

# Inspection of Victoria School

Bell Hill, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 1LD

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Victoria School is a warm and welcoming setting. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils rise to these expectations and achieve well. Leaders are determined to prepare pupils as future citizens within their local community.

Communication is high priority. Leaders pay serious attention to giving pupils a voice. Pupils who do not use verbal language are taught how to communicate their thoughts and feelings well. In addition, staff have a good understanding of any barriers pupils may have to learning. As a result, the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met very well.

Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive. Pupils' individual needs, such as behavioural, communication, physical and sensory needs, are supported exceptionally well. Pupils are taught positive behaviour strategies to help themselves. Consequently, behaviour across school is calm and settled.

Pupils have an impressive range of wider opportunities. These include residential and music events. Pupils help to shape the additional opportunities on offer. For example, older pupils have set up a 'share and care' group. As part of this group, pupils talk about their feelings and worries and share strategies and ideas to support one another. Pupils demonstrate the school's values of respect, inspire, support and empower exceptionally well.

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

In recent years, the school has implemented many positive changes across all phases. Leaders, including governors, are focused on giving pupils a high-quality education that helps prepare pupils for adulthood. As a result, the school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils. At the heart of this curriculum, is a focus on supporting pupils' communication, independence and physical needs. However, leaders recognise that there is still some work to do on how they consistently evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning. Some subject leaders do not always have an accurate view of how well pupils are achieving in their subject area.

In lessons, learning is adapted to support pupils' individual needs. For example, in physical education (PE), lessons support pupils' postural management and mobility. Pupils take part in sports and games. Pupils can talk about the knowledge and skills needed for different sports, including how to umpire a game. Teachers carefully check pupils' learning using various assessment strategies. Teachers use this information to plan well-thought-out lessons. In the early years, the environment is well organised and resourced. Communication systems for individual children are established early on. This means that all children have a strong start in developing their early communication skills. However, in some parts of the curriculum for older pupils, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge and skills they want

pupils to learn. Consequently, pupils are not always accurately taught the essential knowledge for future more complex topics. This slows some pupils' learning.

Reading is high priority at Victoria School. Leaders' ambitions are for every pupil to be a reader and to engage with text, symbols and sounds in a meaningful way. The school uses a systematic phonics scheme. All staff are well trained to deliver this. Pupils access phonics and reading through various communication systems, including verbal language, eye-tracking technology, symbols and body tapping. Leaders ensure that pupils experience a wide range of diverse books throughout their education. More complex texts, by authors such as Shakespeare, are adapted by staff. This helps older learners to access a wide range of challenging texts.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Staff know the needs of individual pupils and learning environments are purposefully designed to support pupils' behaviour and sensory needs. Consequently, classrooms are calm and purposeful. All pupils engage well in their learning. Furthermore, leaders and governors prioritise pupil attendance. They have secured improvements in this area.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils' mental health and well-being are well supported by all staff. Pupils comment how they feel wanted and highly cared for from the moment they arrive at school. Sensitive topics, such as bereavement, are taught with great care. Pupils' talents and interests are promoted, for example through sports, art and theatre. All of this is supporting pupils' character development well and helping them to prepare for their future lives.

The school's offer to promote careers information, education, advice and guidance is strong. Pupils are well prepared for appropriate outcomes in employment, further training or supported living. In the sixth form, students' views about their future aspirations are well considered. The school provides a range of opportunities to support students' wishes about their future.

Governors are highly supportive of the school. They ensure that pupils are at the centre of all decision-making. Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

## **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 parts of the curriculum, particularly for older pupils, the school has not identified the essential knowledge and skills it wants pupils to learn. This means pupils are not always accurately taught the essential knowledge for future more

complex topics. This slows some pupils' learning. The school should identify the essential knowledge and skills pupils need for subsequent learning in all subjects.

- There are inconsistencies in how leaders evaluate different areas of their work across the school. This means that some leaders do not have an accurate view of the impact of their work on pupils' learning. The school should put in place consistent systems to check and evaluate the impact of their work.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103601
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290529
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	222
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	39
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Clare Mills
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Coffey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.victoria.bham.sch.uk">www.victoria.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Federation of Cherry Oak School and Victoria School. There are two schools and one college within the federation. The two schools share the same governing body.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. These mostly support severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning disabilities, cognition and learning and speech language and communication needs. Pupils also have physical, medical and sensory needs.
- There were no nursery-age children on roll during the inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- ☑ The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteachers, chair of governors, additional representatives from the governing board, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with transport assistants, drivers and staff.
- ☑ The lead inspector spoke with a school improvement adviser and a representative from the local authority.
- ☑ Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, communication, mathematics, art and design, and PE including physical development. 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.
- ☑ To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- ☑ Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- ☑ Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

## Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Mann	Ofsted Inspector

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