

Valley End CofE Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125140
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328296
Inspection date	26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	152
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Whittington
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Heritage
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Higham's Lane Valley End Chobham Woking GU24 8TB
Telephone number	01276 858 299
Fax number	01276 858 299

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of leadership and management in bringing about further improvements
- the strengths in teaching and learning that bring about such high levels of achievement and standards
- the quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and from the scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors, other leaders and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school in a rural location, attracting pupils from a wide area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. A very small proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School accreditation and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Valley End is an outstanding infant school. The headteacher provides committed and visionary leadership. She is extremely well supported by the staff and governing body, who work very closely together as a highly committed team. Together they ensure pupils' outstanding progress in both their academic and their personal development. Excellent links with parents, the community, other schools and outside agencies contribute very well to pupils' learning and the extremely high level of care and support provided by the school. Many parents comment on how pleased they are to be able to send their children to the school. One wrote: 'Valley End is an example to all schools. Teachers work so hard with individual children and classes alike. It provides a wonderful, caring environment. All staff, from the admin. staff through to the caretaker, are so active and make the school what it is, a fun and exciting place to be'.

This fun and excitement are clearly evident from the time that pupils enter the playground at the start of the day. They are raring to go, and chat eagerly with one another. The playground itself provides an imaginative and stimulating learning environment, with its quiet areas, sensory garden, drums, tubular bells, Victorian classroom and covered role-play areas. 'Learning outside is the best part of the day,' said one pupil. Beyond the playground are a wooded area and a vast playing field, used well to support the school's excellent, extremely well-enriched curriculum. Pupils use these facilities very responsibly, well aware of any safety issues. Their tremendous enjoyment of school is further reflected in their excellent attendance. They particularly like the opportunities they have for sport and physical activity, supported by coaching links with a nearby school. They appreciate the nourishing meals served to all the pupils at lunchtime, recognising the importance of a balanced diet. One pupil commented, 'We need to eat the right things so we don't get ill.' Pupils' excellent understanding of keeping fit and healthy is recognised in national awards. They make an extremely positive contribution to the school and local communities, with a strong enthusiasm for ecology. Exemplary behaviour and excellent attitudes to learning contribute to pupils' outstanding achievement and preparation for the future.

From above average starting points in Year 1, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress towards the very challenging end-of-year targets set for them. This progress is very carefully monitored, and additional support is provided where pupils are not making the expected progress. At the end of Year 2, standards over recent years have been consistently and exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics, with significantly high proportions working at higher than expected levels. This level of achievement results from the outstanding level of teaching and learning within the school. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, support staff make excellent contributions, and there are many opportunities for pupils to work and learn independently. In a Year 1 lesson on the parts of a plant, pupils worked very well with a range of creative activities to reinforce their learning, while adults focused on specific tasks that ensured pupils' very clear knowledge and understanding of the subject. Year 2 pupils worked enthusiastically on a personalised computer program designed to improve and assess their mathematical skills. Pupils themselves are very aware of how well they are doing and how to improve their work through personal targets and very good opportunities to talk about and evaluate what they are doing in lessons.

Despite the school's continuing academic success, it continually looks for ways in which to further improve its provision, based on thorough and accurate self-examination. The curriculum has become more creative and personalised, and reflects multi-cultural awareness more fully.

This was an area for improvement at the last inspection which the school has evaluated and developed. Pupils value the display of national flags in the hall, showing their different backgrounds. By drawing on these backgrounds and developing global links, for example with a school in Uganda, the school is ensuring that pupils are developing an understanding and respect of communities and cultures beyond their own. On moving into Year 1 from Reception, pupils continue to benefit from aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage practice, which fosters outdoor learning, choice, independence and exploration, alongside excellent directed learning opportunities. The school is at a stage of reviewing its leadership and management structure, to give further opportunities for newer staff to take a fuller part, particularly in analysing assessment data and tracking pupils' progress. It responds extremely well to the concerns of parents. Some wanted early morning provision for their children, but when they were surveyed it became clear that too few were interested at the time to make it viable. Given the school's success and track record, it has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of their age. Excellent links with parents, and very good opportunities for them and their children to visit before starting school, mean that children quickly settle. They go on to make outstanding progress as a result of extremely effective teaching that inspires their interest and natural desire to learn. Teachers plan a very wide mix of activities, with the children being given exceptionally well-planned opportunities to choose and explore, as well as being discreetly guided towards specific, adult-led activities. By the end of the Reception Year, the great majority of children are working securely within the learning goals expected at this age, with significant proportions fully meeting or exceeding them, especially in aspects of writing, and mathematical and physical development. Children develop excellent personal and social skills through the secure and stimulating learning environment, with outstanding support from adults. Their progress is tracked very closely, so that adults know exactly how well they are doing. The curriculum meets children's individual needs exceptionally well and there is an appropriately sharp focus on developing basic skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed highly effectively, with a strong team of staff who work together extremely well to promote children's welfare and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of the new leadership team, particularly with regard to analysing and tracking pupils' progress.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

09 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Valley End CofE Infant School, Woking, GU24 8TB

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit, and you were interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in.

Valley End is an outstanding school.

We liked these things the most.

- Children get an excellent start to school in Reception.
- You enjoy school, behave extremely well, and want to do your best.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and extremely well looked after. It really is one big, happy family.
- You have lots of exciting things to do. We were particularly impressed with all of the things you can do out of doors.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- The staff are extremely welcoming to your parents and encourage them to support you in all that you do in school.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff are doing an excellent job.

We have asked the school to work particularly on the following thing.

- Your headteacher looks closely at how well each one of you are doing, recording this information on a computer and checking that all of you are making the best progress possible. We have asked the school to ensure that other leaders take part in this tracking of your progress.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector