

# Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 5RE

**Inspection dates** 5–6 June 2013

|                                |                      |                             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good                        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress is uneven across classes.
- Teaching is not always good and a small amount is inadequate. Teachers do not always match the activities they have planned well enough to pupils' needs so they find work either too easy or too hard.
- Teachers do not always question pupils well enough to check their understanding of what they are learning or allow them enough time to respond to feedback. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress in some lessons.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to use their mathematical skills to solve problems or to practise them in subjects other than mathematics.
- Subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in checking and driving improvement in the quality of teaching in their subjects. Staff are not always held accountable for the progress pupils make. The good practice in the school is not yet, therefore, spread widely enough.
- Attendance is below average.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher, strongly supported by the acting deputy headteacher, gives very clear direction. In the short time they have been in post, they have accurately evaluated the work of the school and acted decisively and successfully to improve the school's performance including in teaching and achievement.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy a rich variety of experiences and make good progress.
- Governors are well informed and have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many extra opportunities through visits and visitors adding enjoyment to pupils' learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The school provides a very caring environment and pupils are very friendly, behave well and say they feel safe.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were joint observations with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. In addition, they also made a number of short visits to lessons and small group sessions.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups read, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to the school's management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), questionnaires completed by staff and outcomes from the school's consultations with parents.

## Inspection team

|                                   |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Prydwen Elfed-Owens               | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Victoria Road Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there has been disruption to staffing, including in leadership. Since September 2011, the deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher and the assistant headteacher acting deputy headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2013.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress so that it is consistently good or better as they move through the school by:
  - ensuring that teachers always plan activities which match the needs of pupils with different abilities so that work is consistently challenging
  - ensuring that questioning consistently checks on pupils' understanding of what they are learning so they make better progress
  - ensuring that marking consistently gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve and providing pupils with time to respond to this
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to solve problems and to practise them in subjects other than mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - developing the role of middle managers and subject leaders to drive improvement in teaching and learning by regularly checking on pupils' progress
  - ensuring that staff are more accountable for the progress pupils make.
- Improve pupils' overall attendance, so that it is at least in line with national average, by working even more closely with parents, to make them fully aware of the importance of regular attendance and the school's expectations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is inconsistent across year groups and not enough pupils are making good progress. Disruption in staffing has been a factor in a lack of progress by some groups of pupils.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in reading, writing and their communication skills.
- In 2012, the progress and attainment of Year 6 pupils dipped drastically in comparison to the previous year when both were above average. This is because the quality of teaching has been inconsistent over time.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2012 was well below average in English and below average in mathematics. The school failed to meet government targets. The new leadership team and a change in staffing have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. School data and the work in pupils' books indicate that attainment has risen and in the current Year 6 it is closer to average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels, particularly in mathematics, is below the national average because work is not always matched well to pupils' different needs; particularly for the more able pupils and they are not making enough progress. The opportunities for them to practise their skills to solve problems are limited.
- In the phonics check at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' reading ability was well below the national average in 2012. This is because there was not a consistent approach to the teaching of letters and the sounds they make. Effective leadership has improved the teaching of letters and sounds and the majority of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are achieving as well as expected nationally.
- Pupils' attainment in reading has improved with more pupils enjoying reading. Current data shows that the majority of pupils in Year 6 are achieving as expected.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the small number who have English as an additional language are supported effectively and make progress which is at least as good as other groups of pupils.
- The school makes good use of the extra funding from the pupil premium to enhance learning opportunities for pupils. This includes, pupils given additional support in class or when they are taught in small groups outside the classroom.
- The attainment of pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 was below that of other pupils in the school in English and mathematics by about one year but the progress they made was in line with those who not eligible for free school meals.
- Current data show that use of this funding is helping to close the gap between these pupils and others in the school. However, the school's drive to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed is not yet fully successful, because progress still varies between classes and groups of pupils.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent in quality across different groups of pupils. Observations show there are examples of good and outstanding teaching across both Key Stages 1 and 2 and there have been improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Good teaching in the Reception class includes an effective mix of adult-led and child selected activities, which are well matched to children's interests and abilities. Good use is made of the indoor and outdoor learning environments to support learning well. As a result, children make good progress.
- In the best lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers plan well for pupils' learning needs. They

make sure that work is set at the right level so that it makes pupils think and challenges them so they make the best progress. However, in some lessons tasks do not match pupils' needs and work is too easy, with pupils completing tasks quickly, particularly in mathematics. In these lessons, pupils lose concentration and their learning slows.

