

Inspection of Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5RE

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at Victoria Road Primary School. The pupils who spoke to us said that everyone is accepted, happy and that they all get along 'like a family'.

All pupils, including those who are vulnerable or those who need emotional support, are well cared for by staff and leaders. This contributes to the positive relationships between adults and pupils.

Pupils behave well. They said that bullying is rare. When it does happen, pupils told us that teachers quickly resolve any issues. Pupils enjoy playtimes and lunchtimes. They said that they feel safe in school. They benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their interests outside of the classroom. These include visiting places of interest and taking part in residential trips. They also enjoy the range of clubs on offer, including a variety of sports clubs.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' learning. In many subjects, the curriculum is clearly planned and delivered. Pupils achieve well in the early years and key stage 1. Historically, pupils have not achieved consistently well at the end of key stage 2.

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

The school community benefits from being part of the Aspire Educational Trust. In partnership with the trust, leaders are developing the curriculum so that more pupils achieve well. However, these improvements have not had enough impact on pupils' attainment, particularly in key stage 2. In 2019, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education.

The strong impact of leaders' work is clear in subjects such as science, history and geography. In other subjects, such as art and design, leaders' plans are not yet embedded. There are gaps in pupils' learning. In mathematics, leaders continue to develop the curriculum to make sure that it builds on what pupils already know. Leaders are working with teachers to make sure they fully understand the approach. The yearly plans in some classes are different to others. It is therefore difficult for teachers to know exactly what pupils have learned previously. New plans are ambitious, but it is too early to see the impact of leaders' work, particularly in key stage 2.

Reading has a high priority in the school. The teaching of early reading is effective. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they enter their Reception Year. Leaders keep a close check on pupils' progress through the phonics programme. They ensure that pupils read books that match their phonics ability. Adults provide extra support for pupils who need more help. They help younger children to develop confidence and fluency in reading. As a result, most pupils meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1. In key stage 2, there is now a more

structured approach to deliver the reading curriculum. Changes have been made to improve pupils' attainment. Adults have high expectations of the quality of pupils' responses to questions. There is a real focus on reading for pleasure. Teachers extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of vocabulary well.

Promoting pupils' personal development is also a high priority. Pupils speak positively about the support that they receive in school, including support with their mental health. They understand that they can go to the family support worker for help with issues such as anxiety.

There are many opportunities in school for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. They enjoy visits from a group of people who share Bible stories with them. During such a visit, pupils were keen to help with acting out a Bible story. They listened to this story with interest and joined in the singing and prayers.

Pupils enjoy positions of responsibility, such as being anti-bullying ambassadors, student leaders and eco councillors. They are proud to hold these positions and to act as positive role models for other pupils.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In classes and around school, pupils show respect for each other and for staff. They get along well and are kind and considerate to others. Pupils' behaviour is good and disruption to learning is rare.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to achieve well. They access the full curriculum and learn alongside their peers.

Children in the early years have positive attitudes to learning. They show high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. They listen and respond well to adults. The early years curriculum is designed well to meet children's needs. There is a sharp focus on developing early language and extending children's vocabulary as well as their personal, social and emotional development. There are many opportunities for the children to engage in counting and other mathematical activities. Other areas of learning, such as expressive arts and design, are well provided for. Children achieve well in the early years and are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

The trust has been instrumental in providing training opportunities for staff. This allows staff to be better prepared to deliver the curriculum. Staff feel well supported by senior leaders. The teachers spoken to said that leaders take account of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. All staff understand the need to protect pupils and how to do so. They know how to report any concerns they may

have about a pupil's safety or well-being. Safeguarding records are detailed and well managed. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and they play an important role in promoting the school's anti-bullying messages.

There are a number of specialist staff who provide helpful services and support for pupils. Parents and carers value the assistance that they get at difficult times for their families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The mathematics curriculum is not coherently planned and understood by all staff. This means that pupils have not developed their knowledge and skills to help them succeed in this subject, particularly in key stage 2. Leaders should ensure that the long-term plans for each class fit together more seamlessly so that teachers better understand how to build on pupils' prior learning. This will help to ensure that pupils' attainment improves, and that they are better prepared for the next stage of their education.
- In other subjects, such as art and design, the curriculum has only recently been coherently planned and sequenced. This means that pupils' skills and knowledge are not sufficiently developed. Leaders should ensure that newly introduced curriculum plans are implemented so that pupils know and remember more in all subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143164
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10121915
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Hailwood
Headteacher	Catherine Lord
Website	www.victoriaroad.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy.

Information about this school

Victoria Road Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, Victoria Road Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

- We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We spoke with members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body, a trustee, two members of the trust, the headteacher, assistant headteachers, members of staff and parents.
- We reviewed a range of documentation about pupils' attendance, safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- We considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 23 responses from the survey for staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and art and design. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at

examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to pupils read. We also looked at history and geography on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Hardman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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