

Victoria Primary Academy

Ivy Avenue, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS9 9ER

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, considerable staffing disruption and change have had a negative impact on the school's effectiveness. At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment have been low. Pupils have not been well prepared for secondary school.
- While many improvements are now underway, this has yet to result in pupils' good progress over time. The quality of teaching across the school remains variable.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to ensure that pupils are given tasks that meet their varying needs and abilities. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Work lacks challenge, especially for the most able pupils.
- The teaching of phonics requires improvement. Some staff use incorrect pronunciation when teaching letter sounds to pupils.
- In lessons, some pupils do not show good attitudes to learning. Tasks fail to sustain their interest and concentration. When this happens, their behaviour wanes. This disrupts pupils' learning and wastes valuable learning time.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Often, it is poorly presented.
- Some middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. Their skills in evaluating pupil performance and checking the effectiveness of teaching are at an early stage of development.
- Children's learning in the early years does not get off to a good start. Teaching is not consistently good, and, therefore, children do not make good progress from their often-low starting points. They are not well prepared for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum.
- Attendance is below average. Despite recent improvements, too many pupils miss school regularly, particularly disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong senior leaders, along with effective support from governors and the trust, have successfully reversed the school's decline.
- Together, they are bringing about rapid improvement in many areas. Teaching is improving and standards are rising. Pupils' behaviour and attendance are also improved.
- Safeguarding procedures are strong and effective. Well-managed systems ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- There is a supportive and nurturing culture at the school. The social and emotional needs of pupils are very well met.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment in all key stages so that pupils make good progress in all subjects across the curriculum and standards rise, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers, including in early years, assess pupils accurately and use this information effectively to set pupils tasks which match their varying needs and abilities
 - making sure that expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high and work is challenging, especially for the most able pupils
 - providing further training to all staff in the teaching of phonics
 - ensuring that all staff use correct pronunciation when teaching pupils letter sounds
 - refining the curriculum so that it enables pupils to deepen their understanding when they complete work across the curriculum subjects
 - developing the roles of new leaders in checking the quality of teaching in their subjects and phases of responsibility, so that they can make a more effective contribution to improving teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and personal development by:
 - fostering good attitudes to learning
 - making sure that activities are engaging and sustain pupils' concentration
 - eradicating low-level disruption in lessons, so that learning time is not lost
 - encouraging pupils to take pride in their work and to present it to a good standard
 - improving attendance, so that it is at least in line with the average
 - reducing the number of pupils who frequently miss school, especially disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Over recent years, the school has been through a very challenging period. There have been significant staffing disruptions and changes, which have limited the school's overall effectiveness. However, the recently appointed executive headteacher and head of school are providing stable and effective leadership. Their strong and passionate leadership has ensured effective improvements, and they have set the tone, ethos and direction that the school is taking. They have quickly brought about considerable improvements, especially in areas such as safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The executive headteacher is developing an open, collaborative and reflective culture for improvement across the school. He has swiftly gained an incisive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is enabling rapid improvements to be made in all areas of the school.
- The leadership of special educational needs is strong. The leader has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across the school and monitors it closely to ensure that it is improving outcomes. She works closely with additional adults to ensure that they are fully supported to offer the most effective support for pupils.
- Leaders and governors check that the funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. A well-planned and evaluated programme of additional work, together with specific support in the classroom where necessary, has ensured that the gap in progress between disadvantaged and other pupils is now diminishing.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is used effectively to encourage pupils to participate in sport and to promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils particularly enjoy the support from external sport providers, who facilitate high-quality sport at lunchtime.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developing through a well-thought-out programme. Pupils understand that people are different and can talk about a range of differences. If issues arise in the school, they are quickly addressed through assemblies and teaching to address any lack of understanding.
- Leaders use a range of activities to ensure that there are effective checks on teaching. This is followed up with high-quality training and support for teachers. As a result, teaching is improving at a good rate.
- The school provides pupils with a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their thinking across a wide range of curriculum subjects. However, pupils are not always challenged to think in depth in all curriculum areas.
- Middle leadership is now developing. Many middle leaders are new to their roles. They already have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their phases and subjects. However, they have not yet had the time to have a significant impact on school improvement. Their skills in reviewing pupil performance information and checking on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility are at an early stage of development. Nevertheless, plans are firmly in place to ensure that they play a

greater role in developing subjects across the curriculum.

