Victoria Park is a large primary school that serves a rich and diverse multicultural community in the heart of Smethwick. Almost all pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with over 65% speaking English as an additional language. Over 40 different languages are spoken by the pupils. Just under one half of families claim for a free school meal. With a budget of £2 million the school employs almost 80 staff who seek continually to transform the lives of all 450 of its children.

Where next?

Schools that are judged to be outstanding will no longer receive frequent inspections. This is so that inspectors can spend more time in weaker schools.

As an outstanding school we are now expected to support schools that are not achieving well and we look forward to sharing our exemplary practice.

We are always looking at ways of making our school even better. We welcome Ofsted’s two areas that they feel we need to improve on.

Key Issue 1
To raise standards even further by making sure all children can read well, especially by practising at home.

We will also improve even further the high quality teaching across the school.

Key Issue 2
To improve attendance by working closely with those parents who do not send their child to school.

We will also continue to reduce the number of term time holidays by refusing to authorise any requests and following these up.

We will also continue to target those parents who do not ensure that they bring their child to school on time.

Outstanding children
An outstanding school

On Tuesday 4th October 2011, pupils and teachers at VP were quietly going about their business. They had no idea that they were about to receive a telephone call to tell them that Ofsted were arriving in less than 48 hours!

During a two day period (6th and 7th October) a team of four Ofsted Inspectors spent the time in school observing lessons; talking to parents; grilling teachers, governors and staff; quizzing the children, and; looking in books, cupboards and filing cabinets. No stone was left unturned.

It was almost three years since our last inspection and so everyone was understandably nervous. How would we do? We always knew that we had created something special in the heart of Smethwick, but would the Inspectors see it?

As the minutes and hours ticked by, it soon became clear that Inspectors were very impressed. ‘It’s a magical place you’ve got here,’ said one of them to the headteacher.

At this point, we knew we’d done it, especially as Inspectors had seen plenty of outstanding teaching and well behaved and excited children.

Victoria Park is an OUTSTANDING school!

A Smethwick success story

In June 2007, Victoria Park Primary school was in special measures. It was deemed a failing school and was in the bottom 1% of schools nationally.

Many people had given up on the school. But not the teachers. Nor the children. Together, they were determined to build the school from the bottom up to make it a success story to be proud of. And now they’ve done it!

At last, the standards in the school are similar to all other schools in England. Children make exceptional progress, many of whom go on to get a Level 4 having only joined the school a few years earlier with no English whatsoever!

Headteacher, Andrew Morrish, joined the school in September 2006 and has seen the school go from strength to strength. He is very proud of all that has been achieved by the many hardworking and dedicated staff. ‘They deserve to take a bow, each and every one of them. At long last, they can say they are outstanding...’

Victoria Park now one of the best!
“The pupils of Victoria Park know they go to an outstanding school...”

The above headline is the opening line of our Inspection report. All schools that are inspected receive a detailed report that outlines what schools do well and where improvements are needed. Rarely do reports open so positively, referring immediately to our wonderful children.

Inspectors were so impressed with how polite, respectful, well behaved and well mannered the children were. We weren’t surprised to be told this, as we’ve known this all along: VP pupils are the best!

Comments in the report about the children include:

“Pupils bubble over with enthusiasm when talking about the things they learn.”

“Pupils are extremely keen to do well ... they love their learning.”

Below are some more comments taken straight from the Inspection report.

The full version can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk or from the school.

Teaching and learning

- The quality of teaching across the school is good and a substantial proportion is outstanding.
- Leaders have established a high level of good practice across the school.
- Teachers consistently plan well to meet the differing needs in their classes.
- Teachers provide a lively environment and a range of innovative resources to excite pupils and stimulate their imagination.
- Warm relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all classes.
- ICT is used very well to enrich learning.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and are skilled in providing appropriate support and challenge.
- An increasing proportion of pupils are achieving the highest levels in English and mathematics.
- Rates of progress have been significantly higher than the national average over the past three years.

As one pupil commented:
‘The school looks after its pupils and makes sure that learning is fun.’

Curriculum

The stimulating, motivating and highly relevant curriculum results in pupils’ evident love of learning.

Outdoor learning is very well developed and forms part of an extensive varied programme of enrichment activities.

Pupils enjoy the wealth of active cross-curricular tasks that are provided for them that make their learning relevant.

Care, guidance and support

All pupils are known and cared for as individuals.

Transition arrangements are exemplary, including home visits and one-to-one pupil meetings to ensure that pupils settle well and feel secure.

Pupils say that the school keeps them safe and show an excellent understanding of how to look after themselves.

The care provided for those pupils and their families who face challenging circumstances is exemplary.

Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is always an adult they can turn to for help.

School community and partnerships

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and local community.

The school knows its community well and the promotion of community cohesion is exemplary.

The school works persistently to engage parents and carers.

Strong partnerships with a significant range of external agencies ensure the excellent support for pupils’ well-being.

Pupils take an active role in improving the local community.

Outstanding children | An outstanding school

Outstanding children | An outstanding school