

Summarised inspection findings

Victoria Park Primary School

Dundee City Council

7 February 2023

Key contextual information

Victoria Park Primary School is located in the west of Dundee. The school shares a campus with St Joseph's RC Primary School, and Balgay Nursery. All three provisions have their own headteacher. The school roll is currently 205. The school has a long tradition of welcoming the children of families from all over the world who are studying or working at the universities in the city. As a result, children enjoy learning in a diverse school community where over 19 languages are spoken. The school is located in an area where many families face a range of socio-economic challenges.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Victoria Park is an inclusive school and members of staff ensure children, families and visitors are made very welcome. Staff at all levels are dedicated to ensuring that children are happy, safe and learn well at school. Across all learning spaces and the playground, children show respect and kindness to one another as they learn and play. The school's vision values and aims of kindness, respect, effort and learning are evident in the daily life of the school.
- The very effective headteacher and depute headteacher are highly respected across the school and wider community. Together, they take a measured and reflective approach to building on existing good practice to continue to improve areas of school life. There are very well-embedded and thorough systems and approaches for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Led by the headteacher, all staff understand agreed priorities to improve practice and outcomes for children. There is a very positive and collegiate ethos of teamwork.
- All staff are highly committed to their own professional learning. The headteacher and depute headteacher promote an openness to learning, development and change. They manage the pace of change well and have a clear understanding of the capacity and interests of the staff team. Across the school, teaching and support staff feel valued and empowered. Teachers participate in training and undertake collaborative enquiry projects to enhance their own knowledge and skills. They use this learning very effectively to lead their colleagues in a range of school improvement activities. This approach currently includes a whole school focus on reading, writing, digital technology and relationships. The staff team is very responsive to challenge and change. They value the time and support the leadership team provide to them in the leadership roles they volunteer for. They support each other in their improvement journey. This is leading to better experiences and outcomes for children and families. The headteacher also leads aspects of early level curriculum developments across the city.
- Children across the school participate in a range of leadership activities. For example, the 'reading champions' work with staff to improve the reading culture across the school. This includes improving the environment for reading and selecting new books. Children also organise and lead clubs for their peers.

- All staff understand particularly well the unique context of the school. The school embraces the rich multi-cultural community. Staff understand the socio-economic challenges families face. Senior leaders use their knowledge of families and understanding of the local community to identify families who would benefit from additional support. Families are very well supported by School and Family Development Workers (SFDW). All staff demonstrate empathy, compassion and sensitivity in supporting families. Staff have a common understanding of the increased challenges around poverty caused by the pandemic and cost of living crisis.
- There is effective planning in place to raise the attainment of children who are disadvantaged. In addition, there are effective practices in place to support families who are newly arrived to Scotland. This includes prompt identification of children's learning needs and appropriate steps taken to ensure children make progress in their learning. Led by the headteacher, staff engage in regular reflection and critical thinking. There is a collegiate approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across Victoria Park Primary School, there is a strong ethos of positive relationships between all adults and children. All children are polite and respectful to their classmates and adults. The headteacher, in collaboration with all stakeholders, reviewed the school vision and values to make them more meaningful and relevant to children. The refreshed school motto, “With kindness, respect, effort and learning we will learn and grow” underpins the work of the school. The school values are displayed widely across the school. Staff model the values in their interactions with children and families. Across the school, almost all children are able to describe how the school values support learning and progress. Children enjoy receiving certificates in assembly when they exemplify the school values.
- In all classes, staff have high expectations of what children can do and achieve. Almost all children enjoy learning and participate well in learning experiences. Most children feel that their teachers support them well in their learning. Teachers have worked together to develop a learning policy which is improving the learning environment. As a result, children learn in calm, structured environments which is supporting improved outcomes, particularly for children who require additional support. Children enjoy learning in a range of motivating contexts including mathematics activities outdoors, local greenspaces and with partners including the Victoria & Albert (V&A) museum. All staff are developing an understanding of rights-based learning. This is at an early stage of implementation. Staff should continue to support children’s understanding of United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and continue with plans to place children’s rights and views at the centre of their learning.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers developed their skills well in using digital technologies to deliver and enhance learning and teaching. Building on this, children would now benefit from more frequent access to digital tools in class. Staff should also make more regular use of digital tools in their teaching. In addition, To enrich children’s learning experiences, senior leaders and staff should continue to develop the use of digital technologies and the role of pupil digital leaders.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. In all classes, teachers share the purpose of lessons and steps for success with children. In a few classes, children are involved in co-constructing steps for success. In most classes, teachers use questioning well to support children’s recall and understanding of their learning. Teachers’ questioning is most effective when children are given the opportunity to develop their higher order thinking skills.
- Teachers undertake research based small tests of change to review and develop their teaching approaches. As a result of this work, there is now a more consistent approach to the teaching of literacy skills across the school. Recently introduced approaches to the teaching of writing are now being implemented throughout the school. As planned, senior

leaders and teachers should continue to carefully monitor the impact of these approaches on children's progress and attainment through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.

