

Inspection of a good school: Victoria Road Primary

Trelawney Avenue, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon PL5 1RH

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. Children in the Nursery learn how to get the most out of their play. In the Reception year, children are taught behaviours that will help them to learn well in group situations. Pupils know what is expected of them. This helps them to feel safe and focus on their learning.

Staff make sure that there is plenty for pupils to do at breaktime and lunchtime. This promotes their physical and social development. Pupils are well supervised and their conduct is usually respectful. They know what bullying is and that they should report it when it happens.

Pupils are involved in trips and visits in and around Plymouth, where the school is located. This helps pupils to develop their cultural awareness. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about life in a completely different context. For example, at the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were enjoying a week-long stay on a farm.

All of this sets pupils up well to learn an ambitious curriculum. However, over time, the school's curriculum has not served pupils well. Pupils do not gain the wide-ranging knowledge that they need to be successful in life.

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

Leaders have begun to strengthen the curriculum. They have rightly prioritised early reading and mathematics for improvement. Children in the Nursery develop enjoyment of reading. By the Reception Year, children are familiar with the sounds associated with some letters. This helps them to get off to a flying start in reading.

Reading remains a priority throughout the school. Leaders are determined to help pupils make up lost ground, due, in part, to the disruption caused by COVID-19. Pupils who need to catch up with their phonics learning receive intensive support. Leaders encourage pupils to borrow books from the school and local library. There is a growing reading culture in the school.

Staff have had training to help them to teach mathematics more effectively. The curriculum is adapted to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn successfully. Pupils, including those with SEND, are confident and enthusiastic about their learning of mathematics as a result. Pupils appreciate the support provided to them by staff and readily seek help if they need it.

Leaders have the confidence of staff. Staff are committed to improving the school and have embraced the changes that leaders have brought. Several subject leaders are newly appointed. They have begun to identify areas for development. However, in the subjects of the wider curriculum, such as history and French, pupils do not learn or understand enough. They are not well prepared for secondary school learning.

The curriculum in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) prepares children well for future learning in English and mathematics. However, leaders have not thought enough about how to prepare them well for the other subjects they will learn about in Year 1. Some subject leaders have begun to identify the vocabulary they would like pupils to have by the start of key stage 1. Their plans are in the very early stages of development and have not yet been put into practice.

There are several subjects in which assessment is not used well. For example, in mathematics, pupils are sometimes tested on curriculum content that they have not yet learned. In other subjects, including science, history and religious education, leaders have not yet established a purposeful approach to assessment across the school. This reduces opportunities for pupils to show leaders what they know and can do.

Leaders have identified a need to improve their engagement with parents. Some parents, particularly parents of pupils with SEND, would like to know more about what their children are learning and how they are being supported by the school. Nevertheless, leaders have a good understanding of pupils' needs and monitor their progress towards targets closely.

Many pupils take up leadership roles in the school. Staff encourage a wide range of pupils to put themselves forward. This helps vulnerable pupils to have a voice in the school. Most of the time pupils are sympathetic towards one another. They respect everyone's right to learn without disruption. Some pupils develop their social skills further by participating in after-school sports clubs.

Leaders, including those from the multi-academy trust, have put together a capable staff team. They recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils achieve well and leave the school with the range of knowledge they need. Across the school, leaders and staff are working together to bring about necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work with other agencies to ensure that children and pupils are safe. They identify families in need of support and offer this in a timely way.

Throughout the school, staff are alert to any signs that pupils could be at risk. For example, they follow up any unexplained absences quickly to assure themselves that pupils are safe. Staff use the school's system for recording concerns confidently.

Governors find out about the culture of the school by talking with pupils and staff. This helps leaders to tackle any issues which might cause pupils to feel unsafe, such as bullying.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure that each element of the curriculum contributes to pupils gaining the breadth of knowledge they need to achieve well later. Pupils do not gain the detailed knowledge that they need from across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- Leaders have not thought enough about how the curriculum in the EYFS, including in the Nursery, lays the foundations for children's later learning in different subjects. As a result, staff are not fully clear what pupils should know when they start key stage 1. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in each subject builds incrementally on the knowledge and language that children gain in EYFS.
- In several subjects, leaders and staff do not use assessment effectively. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their knowledge. This limits how much they learn and remember. Leaders should use assessment to check how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. This will give leaders valuable feedback on how well the curriculum is meeting pupils' needs.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Victoria Road Primary School, to be good in February 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	145654
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10256723
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Debbie Taylor
Headteacher	Sharon Burnett
Website	www.vrpsp.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Victoria Road Primary converted to become an academy in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Victoria Road Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the composition and leadership of the school. In 2019, the on-site nursery provision, which caters for children aged two to four, became part of the school. The headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school includes provision for childcare before and after school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above what is typical nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including pupils with education, health and care plans, is well above what is typically seen nationally.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and members of her senior leadership team, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the chair and vice-chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the local governing body and one other governor.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and considered samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working within the school. The inspector discussed safeguarding practices and the culture of the school with leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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