

Inspection of a good school: Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 5BN

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 March 2024

Outcome

Victoria Road Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy attending Victoria Road Primary School. They embrace the school values of 'care, achieve, respect and enjoy'. These values are lived out fully by pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The atmosphere is calm and orderly. Older pupils are positive role models for those in the younger years. They help children in the early years to learn how to play together cooperatively and how to conduct themselves around school.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (the specially resourced provision). The school has a clear vision to prepare pupils for the next steps in their lives. Pupils try their best and achieve well. They are understandably proud of their achievements.

Pupils enjoy the numerous trips, visits and visitors that the school provides for them. These include field trips to the local old town or residential visits further afield. These well-thought-out opportunities enrich pupils' life experiences and deepen their understanding of the curriculum. Pupils' talents and interests are fostered well. Pupils like attending after-school activities such as football, chess or art club.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum that broadens pupils' horizons. The key knowledge that pupils will acquire from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 6 has been clearly identified. The school makes sure that pupils, including those with SEND, learn new content in a logical way.

Staff deliver the curriculum with expertise and enthusiasm. In most subjects, they skilfully design learning activities that help pupils to make connections between what they are currently learning and what they know already. The school's focus on broadening pupils'

vocabulary supports their language development across a range of subjects. Pupils' recall of their current learning is secure. Staff use assessment strategies well to identify and address any gaps that pupils may have. In a small number of subjects, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for some pupils to revisit and consolidate earlier knowledge and skills. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from building securely on what they already know and can do.

The early years curriculum is extremely well designed. Staff provide exciting learning opportunities that help children to develop their curiosity. Staff know the children particularly well. They use this knowledge to tailor activities that maximise children's engagement. Children in the early years are well prepared for the challenges of the Year 1 curriculum.

The school recognises the importance of teaching pupils to read. Staff teach the phonics curriculum in a well-ordered way. They make sure that the books that pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to gain the secure phonics knowledge that they need to be successful readers. Highly trained staff give pupils who struggle prompt help. This ensures that these pupils catch up with the phonics programme quickly. Pupils across the school relish the rewards that they receive for their achievements in reading. They especially enjoy earning tokens for the vending machine and enjoying a hot chocolate with staff.

The school has high expectations for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are quickly and accurately identified. Staff adapt the delivery of the curriculum on offer for pupils with SEND skilfully. As a result, pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers and achieve well. They participate fully in school life. Pupils who may struggle to regulate their behaviour are supported extremely well, including in the specially resourced provision. This helps these pupils to access the learning and feel safe.

The programme to promote pupils' personal development is well thought out. Pupils learn about basic first aid and are confident in how they could react in an emergency. They take on many leadership roles, such as school councillors, house captains and play leaders. Pupils contribute to the life of the school and the local community. For example, each class raises money for its dedicated charity. The school prepares pupils well for life beyond Victoria Road Primary School.

Staff are well supported by leaders. Most staff are very proud to work at the school. They know that leaders, including governors, consider their workload and well-being before introducing changes. For example, improvements to the curriculum and how feedback is given to pupils have reduced staff workload greatly while also benefiting pupils.

Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties with diligence. They provide effective support and challenge the school to continually improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for some pupils to revisit and consolidate earlier knowledge and skills. On occasion, this prevents some pupils from remembering and building upon their previous learning as well as they could. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, staff are supported well to design activities that enable pupils to embed knowledge into their long-term memory.

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 school to be good in November 2018.

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	110992
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10313984
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hilary Moss
Headteacher	Emma Roberts
Website	https://victoriaroadprimary.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers specially resourced provision for up to eight pupils aged between four and seven years old with social, emotional and mental health needs. This provision is commissioned by the local authority.
- The school do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. She met representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, she 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 inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at playtime. She considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His 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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