

Inspection of Victoria Park Primary

Ballot Street, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 3HH

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
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

The headteacher of this academy is Robert Reed. This school is part of Victoria Academies Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sharron Philpot, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gurinder Singh Josan.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Victoria Park Primary as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe the school as their 'second home'. They say it plays an important part in their everyday lives. Pupils are rarely absent. They value the level of care and support they get from the staff. Parents and carers appreciate this too.

Leaders and staff work as a team with a clear focus on doing what is best for the pupils. The school's vision is to provide pupils with the best possible education to prepare them for future opportunities. Leaders have constructed an ambitious, well-rounded curriculum and they continually look at ways to improve it even further. The multi-academy trust (MAT) is right behind the school and support them in their efforts to drive improvements.

Pupils are polite and very well-mannered. They greet visitors with a smile, and rush to hold doors open for staff and other adults. Pupils get along with each other. In most instances, they listen well, focus on their learning, and complete their work. On the playground, pupils enjoy playing and chatting with their friends. However, pupils say they would like more structured activities at breaktimes.

Parents are assured that their children are kept safe. They value the level of communication with the school.

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

The school has thought carefully about the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn within and across year groups. There is a relentless focus on developing pupils' language skills. This starts on a child's first day in the early years and continues up to the time they leave in Year 6. The curriculum makes clear links and connections to what pupils have learned in the past. This supports teachers to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know. In turn, this helps pupils to connect new learning to what they have studied in the past. Learning in some subjects is revisited and extended in other areas of the curriculum, which helps pupils to deepen their learning in different contexts.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge in a wide range of curriculum areas. They explain new learning in a logical manner. Staff model subject-specific language accurately to support pupils' language development. As a result, pupils use this subject-specific vocabulary confidently when explaining their own ideas. However, some staff do not routinely check on pupils' learning. This means that adults do not always identify misconceptions and spot gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

Reading has a high priority in the school and threads through the entire curriculum. Staff consistently follow a structured approach to delivering phonics sessions from Reception onwards. Pupils are familiar with the structure of the phonics sessions, which supports their learning. In addition, the school is working hard to promote a

love of reading through the curriculum. This work includes opportunities for regular story times and special reading events.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and all aspects of school life. Teachers, supported by skilled teaching assistants, plan activities and provide appropriate support. Staff are at hand to step in and provide help if required, but they are careful not to do the work for the pupils. This all means that pupils with SEND can learn the same content as their classmates.

There is a strong sense of pastoral care that permeates through the school. Positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils trust the staff and know that they are always there to help them. They understand the importance of a healthy diet, regular exercise, and the importance of sleep. They know about the potential dangers of the internet and how to keep themselves safe when working online. Pupils have a growing knowledge of other faiths and cultures that are different to their own. However, their knowledge of the different types of families that exist in the local area is less developed.

School leaders, the academy council and the MAT work well together. They share a common goal of improving the future life chances of the pupils in their care. However, in some subjects, the checks that the school makes on how well the curriculum is being delivered are not always effective. They are not, for instance, routinely picking up the areas that need to be improved.

Staff value the training they receive linked to safeguarding, SEND and the curriculum. This equips them to do their job better. Teachers say that leaders are always available to listen. They value this, as well as the support they receive from each other. A comment made by a teacher sums up the feelings of many, 'Everyone is on the same page, and everyone is valued.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school is not making effective checks on how well the curriculum is taught. In these instances, inconsistencies relating to the implementation of the curriculum remain and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should make effective checks on how well the curriculum is being delivered in all subjects, so that inconsistencies can be identified and appropriate support put in place.
- The school is not using formative assessment consistently well to identify pupils' misconceptions. As a result, misconceptions are not being routinely identified and

addressed. This means that pupils continue to make the same mistakes. The school should ensure that staff use formative assessment consistently well to identify pupils' misconceptions so that they can be addressed.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138033
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10267960
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	640
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gurinder Singh Josan
Headteacher	Robert Reed
Website	www.victoriaparkacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club. This provision is operated by an external provider.
- The school is part of the Victoria Academies MAT.
- The school has a nursery that admits three-year olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the chair of the academy council, the chief executive officer of the MAT and two members of the board of trustees, including the chair.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss provision for pupils with SEND, pupils’ behaviour, attendance, the early years, personal development and additional funding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Three separate groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on personal development learning walks around the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses received during the inspection. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school’s self-evaluation form, school development plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the academy council.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Snooks	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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