

Inspection of Victoria Primary Academy

Finedon Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4NT

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

'Aspiration' is a key word at Victoria Primary Academy. It is central to everything leaders do, from the design of the school's ambitious curriculum to the awe-inspiring trips on offer. As one of their rainbow values, pupils know that 'aspiration' is about aiming high, reaching for the sky and achieving their goals.

Victoria is a vibrant, happy place. Pupils feel safe and secure. They know that the staff care for them. As one pupil, typical of many, said, 'The adults are really kind here; they watch out for us.' Pupils know that they can share anything that worries them, and that they will get the help they need.

Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. Staff have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and conduct. Pupils are polite and hard-working. They move between activities calmly and sensibly. Adults deal with behaviour that falls below these high standards effectively and consistently. One pupil summed it up perfectly when they said, 'Teachers put trust in us to listen, work independently and to follow instructions so that we can become "Victastic" learners.'

Older pupils can see the positive changes that have taken place during their time at Victoria. Pupils are proud of their school.

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

Significant improvements have been made at Victoria Primary Academy in recent years. Pupils now benefit from a good quality of education.

The new curriculum at Victoria is ambitious and well sequenced. There is a precise order to what pupils learn. Leaders have purposefully redesigned the curriculum to give pupils a deep level of understanding and a wide vocabulary. In most subjects, teachers bridge any gaps in learning well so that pupils can achieve the aims of the new curriculum.

Leaders have thought carefully about the style of teaching that will help the pupils at Victoria learn best. Leaders ensure that teachers revisit prior learning so that it sticks in pupils' memories. These 'flick-back' tasks help pupils retain important knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils remember lots about the Norman invasion of England and how William the Conqueror built castles to secure his realm. Teachers typically model what they want pupils to do. This helps pupils to succeed. However, when teachers do not demonstrate to pupils what they want them to do, pupils can find it harder to apply their knowledge and refine their skills.

Through the school's 'SEND 5' approach, staff ensure that the curriculum is adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Support plans for pupils with SEND are closely matched to their individual needs.

Reading is a priority at Victoria. Leaders have a sharp focus on raising attainment in phonics. They have ensured that staff have the expertise to teach pupils how to read. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school. Pupils have phonics sessions in both the morning and the afternoon to keep letter sounds fresh in their minds. Additional support is given to any pupil who needs it. Books are matched to the letter sounds that pupils know. Staff encourage pupils to read with fluency, although they do not always show them how to do this well enough.

Children in Reception benefit from a warm, nurturing early years environment. Clear systems and routines are preparing children well for the next stage of their education. However, in some of the free-choice activities in the outdoor area, it is not always clear what children are expected to learn. Sometimes, adults do not develop children's communication and language well when they are learning outside.

There are clear procedures in place to reduce absence. Leaders intervene early when attendance is below where it needs to be. This approach has seen a reduction in the amount of time pupils have off school. However, reducing the rate of persistent absence further, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, remains a priority.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is a considerable strength. Pupils are knowledgeable about British values and their importance. They hold open, inclusive, and welcoming attitudes to difference and diversity. Pupils have many opportunities to experience new things and broaden their horizons. In Year 3, for example, pupils sing with an orchestra at the Barbican in London. There is also a wide variety of clubs on offer to develop pupils' talents and interests.

Staff enjoy working at Victoria Primary Academy. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and the opportunities to develop their careers.

The team at Hatton Academies Trust supports and challenges the work of others effectively. Trustees check closely on the work of school leaders. They are focused on achieving their vision of 'creating learners without limits'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained in how to keep pupils safe. They know the signs that might show a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders regularly check on staff's safeguarding expertise. Staff record and report any concerns straight away. Leaders act promptly. They work well with other agencies and ensure that pupils and families get the support they need. Leaders know the local area and its potential dangers. They have adapted their curriculum so that pupils learn about the risks that are most relevant to them. Pupils know that they can share their worries with any member of staff, and they will be listened to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders prioritise the importance of teachers showing pupils what they need to do. However, staff do not always model learning as they are expected to. When this happens, some pupils are not sure how to apply their knowledge or refine their skills. The quality of their work is not as high when they do not have an example to follow. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well by all teachers so that all pupils achieve well.
- The intended learning outcomes for some of the outdoor free-choice activities in the early years are not always as clear as they need to be. Some adults do not extend children's understanding and build their vocabulary well during these times. This means that children in the early years do not always develop their knowledge, skills and vocabulary as well as they might. Leaders must make sure that children get the most from all the free-choice activities in the early years and that staff maximise opportunities to develop children's communication and language.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	140193
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254864
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Thallon
Principal	Ian Pearson (acting)
Website	www.victoria-pri.northants.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Hatton Academies Trust.
- The acting principal has been in post since October 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, geography and art. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum plans for history and computing. They looked at pupils' work in these subjects. They also met with pupils to discuss their learning in history and computing.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the assistant principal and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years, behaviour, and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including the academy improvement plan and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with directors from Hatton Academies Trust, including the chair of the board of directors. The lead inspector also met the chief executive officer of Hatton Academies Trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Luella Manssen	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Kirk	Ofsted Inspector

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