- In all reading activities and in a few writing lessons, children engage in differentiated tasks that meet their needs well. Across other areas of the curriculum, children mostly experience whole class lessons. Teachers should keep approaches to learning and teaching under review to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged. As planned, staff should continue to support children to consider the range of skills they are developing and using during their learning experiences across the curriculum. This will help to develop children's skills for learning, life and work, and apply these skills in relevant contexts. Staff should ensure children develop more independence and creativity in their learning.
- Teachers are using the local authority guidance to support the implementation of play pedagogy for children in P1. This is at an early stage of implementation. Teachers and senior leaders carefully consider the balance of teaching, guided learning and free play to support children's learning through exploration and investigation. Learning spaces are being used effectively to motivate children and to encourage play and quality interactions. Senior leaders are working with staff to monitor the outcomes of these approaches.
- Teachers plan effectively over different timescales across all curricular areas using the experiences and outcomes of CfE. Teachers use pathway guides to inform their planning and support children to make progress in their learning through CfE levels. Teachers use a range of assessments to determine children's progress and attainment in literacy, and numeracy and mathematics. Teachers work together to discuss their judgements of the progress children are making. They are beginning to plan assessment activities which provide children with opportunities to demonstrate their progress linked to the National Benchmarks. Senior leaders and staff should continue to use the National Benchmarks during support tracking discussions about children's progress across all curricular areas. This will help support a shared understanding of progression within and across CfE levels and improve confidence in teachers' professional judgements.
- Senior leaders have recently created a whole school tracking system to monitor children's progress and attainment in for literacy and numeracy. This is supporting their termly discussions about progress of all children and identification of children who require additional support or whose learning could be extended further. This approach should now be developed to include tracking children's progress in other areas of the curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- During the pandemic and the subsequent recovery period, teachers prioritised delivering learning experiences in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy and health and wellbeing. As the terms progress children are now experiencing a broader curriculum. Children receive their entitlement of two hours of physical education (PE) each week. Staff should ensure that all children have regular, progressive experiences across expressive arts, religious and moral education and modern languages.
- Staff make use of the local authority progression frameworks in their planning across the curriculum. Across the year, children experience interdisciplinary learning through a range of topics. The school has identified the need to improve the curriculum. A first step is to involve the whole school community in the development of a curriculum rationale. Children enjoy the topic work across the school and talk well about their experiences. They enjoy choosing areas for research. Moving forward, there is a need to review the contexts for learning to ensure they are relevant to the unique setting of the school and take advantage of the rich local learning environment. The school is very well placed to build on their work with a range of partners in developing high quality curricular experiences for all children. During the planned curriculum refresh, staff should embed progressive and coherent opportunities for children to develop knowledge and skills around sustainability, the world of work, digital literacy and equality and diversity.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- There are strong relationships between staff and parents and carers. Staff based in the office ensure all parents are warmly welcomed and that their enquires are dealt with appropriately. Parents trust the staff team and feel that staff are approachable and always willing to listen to their concerns. During the pandemic, parents felt well supported and appreciated the efforts and commitment of staff to ensure children continued learning. They appreciate that their children are known well as individuals and they feel that this contributes to the warm, family ethos. All parents think that the school is well led, and value the work of the headteacher and the depute headteacher. A few parents would like to have more regular information about their children's progress and next steps in learning as part of pupil reports. Parents would welcome more support to understand learning and teaching approaches as children move through the school, for example, in the teaching of numeracy and mathematics. They feel this would help them to support homework more effectively.
- Parents very much appreciate the attention given to the cost of the school day, and that their children can access excursions and activities free of charge. Parents are supportive of all school events and celebrations. The Parent Council (PC) is active in organising social and fund- raising events. These are very well attended and appreciated by children and parents alike. The recent cinema nights served as a fun start to the festive season. The PC is keen to attract more parents to be involved in a broader range of activities. Parents appreciate the information the headteacher shares regularly about the work of the school, including new developments and priorities. As the school continues its improvement journey, parents are keen to be fully involved in developments, for example, in the planned curriculum refresh.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Staff reviewed the school's vision, values and aims to reflect better the importance of children's wellbeing. The school's values support children well to treat each other with kindness and respect. As a result, children interact well with each other. They are friendly and play well together. Children use the school's values often to praise their peers when they have done well in class. They show acts of kindness regularly to others in the school. This supports children to learn in an ethos where they feel a strong sense of belonging.
- Staff model caring respectful relationships in all their interactions. They actively promote a climate across the school, which promotes and supports the wellbeing of children and colleagues. Staff are responsive to each child's wellbeing. They show high levels of consideration for children's emotional needs. This supports children to feel safe and valued. They know there are adults in the school whom they can trust and who will listen to them.
- Staff are developing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They are exploring the importance of each indicator and how it contributes to children's wellbeing. Staff now need to develop further their use of the wellbeing indicators to become integral in all aspects of the school's work. Children should be supported to develop a shared language and knowledge of the wellbeing indicators. This should include developing their understanding of the importance in each one and how it contributes to their overall wellbeing. Staff should help children further to learn what actions they can take to contribute to their own wellbeing.
- Teachers engage well in a range of professional learning to support the development of their understanding of children's rights. They are building their knowledge of children's rights and how these can be promoted more fully throughout the school. Teachers should now consider how best they can help children to learn about their rights. This should include teachers developing their approaches to learning and teaching to promote further children's understanding of their rights in practice.
- All staff and partners have a good understanding of the value and importance of each child as an individual. Partners contribute effectively to the sense of community across the school. The SFDW team provides valuable support to children and their families. They intervene effectively with groups and individuals to ensure children and families get the support they need, when it is needed. This includes signposting parents to other agencies, helping families in accessing benefits and other necessities. They provide a valuable link between the school and children's families. For a few families, this support is resulting in improvements in their child's attendance at school. During school holidays, they organise activities for identified groups of children to have fun with their peers. This supports these children to maintain their friendships with their classmates during school holidays.

