

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



9 July 2021

Hayley Scargill  
Principal  
Victoria Primary Academy  
Finedon Road  
Wellingborough  
Northamptonshire  
NN8 4NT

Dear Mrs Scargill

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Victoria Primary Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 15 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- develop strategic plans to promote pupils' love of reading and to ensure that pupils read widely across the curriculum to support the acquisition of knowledge
- ensure that all subject leaders check that curriculum plans are followed by teachers and that this is making a difference to what pupils have learned and remembered.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there have been substantial changes in staffing. In the 2019/20 school year, nine class teachers left the school, including three part-time teachers. Earlier in this school year, two class teachers left the school. Currently, two teachers are on maternity leave. While levels of staff turnover have been high in recent years, staffing has now largely stabilised.

Now that the school has reopened, all pupils have returned to face-to-face teaching. Leaders have supported parents who were anxious about their child returning to school. Leaders know that some pupils have found it hard to return to school after learning at home. Staff have made sure that these pupils are identified. Pupils have been given the help they need to adjust to being back in school. All pupils have been taught strategies to manage their feelings after a difficult year.

COVID-19 continues to present leaders with additional challenges when pupils, and staff, need to take time off school to be tested or to self-isolate

## **Main findings**

Leaders know their school well. They are committed to providing a well-planned and balanced curriculum that will meet the needs of the pupils at Victoria Primary Academy. Curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. These plans set out the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders have also thought carefully about the order in which this knowledge is taught. For example, in science, pupils learn how light travels in Year 3 so that they can understand how the eye works when they are in Year 5.

Curriculum leaders have been provided with a wealth of training to help them lead their subjects. However, leaders know that not all subjects are led as well as others. Where subjects are well led, curriculum leaders are reviewing their plans to check that pupils have not missed any crucial learning as a result of home learning. Curriculum leaders have had some opportunities to check that teachers are covering the knowledge outlined for each subject and to make sure that pupils are remembering what they have been taught. However, this work has been slowed by the pandemic. Leaders know that this work now needs to be a priority for the school.

The leader with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has made sure that support plans are in place for every pupil who needs one. He, and the deputy special educational needs coordinator, work closely with teachers to identify the help that pupils need to access the curriculum. Supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs has been prioritised. A leader with responsibility for pupils' mental health has been appointed. All pupils are taught strategies to help them to deal with their emotions. Pupils who find it hard to manage their feelings have individual plans and receive additional support. Pupils can talk about the techniques they have been taught in order to cope when they are stressed or angry. They say that these techniques have helped them when they are finding things hard in school.

Helping pupils to become fluent readers has been a priority for the school. Younger pupils have daily phonics lessons. These lessons are well planned and taught consistently by staff who have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils use the sounds they know to read carefully chosen reading books. Leaders know that the pandemic has slowed some pupils' progress in phonics. However, leaders are working hard to make sure that pupils do not fall behind. Pupils are regularly assessed in phonics and support is put in place so that they catch up quickly. While pupils learn to decode words well, not all pupils are enthusiastic readers. Pupils struggle to talk about their favourite books and authors. Leaders know that it is important that pupils read widely and across all subjects. However, plans for this are not well thought out.

Leaders of the multi-academy trust have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and areas for development. They have supported the school to improve the quality of the curriculum and to develop the role of subject leaders. They know that the school still has work to do to check that the knowledge identified in curriculum plans are taught in all subjects and to make sure that pupils are learning well

### **Additional support**

The school has received support from the English hub, mathematics hub and behaviour hub as it seeks to continue to improve. Leaders have also worked with successful local schools to check that they are focusing on the right priorities. Training from an external consultant and The National College has been provided to develop teachers' understanding of subject leadership. Subject leaders are positive about the support they have been offered. They say that it has made a significant difference to the expertise with which they lead their subject. Leaders have also used online training to make sure that all staff have the skills they need to fulfil their roles

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I spoke to the principal, two vice-principals, the chief executive officer of the Hatton Academies Trust and the chair of the board of

directors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held meetings with the reading leader, three subject leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the leader with responsibility for pupils' mental health and four representatives from the staff, including a teaching assistant and a newly qualified teacher. I spoke to a small group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, visited five phonics lessons and listened to pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading with a familiar adult. I reviewed the school's development plan, looked at examples of reports from external support the school has received and examined minutes from meetings of the governing board. I examined the school's behaviour records and examples of individual pupil's behaviour plans. I looked at the 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including two free-text responses, and 28 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Hatton Academies Trust, a multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Poole  
**Ofsted Inspector**