

Inspection of Vale Primary School

Belval Road, Vale, Guernsey GY3 5LN

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 March 2022

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development and welfare	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. They place pupils at the centre of all decisions they make. The school's curriculum inspires and prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Pupils love to learn.

Pupils follow the 'Vale Values' in all that they do. They know how the values link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These values help them to make the right choices. Pupils are polite, kind and caring to each other. They show respect and listen carefully to their teachers and friends. Staff teach them to, 'treat others as you would want them to treat you'. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. They say they feel safe.

Each year, there are a wide range of opportunities and extra-curricular clubs on offer, such as football, choir and cookery. These activities help to develop pupils' talents, interests and knowledge of how to be physically and mentally healthy.

Pupils take on roles of responsibility with great pride. For example, they act as school councillors or food ambassadors. Pupils talk with confidence about the difference they make to their school and community such as caring for their local environment by completing a beach litter pick.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have ensured that the school's curriculum is continuously developing. As a result, the curriculum is clearly sequenced to build pupils' vocabulary, skills and knowledge over time. In some subjects, leaders have identified and broken down the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. This helps staff to support pupils to practise and remember successfully. For example, in science, Year 6 pupils know the role of the different organs that make up the digestive system.

Nevertheless, there are a few subject curriculums that are not as well developed. Teachers' subject knowledge is not as secure in these subjects. This makes it difficult for teachers to check precisely where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Therefore, they cannot plan to fill these gaps quickly. In these subjects, some pupils are less able to make connections or secure new knowledge. For example, some pupils cannot use efficient calculation methods in mathematics as they do not have a secure knowledge of basic number facts.

Leaders are passionate about reading and determined that all pupils read well. This begins with teaching phonics in the early years. A consistent approach helps teachers to check and spot who needs extra practice. The books pupils read match the letters and sounds that they know. This helps pupils to develop their reading speed and accuracy well.

Staff nurture pupils' love of reading. Class books are chosen carefully by teachers to interest and engage pupils in reading. Staff regularly read to pupils and encourage pupils to enjoy books from an early age. Pupils recall author visits and enjoy taking part in book-based competitions. They know and understand the importance of learning to read well.

Leaders and staff value all learners equally. Consequently, the school is an inclusive community where staff consider the social, emotional and educational needs of each individual child. Staff work closely with leaders of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and external agencies to correctly identify pupils' additional needs. This begins in the early years. Staff know the pupils well. They adapt the curriculum and use of resources appropriately. However, some pupils' individual provision map targets are not sufficiently specific to support pupils' learning well enough. The targets are too broad. They are not broken down into small, achievable steps. For example, pupils are asked to learn large parts of the phonics programme rather than individual letters and sounds. This does not help to ensure pupils are making progress in learning what they need to know next.

The school has a calm and orderly environment. Staff spot quickly if pupils need additional help to understand and manage their feelings. There are clear routines and high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This begins in the Reception Year where children are shown how to get along with others. They quickly gain the skills needed to work together and make friends. This leads to productive learning in class and enjoyable playtimes.

Leaders and staff help pupils to develop important life skills. For example, pupils understand the need for patience and tolerance when working with others. They know the importance of commitment and practice to get better. Pupils also show empathy for people whose lives are affected by war.

The well-being of pupils, parents and staff has a high profile at the school. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration and support to manage their workload. In recent years, leaders' work with families has successfully improved pupils' attendance. Pupils attend school regularly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular training and updates support staff to carry out their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They know how to report concerns. Staff are confident that the child protection officer follows up any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being.

Leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of support for the school's most vulnerable pupils. Referrals to external agencies are made in a timely manner. Care is personalised for each child and their family.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils know not to talk to strangers online or share personal information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Teachers' subject knowledge is not secure in some areas of the curriculum. This makes it difficult for teachers to fully implement the intended curriculum. In some subjects, they do not accurately assess and rectify pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to continue to monitor the implementation of the curriculum to refine and further support teachers to develop their subject knowledge.
- Individual provision map targets for pupils with SEND are too broad. They do not break down the essential knowledge the school wants pupils to know and remember into small, achievable steps. Leaders of SEND need to support teachers to write specific and measurable targets that will identify what pupils with SEND need to learn next.

School details

Inspection number	10208703
Type of school	Primary School
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	454
Appropriate authority	The States of Guernsey
Headteacher	Mr Gary Hind
Website	www.valeprimary.sch.gg
Date of previous Ofsted inspection	Not previously inspected by Ofsted

Information about this school

- Vale Primary School is a three-form entry primary school, located in Bordeaux, Guernsey.
- Children join the Reception class at the start of the academic year that they turn five.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 35 of the Guernsey Education Law 1970.

- This was the first inspection the school has had since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior and subject leaders, including the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, deputy headteacher, staff and subject leads for English, mathematics, science, design and technology (DT), physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education. They also met with a representative from the Education Office. Inspectors discussed leaders' evaluations and priorities for improvement and the curriculum.
- Inspectors did deep dives into five subjects: reading, mathematics, science, DT and PE. They met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also

visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. They reviewed subject planning and spoke to leaders about other subjects.

- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement and paperwork relating to support and challenge. They scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding by discussing policy and process with staff, checking processes to check that staff are safe to work with children and scrutinising records made relating to safeguarding on the school's record-keeping system.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Dulon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stewart Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages in England. Ofsted has been commissioned by the States of Guernsey to inspect its schools.

© States of Guernsey copyright 2022