- Children are developing their confidence acting as school leaders. For example, as eco or playground champions. These roles support them well to develop their sense of responsibility. They undertake research on issues relevant to the school and local community, for example, in identifying the cost of potential improvements to the school playground. During the pandemic the school playground was divided to reduce the risk of infection between children from the two schools sited on the campus. At the request of the children, this approach has continued. Children at Victoria Park say they feel happier knowing well the other children playing in their school playground, and they can access staff they know easily. Playground champions are leading the development of the Victoria Park playground space to provide children with more equipment to support their play. Outdoor spaces throughout the local community are used well by staff to support children to develop their wellbeing.
- The school's zero waste policy has led to the creation of a space in the reception area where parents can share clothes. This supports families to pass on school uniforms and other garments as their children grow. These uniforms are of a high standard, which protects the dignity of children and adults. The school food sharing shelves are stocked with donated items identified as those most required by families affected by poverty.
- Teachers are adept at identifying children requiring additional support. They access appropriate support when required. This ensures children requiring additional support are supported effectively to achieve in class. Support assistants are deployed well to support children to make progress in their learning. Children's barriers to learning are captured well by teachers in 'addressing barriers to learning' (ABLE) plans. These plans support teachers well to identify strategies and interventions to best support each child. Senior leaders should continue to explore how teachers can use ABLe plans to better support tracking and monitoring of children's progress. This should include clear reference to targets within ABLe plans for individual children. Senior leaders are working with Dundee Educational Psychology Service to develop how children and parents can contribute meaningfully at review meetings. Children for whom English is an additional language are assessed robustly when they start at the school. This helps teachers implement interventions, which help the children acquire English language quickly. Children then settle well, and make friends quickly in school.
- Victoria Park shares a building and campus with a nursery and other primary school. The three senior leadership teams are creative in how they make best use of their unique setting to support children. For example, they ensure that in the event siblings are unable to attend Victoria Park primary school together due to a lack of space in a particular class, they are still able to attend school and nursery, in the single campus setting.
- Staff celebrate children's diverse cultural backgrounds frequently throughout the school year. In most classes, this occurs during religious education lessons and at festivals. This supports children to develop their understanding of other cultures and faiths. Staff have established an inclusive culture across the school, where every child's individual differences and beliefs are recognised. This supports children to be highly inclusive of their peers. Teachers should build on this strong practice by ensuring the school's curriculum is designed better to develop and promote equality and diversity and eliminate discrimination.
- The local authority submitted self-evaluation information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties, as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school health promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment data provided by the school shows that for session 2021-2022, levels of attainment across the school were very good. Most children at P1, P4 and P7 achieved expected levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics.
- Almost all children, including those with English as an additional language, make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. Most children with English as an additional language achieve expected levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics by the end of P7.

Attainment in Literacy and English

- verall, most children make very good progress in literacy and English. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment. All class libraries have been refreshed as part of the strategy to strengthen reading for enjoyment. Across all areas of literacy, children would benefit from further opportunities to talk about and recognise the skills they are developing in literacy activities.