- Support from the Wellspring multi-academy trust is effective and is beginning to have a positive impact on school improvement. Inspection evidence confirms that: standards are rising after a period of decline; teaching is improving across the school; pupils who had previously underachieved are beginning to catch up on lost ground; and attendance rates are beginning to rise.
- Staff in the school are overwhelmingly positive about recent changes to leadership. Staff feel valued and receive regular praise for the job they are doing. Staff say they are allowed to innovate and take risks, while leaders ensure that staff well-being is a priority. Staff said that the appointment of the executive headteacher and head of school has been a 'change for the best' while other staff report, 'It's a family here at our school.'
- Parents' views of the school are mixed. Some parents speak enthusiastically about the work leaders have done to improve the school. However, some parents still say that they have concerns about behaviour within the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is extremely well led. The chair is very experienced and has a range of skills to ensure that the governing body fulfils its responsibility to hold the school's leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors know the strengths of the school and are aware of the current areas for development. As a result, governors are well placed to offer leaders effective support and to challenge them.
- Governors have a strong understanding of how leaders spend the pupil premium funding. They ensure that this is used effectively to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Governors also have an accurate understanding of how the funding for pupils with SEND and funding for sport is used, and the impact of this on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have improved this aspect of the school's work considerably in recent times, and it is now a school strength.
- All leaders have ensured that provision for safeguarding is at the heart of the school. Leaders make sure that the most vulnerable pupils and families are supported effectively. A tenacious pastoral support team has forged positive, binding partnerships with external agencies, experts and families. Several parents and carers expressed their gratitude for the way that staff 'always have time to talk' if concerns arise. Pupils' and families' needs are, therefore, promptly identified and acted upon.
- Leaders are diligent in their efforts to protect pupils from harm. They ensure that the appropriate checks and searches take place during staff recruitment. Staff are well trained, receive regular safeguarding updates and are fully committed to their role in the care and protection of pupils. Records pertaining to children's behaviour and matters of child protection are detailed and well maintained. Such measures make sure that issues or concerns are identified promptly, meaning risks for pupils and staff are minimised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across key stages or subjects. Although there are signs of improvement, teaching is still not good. As a result, pupils' progress not fast enough and pupils do not achieve to the best of their ability.
- Some teachers do not yet plan work that correctly meets the varying needs and abilities of pupils across subjects. Some adults do not have high enough expectations of pupils and of their potential. Work often lacks challenge, especially for the most able. As a result, pupils' progress is too variable.
- When work is not well matched to pupils' needs, the behaviour of some pupils in class deteriorates. As a result, pupils do not learn effectively and valuable learning time is lost.
- Although new assessment procedures have been put in place, teachers do not yet use this information to plan pupils' learning effectively. Teachers' assessments in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics sometimes lack accuracy.
- In early years and key stage 1, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Sometimes, activities do not build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. In these cases, assessment is not used well enough to adapt work to meet pupils' needs. Also, at times, adults do not use the correct pronunciation of letter sounds. As a result, pupils do not learn to blend sounds correctly. This hampers their progress.
- It is clear, through looking at work in pupils' books, that progress for pupils currently in Year 6 is improving. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. In this year group, there are strong links between the various curriculum subjects. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use and apply their writing skills across the curriculum subjects. Pupils deepen their understanding effectively. This is helping to raise standards considerably. This effective approach is not consistently followed in other year groups.
- Pupils with SEND benefit from good support with their learning. Additional help ensures that some individual pupils with SEND generally make positive progress from their starting points.
- Teachers regularly set pupils homework that helps them to extend their learning. The vast majority of pupils complete their homework and say that they 'see it as important'.
- Teaching assistants make a positive and effective contribution to pupils' learning and progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not show consistently good attitudes to learning. Some pupils are easily distracted; they lose concentration and drift off task, and their behaviour wanes. Valuable learning time is lost as a result.
- Some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Some do not present their work to a good enough standard.
- Around school, pupils are respectful to adults but are not always respectful and tolerant of one another. Pupils say that, sometimes, derogatory language is used on the playground. However, incidents of racist name-calling have declined significantly since new leaders have been in place.
- Senior leaders understand the needs of pupils' families and provide effective care and support for them. The pastoral leaders have developed a consistent and coordinated approach to supporting vulnerable pupils. The school's work with external agencies is effective in identifying pupils' needs and offering support when required.
- The school's nurture resource provides a calm environment to support pupils with additional needs. Their social and emotional welfare is exceptionally well supported. Staff understand pupils' needs extremely well and plan activities to enhance their mental health and well-being particularly well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through lessons and assemblies. Pupils are engaged in a number of fundraising activities, including raising money for local charities.
- Pupils told inspectors they enjoy the school and feel safe. They report that 'bullying doesn't happen often'. Pupils trust adults in the school to act and address any behaviour that is causing them to feel unhappy.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take on leadership opportunities. For instance, some pupils are house captains. Pupils say that they would welcome the opportunity to develop their responsibilities further.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Over the last year, leaders have improved pupils' behaviour considerably. Pupils agree. They report, for example, that there are fewer incidents of poor behaviour on the playground.
- Despite improvements, pupils' behaviour in classrooms is still not good. Although classrooms are generally orderly places, there is some low-level disruption when the quality of teaching is weaker. This adversely affects pupils' learning and progress. When the work is not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils quickly drift off task. Some fail to complete their work.

