

Victoria Road Primary School

Victoria Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5BN

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved. Pupils make good progress from starting points that are below and sometimes well below those expected for their age.
- Attainment has risen. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach at least average levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have quickly improved the quality of teaching. Teaching is consistently good and it is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils because of the effective support they receive.
- Pupils are happy, make friends easily and respect each other and all adults in school. They are eager to learn, are keen to do well and work hard in lessons.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in class and around school. They feel very safe and cared for well.
- Determined and aspirational leadership by the headteacher, supported by an increasingly effective governing body and highly committed staff, is a key factor in the school's continuing success.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching to ensure that it is helping pupils to learn and progress well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- By the end of Year 6, achievement in writing is not yet as good as that in reading and mathematics because teaching has not helped enough pupils reach the higher standards. Fewer pupils, particularly the most able, make better than expected progress in writing compared to that in reading and mathematics.
- Although pupils reach the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, too few reach the higher levels.
- Marking does not consistently show pupils the precise next steps they need to take to improve their work. Sometimes pupils are not given time to act on advice given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading skills and talked with pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they were currently reading.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with 10 governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own recent parent survey. Inspectors also took account of 28 responses to staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including external reviews of the school's work, safeguarding documents, records of current standards and progress, the school's strategic plan and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Minutes from governing body meetings and reports produced by the headteacher were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- The number of pupils who join the Reception class varies from year to year. The proportion of boys and girls in some classes varies considerably.
- Most pupils are White British with a very small proportion of pupils from a range of other heritages and backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well-above average. An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is continuing to rise and is above the national average. This additional funding is provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has a range of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Science Quality Mark and the Inclusion Quality Mark.
- A breakfast and after-school clubs offered on-site are managed by a private provider. This provision is subject to a separate inspection.
- The headteacher provides occasional support to other headteachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching in order to ensure that the rising trend in pupils' achievement continues by:
 - increasing the level of challenge in Key Stage 1 so that more pupils reach the higher levels
 - ensuring that writing tasks provide enough challenge, particularly for the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers' marking shows pupils the precise next steps they need to take to improve their work and that time in lessons is provided for pupils to act on the advice given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's skills when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year. Children generally enter with skills below those typically expected for their age, however, for some children, their communication skills are well below those typically expected. Because of outstanding teaching in the current year, the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has accelerated and is at least good and often better. Children join Year 1 with skills still a little below those expected in reading, writing and mathematics, although all have extremely positive attitudes to school and learning.
- The improvements in teaching since the last inspection, has increased the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics and for current learners, this proportion is now higher than average by the end of Year 6. The proportion making better progress than expected at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average in reading and mathematics, although a smaller proportion does so in writing.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved and are in line with the national average. However, too few pupils yet reach the higher levels in writing, although more do so in reading and mathematics.
- Standards are improving in Key Stage 1 in response to the improvements in teaching. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now in line with the national average. However, although pupils make good progress from their starting points, too few yet reach the higher levels due to the legacy of some weaker teaching in the past.
- The teaching of phonics, which is the ability to match letters to the sounds they make, and of early reading skills, is effective. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 national phonics check is average. Pupils' love of reading, fostered at this early stage, is built on as they move up the school. Pupils enjoy the texts linked with their topic work and regularly undertake research of topics independently and in small groups.
- Effective and well-planned support enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to learn well and make at least good progress, given their differing abilities and starting points.
- The attainment of the most able pupils is generally similar to the national average for this group. However, fewer pupils make better progress than expected in writing from their starting points in Key Stage 2, and the proportion reaching the higher levels in writing by the end of Year 6 is below that seen in most schools.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2013, the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium (all of whom in the school are known to be eligible for free school meals) improved and the gap between the attainment of these pupils in English and mathematics and others in the school closed. The attainment of eligible pupils in Key Stage 2 also improved but the attainment of this group was still behind that of other pupils by around two terms. Extra support is helping current pupils supported by this funding make more rapid progress across the school and the gaps in their achievement and that of other pupils are closing quickly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- School leaders' firm focus on continuing to improve the quality of teaching is proving successful. Teaching is consistently good and in some year groups, it is outstanding. As a result, pupils are making increasingly rapid progress and achievement is now good.
- A bright and stimulating learning environment has been developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Very effective planning reflects well children's needs and interests. For example, during the inspection, children were eagerly preparing the outdoor area for the 'Brazilian World Cup' inspired carnival they are to hold in the coming weeks. They confidently used their phonic skills to paint the names of the countries taking part in the competition.