Talking and listening

- Children who have achieved early level listen to others attentively and follow classroom instructions well. Almost all children enjoy watching and participating in songs with others and can express their likes and dislikes. Children who have achieved first level watch and listen to a range of video clips to gather key information and identify the main ideas of digital texts. Children who are working at second level can deliver talks and identify some of the features of effective presenting skills. They enjoy participating in debates and would benefit from more opportunities to develop their debating skills.

Reading

- Children who have achieved early level can read simple and familiar words in sentences. They listen and join in well with stories and songs to develop their vocabulary. Children who have achieved first level can distinguish between fiction and non-fiction texts. They can answer literal and inferential questions to clarify their understanding of plots and characters in fiction texts. Children who are on track to achieve second level can explain their preference for different authors justifying their choices. They read aloud successfully with reference to punctuation to add expression.

Writing

- Children who have achieved early level sequence information correctly using instructional vocabulary. They use their knowledge of sounds to write in simple sentences. Children who have achieved first level use adjectives and descriptive language to provide details to

characters and settings. Children who are on track to achieve second level by the end of P7 write non-fiction texts, such as fact files and newspaper articles, well. At second level, children would benefit from further opportunities to write extended texts and apply their writing skills in real life situations.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment. All children would benefit from further opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across other areas of the curriculum and within new contexts.

Number money and measurement

- Children who have achieved early level order and sequence numbers within 30. Children who have achieved first level use the correct mathematical vocabulary when discussing the four operations: add, subtract, multiply and divide. They are less confident in solving written addition and subtraction calculations. Children who are on track to achieve second level work confidently with decimal fractions to three decimal places. They calculate durations of time correctly.

Shape position and movement

- Children who have achieved early level can sort and organise two-dimensional shapes to different criteria. Children who have achieved first level use rulers accurately to draw and measure shapes in centimetres. They can identify right angles within shapes and within the environment. Children who are on track to achieve second level can describe and classify and range of angles, making links to compass points.

Information handling

- Children who have achieved early level can create pictorial displays to represent objects. Children who have achieved first level can interpret information from bar graphs to extract key information and make comparisons. Children who are on track to achieve second level, gather information using surveys and create bar graphs and pie charts digitally. They can successfully interpret information and draw accurate conclusions.

Attainment over time

- Data about children's levels of achievement for the last five years shows a pattern of high attainment overall. This data shows that COVID-19 had a negative impact on children's attainment in session 2020-2021. However, during the subsequent recovery year, children's attainment increased to pre pandemic levels. This session, there is a clear focus on raising attainment in literacy for all children. Children receive prompt additional support if required. This is helping them to make very good progress in their planned learning.
- Senior leaders and staff track the attainment of different cohorts including children with additional support needs and children with English as an additional language. Due to the frequent fluctuation in the school roll, senior leaders recognise that it would be useful to analyse attainment data with reference to specific criteria. This will help them to gather a clearer picture about the progress children are making over time.

Overall quality of learner's achievement

- Across the school, children have useful opportunities to participate in a range of recently introduced pupil leadership groups. Children participate and lead a range of after school and lunchtime clubs. For example, older children lead younger children in a dance club. House captains lead the whole school to participate in enjoyable and engaging inter-house challenges. These opportunities help children to develop their teamwork and leadership skills

well. Children recently collected plastic from a local beach to contribute to an exhibition in the V&A Museum. They are recognising how their actions can contribute positively to the wider community.

- Children's achievements in and outside school are recognised and celebrated. They receive star awards at assemblies when they demonstrate the school values. They demonstrate kindness and respect to others and can talk about how their achievements are helping them to be more confident. A next step would be for staff to record and monitor children's achievements to ensure no child is at risk of missing out.

Equity for all learners

- Staff are successfully removing barriers to learning. They work effectively to raise attainment for all learners. They track and record children's progress to identify factors that impact on their attainment such as additional support needs, attendance or the impact of poverty. They use the data to plan interventions and additional support where needed. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional staff who support children with their attendance. This work is improving children's attendance and impacting positively on children's engagement and motivation. PEF is also used to provide children with digital devices supporting them to access learning at home. Additional staff also support children with targeted interventions in literacy. Senior leaders recognise the need to identify and measure more clearly the intended impact of PEF spending on children's achievement and attainment
- Senior leaders adapt enrolment processes for children who are new to Scotland, which is helping children settle in quickly. Staff provide valuable additional support for children with English as additional language which is helping to develop their English vocabulary and access learning independently.
- All children participate in a variety of trips and excursions at no cost. Children help others through fundraising activities food collection points. They recycle books and uniforms, demonstrating their citizenship skills effectively

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.