

# Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 5BN

## Inspection dates

6–7 November 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders have brought about positive changes at the school in a short space of time because they are setting higher expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics rose in 2018.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their needs are identified well and staff support these pupils to achieve their targets.
- Leaders have improved their provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good awareness of British values and equalities so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The early years requires improvement because senior leaders' actions have not been swift enough to raise standards as rapidly as in other areas of the school. However, there have been significant steps taken to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in the early years is improving.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account for the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in enough detail.
- Leaders have used training and development to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good.
- Leaders have acted on the areas for improvement that were left at the school's short inspection in March 2018. The school now meets the legal requirements for checking the suitability of staff who work at the school.
- Leaders have designed an engaging curriculum that is supplemented by a range of visits and visiting speakers.
- Subject leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects do not provide clear enough support to help staff to further improve pupils' outcomes.
- Although progress is good, some of the most able pupils are not challenged to reach the highest standards in their written work. This is also evident in subjects such as science, geography and history.
- Pupils say that the word 'gay' continues to be used on the playground but that leaders have taken action to reduce this. This aspect of equalities and countering bullying remains an area for improvement.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that
  - governors hold school leaders to account for the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, in more detail
  - subject leaders' checks on the quality of teaching provide support for staff so that they can continue to improve pupils' outcomes in subjects across the curriculum.
- Leaders continue to embed the improvements in the early years so that a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year.
- Teachers challenge the most able pupils to achieve higher standards in writing and in subjects across the curriculum.
- Leaders continue to build upon the good start made to tackle the use of homophobic language in the playground.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders are ambitious for the school. They are setting high aspirations for pupils' achievement, both academically and in their personal and social development.
- Leaders have taken effective action to raise pupils' progress and attainment in a short space of time. The headteacher has made a positive difference to the standards that pupils achieve at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The headteacher has tackled the weakest teaching in the school effectively. Staff are positive about the training and support that they receive. These opportunities have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. All the staff who responded to the staff survey said that they feel proud to be part of the school.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from an engaging curriculum. Pupils say that the topics that they learn are fun and that there is a good balance between the different areas of the curriculum. Leaders arrange trips and visiting professionals so that pupils are inspired to learn well. The school also provides a range of extra-curricular clubs to develop pupils' music, art, drama and sports skills.
- Leaders have reacted well to areas for improvement left at the school's short inspection in March 2018 to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders have ensured that staff have promoted British values well and that pupils have a good understanding of equalities.
- Leaders have established a nurturing ethos. They are committed to ensuring that they meet the needs of pupils. They have set up mentoring groups for all pupils and have established regular meetings for young carers.
- The leadership of SEND is a strength. The special educational needs coordinator has ensured that there is a greater rigour in the identification of pupils with SEND. Individual plans for these pupils demonstrate a good understanding of their needs.
- Subject leaders do not have sufficient opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. As such, the support that they provide for staff to refine their teaching is not specific enough to help them to further improve pupils' outcomes.

### Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is informed by the effective questions that they ask at meetings about pupils' progress and attainment. They have a clear understanding of how recent improvements have been implemented, particularly in mathematics. They understand the priorities for development well.
- However, governors have allowed their focus on the use of additional funding to drift. For example, they have not questioned in enough detail the use of the pupil premium funding. Although this is allocated to support eligible pupils effectively, current plans are not accurate. As such, governors do not display a clear enough awareness of the

barriers to pupils' learning. They do not hold leaders to account for how the funding is targeted to support pupils' learning in enough detail.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have taken swift action to remedy the issues identified at the school's recent short inspection. The school's central record of checks on the suitability of staff is well maintained and meets legal requirements. Leaders have ensured that robust systems are in place for validating the identity of staff joining the school.
- Pupils say that staff are approachable. Pupils feel comfortable to share any concerns that they may have. The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and ensure that pupils are well cared for.
- Staff have received training and updates in the most recent guidance for safeguarding. They are vigilant and have kept awareness of the local risks to pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online. Leaders organise regular lessons, assemblies and visitors to focus on ensuring pupils' safety and welfare.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Pupils read well and demonstrate an increasing fluency as they move throughout the school. Pupils in key stage 1 use their phonics skills well to decode unfamiliar words. Older pupils commit to improving their vocabulary by making notes of new words as they read. Pupils enjoy the texts that leaders have introduced.
- Staff have received comprehensive training to support the implementation of the curriculum. For example, teachers model mathematical calculations consistently across all year groups. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of what they have been taught. Teachers plan tasks so that pupils can apply their reasoning skills to problem-solving, particularly in upper key stage 2. This is successful in developing the depth of pupils' understanding, particularly for the most able, who are provided with problems that stretch their thinking.
- Pupils learn from a rich curriculum. However, the work in pupils' writing books, and in other books across the curriculum, shows that the work of some of the most able pupils is too similar to that of pupils of other abilities. Consequently, the work lacks challenge for these pupils.
- Pupils with SEND read confidently. They can reflect well on the progress that they have made because of the support that they have received from staff. Pupils with SEND have individualised plans that focus on their learning needs. These plans provide clear targets to ensure that adults are aware of pupils' next steps in learning in reading, writing and mathematics as well as personally and socially.
- Well-researched interventions are in place to help pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to catch up on learning that they may have found difficult.