- Pupils have opportunities to work together on joint tasks or through discussion in pairs and groups. In an outstanding music lesson, pupils worked together to produce a 'soundscape' based on the Second World War, discussing confidently what their instruments represented, jointly composing and writing a piece of music, which they performed to the class.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers use questioning effectively to allow pupils to explain their understanding of what they are learning, thus teachers identify where further teaching and challenge would result in more progress. This is not consistent across all classes and some questions fail to extend learning and pupils' progress is not as good as it should be.
- Marking is regular and in the best examples it gives clear guidance on how to improve and pupils have opportunities to respond to this. This is not consistently carried out across all classes or subjects. During lessons and comments in marking do not always tell pupils precisely how to improve.
- Teachers are increasingly helping pupils to develop good mathematical skills. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils showed a good grasp of mathematical methods, choosing the most appropriate one to solve addition problems, confidently explaining how to use them. Opportunities for pupils to use these mathematical skills, to solve problems or to practise them in subjects other than mathematics are limited.
- The teaching of reading is improving with more attention given to teaching letters and their sounds.
- Teaching assistants are used well in the majority of classes to support individual pupils and small groups. The additional support they provide for pupils in literacy and mathematics, and also for those who need emotional support, is effective and those pupils are making at least expected progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils describe their school as a place where, '...we accept everyone here...we take care of them because the teachers take very good care of us- so we do it to others'. There is a positive atmosphere in the school and relationships are strong.
- Pupils fully understand the behaviour system and are involved in making improvements to it. Staff manage behaviour consistently well, including for those pupils who occasionally demonstrate more challenging behaviour. The school is successful in supporting these pupils. One pupil explained that he is now a 'mentor' for another child helping him with his behaviour because he is 'grateful for the support school has given me'.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good most of the time, that teachers 'sort out' any disputes quickly and that bullying is rare and always dealt with well. The school's records of any incidents of poorer behaviour are clear and detail how these have been resolved.
- Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. The small number of parents that responded to Parent View overwhelmingly agree that their child feels safe at school.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club are well looked after and enjoy the opportunities to mix with other pupils and talk to adults. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as play leaders and 'buddies', and are involved in making decisions, for example, in developing the school grounds.
- Ensuring good attendance is a priority for the school and through its work with a range of partners, including the local authority, it is successfully improving this, although it continues to present challenges. While attendance is currently below the national average, the school continues to increase the work it does with parents to ensure that they know that good achievement can only come with good attendance.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The acting headteacher is very clear about the school's strengths and areas for development and has along with the acting deputy headteacher made appropriate decisions to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a short period of time. The school is now in a stronger position to make up lost ground since the previous inspection.
- More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is making it clearer how well pupils are doing. Regular meetings with staff to discuss pupils' progress is identifying any potential under-achievement and strategies are subsequently put in to place to help pupils to catch up. This is showing an improvement in the overall performance of different groups across the school although this is not evident in all cases.
- The school's checks on the quality of teaching regularly. Identified weaknesses are tackled with support and the appropriate training. As yet, a few weaker elements in teaching remain to be resolved.
- Teachers are set targets based on their performance and pupils' progress and any salary awards are linked well to the achievement of these targets.
- Subject leaders are at the early stages of developing their roles in driving improvement in teaching and learning by checking on pupils' progress and ensuring teachers are held to account. Therefore, the effects of their work are yet to be seen in consistently improved standards and quality of teaching.
- The topic-based curriculum is enriched by a variety of visits, visitors and celebrations, such as a Beatles concert. Pupils also benefit from residential visits and a range of clubs and sporting activities. These promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are particularly good links with the local high school which provides pupils with additional opportunities, including visiting a university.
- Parents are warmly welcomed into the school and are encouraged to be part of school life. Examples of this are the family learning sessions, family lunches, assemblies and opportunities to be volunteers.
- The local authority provides regular support visits and provides training and advice to support the development of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good understanding of how the school is doing and are clear about what it needs to do to improve further. They are well-informed through good quality reports, information on pupils' progress and the governing body's own developing checks on the school's work. Governors ask questions to ensure any dips in pupils' attainment do not reoccur. They make good use of training opportunities, including for safeguarding and make sure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Governors understand how the pupil premium funding is used and ensure that finances are carefully managed and the budget closely controlled. The governing body is informed about the quality of teaching and fully understands the performance management of teaching staff, making appropriate decisions about salary increases.

## 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

|                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 111226                    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cheshire West and Chester |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 412736                    |

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

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <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> | 175                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | David Hill                        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Claire Gill (Acting Headteacher)  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 9 June 2009                       |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01606 288030                      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01606 331793                      |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | head@victoriaroad.cheshire.sch.uk |



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

