

Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5RE

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improving, progress is not consistently good throughout the school, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of lower-ability pupils, or the most able.
- Teachers' explanations and their expectations for learning are, at times, not clear enough to pupils.
- Although they are diminishing, differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remain.
- Leaders' improved systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' learning have not yet been fully established throughout school.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors are rapidly improving teaching and outcomes. They have brought about improvements to outcomes in writing, phonics, assessment and pupils' attendance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Children make good progress in the early years due to good-quality teaching.
- Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. They show pride in their school and are learning to be responsible citizens.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes, particularly in mathematics and reading, by:
 - ensuring that staff give clear explanations to pupils, and have consistently high expectations for pupils' learning
 - ensuring that work is matched to pupils' needs and abilities, particularly for the least and most able, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the high-quality use of monitoring and assessment in upper key stage 2 is made consistent throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have brought about a number of improvements to teaching and outcomes since the previous inspection. Systems to monitor and evaluate the school have improved and pupils' progress is accelerating in most year groups.
- The headteacher and her deputy have worked effectively to establish a culture where staff and leaders have a shared commitment to providing the best possible care and education.
- Robust systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching. Teachers have clear targets and are held accountable for pupils' progress. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated, and teaching is improving quickly.
- Staff training has enhanced their skills, particularly in the teaching of phonics and writing. As a result, progress and attainment in both of these subjects have improved. Staff training in the teaching of mathematics has also led to improvements and further training is planned.
- Subject leadership has developed since the previous inspection. Many leaders have attended middle leadership training and this has had a positive impact on developing their skills. They are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and progress in their subject areas. This has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and progress, particularly in writing.
- Leaders' systems to monitor pupils' progress have developed to ensure that a higher degree of attention is paid to identifying each pupil's next steps in learning and ensuring that any gaps in knowledge or slowing of progress are rapidly addressed. This approach has been very effective in accelerating progress in upper key stage 2 to at least good. However, this approach is not yet firmly established throughout the school in order to raise the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress further.
- Parents speak positively about the school. They consider their children to be happy and safe at school and they feel well informed about their children's progress. Leaders have worked well with families to raise attendance levels, improve punctuality and reduce levels of persistent absence since the last inspection.
- Pupils benefit from an interesting, broad and relevant curriculum, which ignites their interest and engagement in learning. Regular visitors and educational visits to, for example, a local science museum, enhance pupils' experiences. Key stage 2 pupils talk excitedly about how they developed learning about 'what is under my feet?' by going outdoors and digging up part of the field and then investigating what they found.
- Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular experiences for pupils. Pupils enjoy participating in after-school activities such as art, dodge ball and football.
- Leader promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn to be respectful of others and to work well together. They learn about other people's faiths belief and cultures. Pupils also learn about British values such as democracy, through election to school council, and through house votes on which charity they will support this year.

- The local authority has supported the school appropriately through regular visits, and in providing consultancy to improve the quality of teaching in writing and mathematics. More recently the Aspire Educational Trust has begun to provide advice to the school in anticipation of its conversion to academy status in 2017.
- Leaders and governors make appropriate use of the pupil premium funding to provide support for pupils to improve their outcomes. Progress for this group is rising. In some year groups, particularly in upper key stage 2 pupils are making good progress. However, this is not consistent across year groups. The Aspire Academy Trust has supported the school to establish more focused monitoring of pupils' progress. It is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Pupils benefit from leaders' effective use of the sports premium funding. This funding has been mainly used to provide a sports coach, staff training and additional after-school clubs. The uptake of after-school clubs has increased throughout the school as a result. Pupils also benefit from increased opportunities to participate in sporting competitions. This has a positive impact on the development of pupils' physical skills and their enjoyment of exercise.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been used to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support to meet their needs. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and this ensures that support is reviewed and adapted when necessary.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an effective knowledge of the quality of teaching and progress in the school. They provide a good level of support and challenge to senior leaders in driving forward improvements.
- Governors have been proactive in steering the school's progress towards becoming an academy. They have carefully considered the options available in considering the best way forward for the school.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's next steps in its development. They are aware that outcomes and teaching need to improve further and are proactive in ensuring that the school continues to move forward.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have created a culture where the safety and welfare of pupils is paramount. Leaders are vigilant to ensure that all policies and procedures are clearly understood by staff. Staff attend regular training and are updated on new developments. This ensures that they are able to identify pupils at risk of harm, including from radicalisation and extremism.
- The school works closely with outside agencies and parents to ensure that pupils are well protected. The family support worker liaises closely with the lead safeguarding officer to ensure that help is accessed at the earliest stage.
- Leaders have established trusting relationships with parents, including by

accompanying some parents to meetings to ensure that effective support is accessed. This helps to ensure that parents and staff work well together to support pupils' welfare and safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. However, teaching requires improvement because over time it has not led to good enough outcomes for pupils.
- At times, work is not well matched to pupils' skills and abilities. This means that on occasion pupils of lower-ability and those who are most-able are not fully challenged because work is either too easy or too hard. On such occasions, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' explanations and their expectations for pupils' achievement sometimes lack clarity. Where this happens, the pace of learning slows, as pupils are not clear enough about their learning. For example, explanations for pupils in key stage 1 were not sufficiently clear for some pupils to fully understand concepts of one more or ten more in a mathematics session.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Phonics check scores have improved since the previous inspection and pupils are more confident to use their skills to read unfamiliar words. In upper key stage 2, some lower ability pupils still require support to catch up on reading skills.
- The teaching of writing is much improved since the previous inspection, and in most year groups is good. Pupils are taught to write for a range of purposes and evidence from books shows that they apply their writing skills well in other subjects.
- In a key stage 2 writing session, teaching created a vibrant learning environment, where all pupils were challenged to think and create a description linked to their class book. Consequently, they made rapid progress.
- Staff training in the teaching of mathematics has led to improvements in the teaching of this subject. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved, and their skills in promoting pupils' learning through applying their skills. However, this is an area that requires further improvement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show very positive relationships with staff and each other. They cooperate well together in lessons to share ideas and produce work. Pupils say they are proud of their school, and that school is a safe and happy place to be.
- Pupils relish their responsibilities as, for example, school councillors, eco-councillors, and junior safety officers.