- Teachers have designed classroom environments to support pupils' learning. Pupils use displays well to improve their vocabulary and when solving calculation problems.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils have positive attitudes towards learning.
- All staff share a responsibility to ensure pupils' emotional well-being by being mentors to small groups of pupils. Pupils are highly positive about the opportunity to meet regularly with their mentor group because they can share their worries.
- Staff facilitate a young carers group to meet regularly so that they have opportunities to speak to others in the same situation. They share the opinion that it is 'nice knowing that you are not the only one'.
- Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of British values. They have opportunities to debate issues and they clearly show respect for other opinions. They relate aspects of their everyday lives to the values that they have been taught by staff.
- Leaders have ensured that there has been a sharper emphasis on understanding and promoting equalities. The pupils that inspectors spoke to could articulate what this means for different groups of society. This is due to the resources and assemblies that leaders have put in place to develop pupils' understanding since the previous inspection. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are attentive in class because staff work hard to ensure that their work is engaging. Pupils understand the content of lessons well and engage in their learning. They understand how to improve their work well. Pupils say that disruptions to lessons are rare.
- Pupils value their education. The school's own figures for the last academic year show that pupils' attendance was broadly average.
- Leaders ask specialists to visit the school to educate pupils about the effects of bullying. Pupils understand this issue well. Leaders have implemented a new recording system so that they can identify any patterns in pupils' behaviour and then offer appropriate support. Pupils do not feel that bullying happens often and that when it does staff tackle this well.
- Pupils behave well on the playground and when moving around the school. The pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term is reducing but it persists. Leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils do not use racist language.

- Pupils display a good understanding of the needs of others. They understand that pupils with SEND can occasionally require additional support. Pupils commented to inspectors how much these pupils have improved the management of their own behaviour.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The provisional data for 2018 shows that progress at the end of key stage 2 in writing and mathematics was good.
- Pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 has improved on previous years to be just below the national average. Attainment in mathematics was better still and was broadly average.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally. Pupils' books demonstrate good progress in writing and mathematics. However, some of the most able pupils are not challenged to achieve the highest standards in writing. Although boys make good progress in their written work, their attainment lags behind that of boys nationally.
- Pupils progress well in subjects across the curriculum because of the well-thought-out way in which leaders have designed the topics to engage pupils. However, in some subjects such as science, geography and history, the most able pupils are not challenged to achieve even higher standards.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress in their learning due to the support that they receive from staff.
- Throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in the school of the same ability. In 2018, the provisional data shows that these pupils made good progress in writing and mathematics and were just below the national average for other, non-disadvantaged, pupils in reading.
- Pupils read confidently and fluently. The provisional results for 2018 show a high level of attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

### Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

- Provision in the early years requires improvement because there has not been a demonstrable impact on the standards that children achieve at the end of the Reception Year. Although the percentage of children achieving a good level of development rose in 2018, it was still below that seen nationally.
- For too long, governors have accepted without question the low attainment of children in the early years. The improved results in 2018 were largely because children entered the provision with skills that were better than in previous years. Although the headteacher has taken action to address this trend of low achievement, this has not been done as rapidly as in other areas of the school.
- Despite this, teaching is improving quickly in the early years. The new staff team have brought fresh ideas and high expectations for children's achievements.

- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. She has secured the commitment of a team of dedicated staff. All staff contribute to assessing children's progress so that staff know how to intervene to support children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum.
- This year, additional funding for disadvantaged children is being used to support children's speech and language. This has shown early signs of improvement. Pupils are confident to talk about their experiences and to contribute to class discussions.
- Teachers intervene skilfully to subtly change the shape of children's learning when they are in different areas of learning, such as when encouraging boys in the home corner to write lists. Children exhibit enthusiasm for their work. Relationships between staff and children are excellent and have a positive impact on the progress children make.
- Children work well together. Their behaviour shows that they feel safe to explore different areas of learning. Teachers ensure that learning is fun. For example, in phonics children engage because of the enthusiastic way in which teachers present the sounds that they are learning.
- Teachers work in partnership with parents to help them understand how to help their children at home. Parents are positive about the provision in the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	110992
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10054368

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Owen
Headteacher	Mrs Emma Roberts
Telephone number	01928 574644
Website	<a href="http://victoria-road.eschools.co.uk">victoria-road.eschools.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head.victoriaroad@halton.gov.uk">head.victoriaroad@halton.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018

## Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of boys and girls in some classes varies considerably.
- The school has a small but increasing number of young carers.
- The proportion of pupils who are identified as having SEND has reduced and is now in line with the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There is a small proportion of pupils who are from a range of other backgrounds.
- A private provider provides breakfast and after-school clubs on the school site.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, including joint observations with the senior leaders. They examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics and writing and from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from all year groups read, both individually and as part of classroom activities. They spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 17 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took account of responses from 16 staff who completed the staff survey and nine responses to the pupil survey.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, middle leaders and the early years team.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, such as the school's evaluation of its own performance, including its areas for development. They also looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this related to daily practice, and spoke with staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Brookes

Ofsted Inspector

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