

The Vale Primary Academy

Ferrybridge Road, Knottingley, West Yorkshire, WF11 8JF

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils of all ages and capabilities make remarkable progress in all subjects.
- The excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a very good grounding in all areas of learning.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils are motivated, enthused and inspired in their learning by the high quality of teaching they receive.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Very positive attitudes towards learning were observed in all lessons.
- The curriculum provides memorable experiences and rich learning opportunities that allow pupils to be investigative in their learning.
- Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. Leaders have a very clear vision for the school and are successfully committed to continuing to improve teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders and governors have a very accurate understanding of the school's performance, as a result of rigorous and regular monitoring.
- However, the role of subject leaders is not yet fully developed. As a result, they do not have the same detailed view of the school's performance, especially in relation to the progress of different groups of pupils within their subject areas.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the many ways in which the school helps their children to learn and thrive as individuals.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out 13 lesson observations, of which one was a joint observation with one of the principals, and looked at work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the academy trust, staff, and pupils.
- Although there were no responses on Ofsted's on-line survey, Parent View, the views of parents were taken into account from the 106 responses to a paper copy of the survey given out by the school and by speaking to parents during the inspection. The views of staff were taken into account through discussions and responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including a summary of the school's view of its performance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Angela Shaw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Vale Primary Academy is an average-sized primary school. It converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2012. When its predecessor school Knottingly Vale Junior and Infant School was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupils premium funding. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and the children of service families).
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school holds a wide range of awards including Healthy School and Young Enterprise Council's Primary School of the Year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the role of subject leaders and so enable them to take a greater part in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' performance in their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils achieve extremely well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid progress from starting points that are mostly well below those typically expected for their age. They learn early reading, writing and number skills quickly because they practise these every day in highly enjoyable activities.
- Across Key Stage 1, progress for all groups of pupils is very rapid. This is closely linked to the high quality of teaching and the relentless focus on tracking pupils' progress along with sharply focused interventions to support learning that make a real difference to pupils' achievement.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils make the same very rapid progress in English and mathematics so that by the time they leave Year 6 their standards are well above average overall.
- Pupils write very well. They are keen to use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing, which shows their great pride in the quality of presentation and handwriting. A Year 5 pupil explained, 'good descriptive words make my writing interesting.' while rewriting the rhyme *Incy Wincy Spider*.
- Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities for reading the school provides, talk enthusiastically about books they have read and understand how reading helps them with other areas of their work.
- Pupils across the school very confidently use a range of written and mental methods of calculation to solve mathematical problems and are able to explain the strategies they have used.
- The school allocates the pupil premium government funding very effectively, providing pupils eligible for free school meals with additional support. As a result, they make outstanding progress and the gap between how well they and other groups of pupils in the school are doing is closing rapidly.
- As a result of highly effective support and carefully planned programmes of work, the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is outstanding. This demonstrates the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity for its pupils.
- Parents strongly agree that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils are motivated, enthused and inspired in their learning by the outstanding quality of teaching that the school provides. Strong and open relationships in all classes form the solid foundations for high-quality teaching and learning. In a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson pupils were able to talk honestly and openly about how their actions and comments may impact on others.
- Exciting activities planned for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage inspire a love of learning. For example, children delighted in finding and writing about the trail of evidence a 'tiger' left behind after visiting their classroom.
- All teachers and other adults working with pupils have the highest expectations of what they can achieve and pupils respond with equal enthusiasm in their learning. This encourages them to achieve and progress extremely well in lessons and over time, especially in literacy, reading and mathematics.
- Teachers are highly skilled in asking pupils probing, open-ended questions which not only make the pupils think deeply about their learning but also help the teacher understand clearly what each pupil knows and what they need to learn next. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were keen to explain their answers to the teacher's challenging questions.
- Teaching assistants who work with pupils who need extra help make a highly effective contribution to their learning.
- Lessons are always carefully planned and structured, thus allowing all pupils to extend their

knowledge and understanding rapidly. Lessons are fun and succeed in meeting pupils' needs extremely well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are exemplary. They are very enthusiastic about their lessons and make an exceptional contribution to their own learning through the cooperation they show when working with others as well as being very confident and capable learners when working independently.
- Behaviour around school is excellent. Pupils treat each other with respect, and display good manners at all times, including holding doors open for each other and for adults. They are very confident and articulate. Pupils in Year 6 are very proud of their role as PALs ('pupils assisting lunchtime supervisors') in helping look after the younger pupils. Pupils from the Reception Year through to Year 6 play very cooperatively together during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Their exemplary behaviour is reflected in the zero figure for any form of exclusion from school.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe on the internet, in school and at home. They say they feel safe in school and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them if they have any concerns.
- Although there were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), an analysis of the responses from a paper copy of the survey, given to parents during the inspection by the school, and discussions with parents show that the overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children are happy and safe in the school.
- The atmosphere around school is very harmonious. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures. This is an inclusive school, where pupils who join the school at different times report that they are made to feel very welcome and quickly become valued members of the school community.
- Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- All leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, are highly ambitious for the school's success and have a shared vision for continually improving the already outstanding teaching further in order to have even greater impact on pupils' achievement. Senior leaders and governors have a very accurate understanding of the school's performance, as a result of rigorous and regular checking on the quality of teaching and the progress of different groups of pupils. However, the role of subject leaders is not yet fully developed and as a result they do not have quite the same level of detail, especially in relation to the progress of different groups of pupils within their subject areas.
- A highly robust performance management system linked to pupils' learning outcomes supports teachers' professional development and is used very well to motivate and reward good teaching.
- The Principals, senior leaders and governors work tirelessly to continue to improve teaching and learning. As a result, the leadership of teaching is a particular strength, with all staff involved in all initiatives. This allows them to learn from and train each other. As a result, teaching is outstanding.
- The curriculum is stimulating and exciting, and allows pupils to explore new learning through a wide range of creative, independent activities. All pupils respond very positively to these opportunities and show that they are resourceful, and thoughtful learners.
- The curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through a wide range of partnerships. An example of this is a luncheon club for older members of the local community which is highly valued both by them and the children who say they, 'love helping the older people when they come into school to have lunch'.
- The school receives light touch support from its academy chain and local authority as

appropriate to this outstanding school, which itself provides a range of support to other local schools. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is extremely well led by a highly experienced and committed Chair of Governors. Members of the governing body are regular visitors to school and know its strengths and areas for further development. They work very effectively with the school's leaders using their collective knowledge and experience very well. Governors have received regular training, including bespoke training arranged by their academy sponsor, for example in analysing the data held by the school. As a result, they are very clear about the progress of different groups of pupils. They are involved in the leadership of teaching and learning and managing the performance of teachers through various committees. The budget is well managed and governors have allocated the pupil premium funding in a well-informed manner.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138332
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	413248

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Schools Trust For Academies
Principal	L Maskill / J Parkin
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01977 722485
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