- Pupils' attendance is just below the national average. However, too many pupils are regularly absent from school. Leaders have begun to take effective steps to follow up all absences. However, improvements in this area have been slow to take effect, and so persistent absence remains high. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, the standards reached by pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have been below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in these key stages have not made good progress in these subjects. For the last two years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been particularly low. Pupils have left the school ill prepared for learning at secondary school.
- After a period of decline, across the school, pupils' progress is now improving quickly. Leaders are making sure that previous gaps in pupils' learning are being addressed. Standards are on an upward trajectory. Current work in Year 6 pupils' books, for example, shows that all groups of pupils are making better progress in all areas. Current standards in mathematics in Year 6 are considerably higher than in recent years. Even so, remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the year groups mean that pupils still do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils do not achieve consistently well. Sometimes, activities lack the challenge needed for these pupils to reach their potential. In recent years, very few pupils have reached the higher standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Leaders are already addressing this. Their efforts to improve the achievement of the most able pupils are starting to pay off, although there is more to do.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well enough. Leaders and governors have taken effective action to ensure that the pupil premium funding is now used more effectively. As a result, there is now little variation between the outcomes of disadvantaged and other pupils within the school. However, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up with other pupils nationally, as their attainment continues to lag some way behind. For some pupils, poor attendance impacts on their ability to make good progress.
- The progress of pupils with SEND is also improving. Work in books and observations in lessons indicate that most of these pupils are making better progress. The new leadership team has evaluated these pupils' needs and starting points effectively. More focused support is now in place as a result.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in recent years has been variable and, typically, below the national average. The approaches to teaching phonics have been revised several times in recent years. Leaders are now providing training for teachers to improve their knowledge and skills. Outcomes are, generally, on a rising trend. However, currently, younger pupils are not making consistently good progress in developing their knowledge of letters and sounds. This is because the quality of phonics teaching remains variable in the early years and in key stage 1.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The skills and knowledge of many children joining the early years are below what is typical for their age, for some well below. Many children struggle with their language and communication skills, and a high proportion of children have underdeveloped personal, social and emotional skills. In recent years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been below, and in some years well below, the national average. Children do not make consistently good progress from their starting points and are not prepared well enough for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum.
- The quality of teaching in early years, while now improving, remains inconsistent and therefore requires improvement. Expectations of what children are capable of achieving are sometimes too low. Activities lack challenge, especially for the most able children. Arrangements to assess what children already know and can do have been recently strengthened; however, staff do not yet use these effectively to ensure that they adjust their teaching to meet children's varying needs and abilities. Gaps in children's skills and knowledge, while closing, are not addressed effectively as a result. The teaching of phonics, as in key stage 1, requires improvement.
- Relationships between staff and children are strong. Adults know the children and their individual likes and dislikes well. Children trust the adults that work with them and speak to adults confidently and with interest. Children learn how to behave well. They play well together, mixing well with their peers in social times. They learn and play happily together and are kept safe. The legal welfare requirements are met.
- The recently appointed early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses across the setting. With effective support, including from an external advisor, she has begun to make improvements to the quality of provision. The quality of teaching is improving. Revisions to ensure that activities closely reflect children's particular interests, such as in superheroes, are well underway. Children are now starting to make much better progress as a result. However, as yet, leaders have not had enough impact on making sure that children achieve well over time.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 142450 |
| Local authority | Leeds |
| Inspection number | 10053493 |

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

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| 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 | 463 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of Trustees |
| Chair | Ian Bennett Hague-Brown |
| Headteacher | Ian Goddard (executive headteacher) |
| Telephone number | 01132482449 |
| Website | www.vpaleeds.co.uk |
| Email address | info@wellspringacademytrust.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The school joined Wellspring Academy Trust in November 2015. Wellspring Academy Trust delegates responsibility for some aspects of governance to a local governing board.
- Victoria Primary became part of Wellspring in November 2015. When its predecessor school, Victoria Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged as requires improvement.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion with an

education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the head of school and executive headteacher.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, members of the governing board including the chair of the governing body, and the chief executive officer of Wellspring Academy Trust.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and minutes of governing body meetings.
- They also considered a range of documentation, including that relating to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views. They also listened to a selection of them read and reviewed a sample of their work.
- An inspector met with a group of staff to seek their views.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents throughout the inspection and took account of 40 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Eve Morris, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Tracy Fulthorpe | Ofsted Inspector |
| Zoe Carr | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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