Reception class and quickly settle. Adults provide a caring and safe environment, so that children develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Most children start school with levels of skills that are at least as expected for their age. Many have good skills in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical and social development. The current class are achieving well and most are above average in all six areas of learning. This is because of skilled teaching and rigorous attention to early literacy and mathematics. Following a visit to the National History Museum, children played excitedly with toy dinosaurs. They were able to name most of them and to count them. One boy was able to share twelve dinosaurs between three children equally. Others were able to do simple addition and subtraction using the dinosaurs. They had lots of fun in their learning and were keen to do more. The outdoor area plays an important role in extending their skills. Children chased each other excitedly on bikes. They shared ideas about using modelling clay to create their own dinosaurs and carefully counted how many legs and how many spines their own model had. Detailed assessment and tracking and regular annotations of each child's successes are key features of the good leadership. Photographic evidence shows children's achievements well. Learning is effectively planned, although children are not as involved in planning their own activities as they could be.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

### **Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school and feel that their children are doing well. 'The school is warm and welcoming. It has a caring ethos,' wrote one parent. A small minority are concerned about behaviour and bullying. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection, although there is evidence of past behaviour difficulties in the school's documentation. Pupils say that any bullying is dealt with quickly and that there is always someone to support them. A few parents and carers do not feel that they receive enough information from the school, or that the school takes sufficient account of their views and suggestions. Leaders agree that they could inform parents and carers more fully about the work of the school. A small minority of parents and carers feel that the leadership and management of the school requires some improvement. Leadership has improved and stabilised recently and there is a new chair of the governing body in place.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Vale Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 203 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	63	31	32	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	59	61	36	37	0	0	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	44	48	49	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	42	38	39	15	15	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	50	52	35	36	7	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	40	44	45	12	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	47	49	51	2	2	0	0
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)	33	34	54	56	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	38	40	41	12	12	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	23	46	47	18	19	8	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	33	42	43	20	21	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	31	38	39	20	21	8	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	53	37	38	6	6	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 pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. 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 pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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 pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**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.**



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Vale Primary School, Epsom KT18 6HP

Thank you for helping us during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing about the things you like doing. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school.

- Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.
- You behave well. You told us that, although there is sometimes a little bullying, your teachers deal with it quickly so that you feel safe at school. Many of you work as Buddies to help other pupils find a friend.
- You come to school regularly.
- You reach higher standards than pupils in most schools in English, mathematics and science
- In some lessons, not enough is provided for those of you who can do the work quite easily.
- Those of you with special needs do well in lessons and have lots of good support.
- The leaders of your school take good care of you. You said that there is always an adult you can talk to.
- A small number of your parents feel that the school could work better with them so that they can help you more at home.

We are asking your school to do a few things to help you do even better. You can help with these by continuing to work hard in all your lessons.

- Improve the curriculum, so that it provides the right activities for all the different pupils, especially those of you who are the most able.
- Make sure that all your leaders improve the way they carry out their roles.
- Work closely with your parents and carers so that they feel closely involved and know how well you are doing.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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