- Pupils say that bullying is a rare occurrence in school. They are confident that staff would deal with any incidents effectively. They say that if they have any problems they can talk with staff, including the school family support worker.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Their understanding is enhanced by, for example, learning about road safety and assemblies relating to keeping safe.
- The school works closely with parents and others to ensure that pupils' welfare is prioritised. Regular family learning sessions help the school to work closely with parents to promote pupils' learning and awareness of staying healthy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They engage well with their activities. Very occasionally, where work is not as well matched to their abilities or where expectations are not as high, some pupils are distracted and lose focus.
- Pupils are familiar with the school's system for rewarding good behaviour and managing behaviour on occasions where it falls short of expectations. Pupils behave well in class and when moving around school. They are polite and respectful.
- The school has worked effectively with parents to raise pupils' level of attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence. As a result, attendance is now broadly average and levels of persistent absence have fallen to average levels. Leaders have also brought about improvements to pupils' punctuality.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress, although improving, is variable across year groups and subjects. Progress is stronger in writing than in reading or mathematics.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not attain sufficiently high outcomes. The 2016 outcomes showed that a lower-than-average proportion of pupils attained greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. In key stage 2, although a higher proportion than average attained higher levels in reading, no pupils attained the higher levels in mathematics and fewer than average attained greater depth in writing. This is an area for improvement that school leaders have identified but, as yet, the impact of action taken has not had enough effect on outcomes for these pupils.
- Lower-attaining pupils do not routinely make the progress they need to make to catch up. Progress is beginning to improve, as leaders have refined the monitoring of progress and are more accurately and swiftly identifying pupils who need extra support. However, outcomes for lower-attaining pupils are not yet good.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving in most year groups. As a result of refinements to the monitoring of progress and swift support to accelerate progress,
- there is evidence that differences are beginning to diminish, particularly in upper key

stage 2. However, differences still remain and this is an area for further development for the school.

- Since the previous inspection, overall outcomes for pupils have improved, particularly in writing. The 2015 published outcomes show that pupils' progress in writing improved to being broadly average, but pupils' progress remained significantly below average in reading and mathematics.
- Although not directly comparable with the previous year's data, provisional outcomes for 2016 show that pupils' progress in writing and reading was not significantly different from the national picture. Pupils' progress in mathematics from their starting points was significantly less than other schools nationally. Almost half of this small cohort of pupils had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' books and school information show that this group made good progress in Year 6, but that this was not sufficient for them to catch up from the legacy of weaker teaching in previous years.
- Evidence from pupils' books, observations of learning, and the school's own information from assessment show that progress is improving quickly and more pupils are making good progress than previously, including in mathematics. This is particularly the case in upper key stage 2, where pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was below average in reading and mathematics, and slightly above average for writing. Work in pupils' books indicates that attainment is rising in most year groups.
- Year 1 phonics screening check results have improved steadily since the previous inspection. In 2016 this figure was close to the national average, reflecting improvements in the teaching of phonics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for these pupils and are skilled at breaking learning down into small and achievable steps.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Reception class with starting points which are below those typical for their age. As a result of effective teaching, they make good progress, and most attain a good level of development by the end of Reception year. They are well prepared for their transfer to Year 1.
- Staff provide a broad range of interesting activities, which follow children's interests in learning. As a result, children are very engaged in their learning. For example, children relished being 'detectives' as they found and followed 'clues' to identify who may have made a mess in their learning environment. Children's skills of letter recognition were developed as they read clues and used electronic tablets to record their findings.
- Staff establish positive, caring relationships with children, which effectively promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Children show a strong sense of security in the Reception classroom. They behave very well, responding well to instructions to tidy up.

- Children make good progress in developing skills in identifying shapes, as they play games with staff, identifying the number of sides each shape has. They take turns well as they play a 'shape bingo' game.
- The early years leader has a good knowledge of the strengths of the provision and areas for development. Children's progress in the areas of learning is closely monitored, and support put in place to ensure that all groups make good progress. Children make particularly strong progress in reading and writing.
- A positive partnership with parents contributes to children's good progress. Staff work closely with parents. This ensures that they are well informed about their children's learning and can contribute positively to assessments.
- All statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements are fully met. Staff are well trained and place children's safety and well-being at the heart of what they do.
- Staff make children feel welcome and ensure that resources are used well to support learning. Leaders have plans to further develop the environment in order to provide a more vibrant setting in which children can learn.

School details

Unique reference number	111226
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10019804

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Hailwood
Headteacher	Cathy Lord
Telephone number	01606 288030
Website	www.victoriaroad.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@victoriaroad.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is above the national average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is in the process of converting to become an academy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and three other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent view, and the 11 parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire to consider.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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