- Pupils learn well when work is set at the right level to match their ability. Sometimes in Key Stage 1, work does not provide pupils with enough challenge to reach the higher levels.
- In Key Stage 2, teachers use good subject knowledge and their clear understanding of the levels at which pupils are working, to provide tasks that allow pupils to make at least good progress. However, in writing, the most able pupils are sometimes set writing tasks that are not hard enough to stretch them and their progress is not fast enough as a result.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and some marking is of a very high quality. This is the case in Year 5, where pupils are given very precise guidance about how they can move their work to the next level. However, although all teachers' marking offers advice about what pupils need to do to improve, sometimes the guidance is too broad. This is particularly the case in writing, where the guidance does not consistently point out to pupils the small steps they need to take to move their learning on.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about how well they have done in lessons. They enjoy working together and sensibly make the most of the opportunities provided to help each other improve their work.
- The school provides a warm, welcoming and well-organised learning environment. The excellent relationships that exist between pupils and all adults contribute well to the good learning that takes place. Well-trained teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to supporting the learning of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite, friendly and courteous. Pupils are proud of their school, which is housed in a Victorian building. They move around the corridors and narrow staircases extremely sensibly. Pupils attend school on time and look smart in their school uniforms. They are given many opportunities to take on extra responsibility; for example, as school and eco councillors and arts ambassadors. During the inspection younger pupils enjoyed sharing their reading books with Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to their learning. They want to do well and they appreciate the help they are given. They do not give up when the work is more difficult; instead, they try harder. Pupils also support one another well in lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are given the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves; for example, safe use of the internet, new technologies and road safety. They are aware of the different forms of bullying and say that incidents are rare. They know that there is always an adult they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils, particularly the older ones, to consider difficult issues. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were debating the merits of video consoles and whether they should be banned or restricted in use. The class teacher skilfully guided the debate and pupils listened maturely to others as they shared points of view.
- The school's effective approaches in promoting to pupils' emotional development impacts well on behaviour. Instances of poor behaviour are extremely rare. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. Staff know their pupils well and manage behaviour successfully. Parents strongly support this view.
- The school has a wide range of strategies in place to support pupils and families who experience difficulties. Parents are very grateful for the level of support they receive and the difference this makes to their child.
- Attendance has a high profile and has improved to above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership is clearly focused on continuing to improve standards. She

is very well supported by the assistant headteachers, staff and governors. Together they have worked tirelessly to make sure that the areas for development identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed.

- The school's view of its performance is accurate because it is based on thorough and regular checks of its work. Targets set for teachers are closely linked to the school's strategic plans and are focused on improving standards.
- Senior and middle leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. An effective and ongoing training programme supports teachers and teaching assistants in keeping their knowledge up to date and their skills sharp. This has helped to move all teaching to at least good. Senior leaders' current focus is on developing teachers' skills to move pupils, especially the most able, to the higher levels in writing and to ensure more pupils reach the higher levels in Key Stage 1.
- The primary sports funding has been allocated effectively to provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop their sporting skills. Owing to the age of the school building, outdoor space is limited. However, the school makes the best use of its own facilities and effective partnerships to provide regular access to the sporting facilities on the sites of the local high schools.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is enriched by a range of visits and trips and effectively matches the needs and interests of pupils. The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are developed well through topics and subjects.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support and to ensure equal access for those eligible pupils to all the school offers.
- Parents are highly positive about the school and the care provided for their children.
- As the school has improved, the range of support provided by the local authority has rightly decreased. The school has demonstrated the capacity and determination to improve further without external assistance. On occasion, the headteacher provides support for other headteachers in the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, governors have taken a very pro-active approach to improving their contribution to the leadership of the school. They have evaluated their skills and aligned these with the school's needs, undertaken appropriate training and created a comprehensive induction pack for new governors. Governors are highly committed to supporting the school.
 - Governors regularly review data about pupils' achievement. They are aware of how the pupil premium funding is used, including the effectiveness of teaching for identified pupils and the positive impact this is having on pupils' progress. Many governors gain regular first-hand views of the school and share their experiences with the full governing body.
 - The governing body knows about the quality of teaching and makes sure teachers' progression through the pay scales is firmly linked to pupils' achievement.
 - Governors check that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110992
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	442356

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Owen
Headteacher	Sue Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
Telephone number	01928 574644
Fax number	01928 563294
Email address	sec.victoriaroad@halton.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

