

Summarised inspection findings

Victoria Park School

South Lanarkshire Council

27 October 2026

Key contextual information

Victoria Park School is a special primary school provision for children with significant additional support needs. Children who attend the school require additional support for a range of care, communication, health, learning and social needs. Victoria Park School shares a campus with High Mill Primary School.

Children attend the school from across South Lanarkshire. The current school roll is 66 children, organised in nine classes. South Lanarkshire Council's Primary Allocation Forum place children at the school.

The headteacher is supported by a deputy headteacher. They have both been in post for just over two years. The school leadership team also includes two principal teachers and two team leaders. Team leaders fulfil a range of duties including assisting the headteacher to co-ordinate the work of support staff.

12% of children attending the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 and 2.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- School leaders recently consulted with staff, parents and children to revise the school's vision and values. The newly refreshed vision and values shape a positive ethos. In most classes, staff work well together to provide children with focused one-to-one and small group support. Almost all staff know children very well and use this knowledge to support purposeful learning. School leaders have established strong systems to support communication across class teams. As a result, staff respond appropriately when children need help to re-engage, regulate or return to learning.
- Almost all children and staff have developed strong, caring, nurturing relationships. Staff support children well to manage distressed behaviours and reduce their impact on children's learning and engagement. Almost all staff intervene promptly to support children to regulate their emotions by using breakout areas, movement breaks and agreed strategies detailed in Behaviour Additional Support Plans. Almost all staff have a very well-developed understanding of children's emotional needs. They provide timeous attentive care and support to children showing signs of distress and this reduces the impact of dysregulated behaviour on peers.

- All staff are committed to making appropriate provision for children. Teachers differentiate learning well in most lessons. Most teachers use a range of creative teaching approaches to support children to take part in learning activities. In a minority of lessons, teachers should increase the pace of learning to enable children to become more engaged in their learning. School leaders and teachers should continue to ensure learning is consistently appropriately challenging and supports progress for all children.
- Staff have developed a total communication strategy to ensure that there is a shared understanding of how to develop children's communication skills. Staff support well children to develop their vocal and gestural communication during learning activities. They recently took part in training to improve their skills in using a sign-based communication system. This is enhancing their total communication approaches. Staff should continue with current plans to consistently embed these practices.
- The majority of teachers use questioning and feedback well to encourage children to take part in learning. They use effective questioning techniques to focus attention, stimulate curiosity and engage children in learning activities. Staff use praise well to support children to remain on task. In a few lessons, learning remains too adult-led. This limits opportunities for children to build independence, to practise skills and to take an active role in learning. Staff should continue to review and reduce unnecessary adult support to enhance children's ability to lead aspects of learning, particularly within daily routines.
- Staff are aware that a minority of children can become over-reliant on digital technology. They have worked well together to make clear when staff should use technology to enhance learning and when to limit its use to reduce over-stimulation. In doing so, staff have developed a productive approach to using digital tools to support learning, communication, focus and engagement. Most teachers use outdoor areas and specialist learning spaces effectively to enrich learning and support regulation. They provide high-quality learning activities in the movement hub, messy playroom and library. Teachers should continue to purposefully use digital, outdoor and community learning to extend children's skills and experiences.
- Staff develop well learning through play, including play boxes, messy play and sensory activities. Staff are beginning to use these approaches to support engagement, regulation and play skills. Staff organise classroom environments in a uniform way to support regulation and consistency. Staff should ensure that resources are more accessible for children to make choices, develop independence and support their self-regulation.
- Staff use well a range of assessment approaches appropriate to children's individual profiles. Teachers and allied health professionals (AHPs) assess very well children's care, health and learning needs and use this information to form individualised plans. Teachers assess children's progress against personal targets, national milestones and national Benchmarks. Almost all children work at foundation or pre-early level milestones, and a few work at early level Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) for aspects of their curriculum. School leaders use assessment information increasingly well to understand better individual children's learning profiles, identify next steps, plan interventions and quality assure staff judgements. As planned, school leaders should work with staff to clarify further what constitutes consistent, high-quality observations of children's progress.

- School leaders and staff collaborate very effectively with AHPs. Staff have developed strong approaches to incorporating joint assessment and planning information in AHP Activity Profiles into children's daily routines. They use very effectively information from speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists to inform these profiles. Staff maximise learning time by weaving identified functional goals and daily tasks into class plans. Staff should continue with these successful and well-developed approaches to meeting holistically children's care, communication, health and learning needs.
- School leaders engage well with national and local professional networks to enhance their knowledge of assessment and planning. School leaders use this collaborative approach to deepen their understanding of good practice. They apply this learning well when considering changes to assessment and planning systems. Moderation approaches within the school remain at an early stage. School leaders should support teachers to improve further moderation processes within the school and with partner schools. This should support teachers to strengthen their understanding of the link between assessment and planning.
- Staff recently adapted curriculum plans to provide greater detail and link targets more clearly to class-based learning. Staff use effectively an interdisciplinary learning planning framework to ensure breadth across the curriculum. Teachers break down class activities to make clear children's individual termly learning targets and expected progress in each area of the curriculum. Staff use well 'Learning and Care' plans to detail individual targets in communication, independence and wellbeing. Staff monitor children's progress effectively and use assessment data and observations to set meaningful targets. Senior leaders should continue to build on the positive steps they have taken to improve planning systems. They should review literacy and numeracy targets to help increase the pace of learning and level of challenge for a few children.
- School leaders support staff well to develop further approaches to tracking and monitoring the progress that children make in their learning. Teachers track well children's progress using a digital platform in which they record progress and related evidence. Staff are increasingly aware of how to consistently document small steps in learning. School leaders use this information well to quality assure teachers' work and to provide support and challenge. They meet termly with teachers during forward plan dialogue meetings. They should continue to embed these approaches to ensure that teachers gain further confidence in their professional judgement of CfE levels.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- Almost all staff have a strong understanding of children's wellbeing needs. As a result of staff being very responsive to wellbeing needs, most children settle well into the school. Staff ensure that children experience a nurturing, safe and caring learning environment which is underpinned by their shared understanding of the school's values. As a result, children develop positive relationships with staff and with their peers. Parents appreciate awareness sessions offered by staff to support wellbeing, for example on promoting positive relationships and understanding behaviour as communication.
- All staff are respectful of children's rights. All children benefit from staff using consistent, trauma-sensitive language and calm approaches. Staff support children well to treat others with respect and to develop relationships and friendships. Staff regularly plan collaboratively to bring children together to learn. This supports children to develop further friendships and promotes positive wellbeing. While there is reference to children's rights in areas of the school, staff should further support children to develop their understanding of their rights and how these apply to their everyday lives.
- Staff use effectively a range of wellbeing approaches, such as wellbeing check-ins and story massage, to support children's sense of belonging. These strategies enable children to regulate increasingly their emotions as they move through the stages of the school. All children have support plans including the 'How to Support Me Best' and 'Learning and Care' plans. Staff use these effectively to tailor support which ensures that children feel safe in school and grow in confidence.
- School leaders established a whole school breakfast club during session 2025-2026, to promote equity for children and families. Staff offer all children breakfast as part of their morning routine, and this supports them to begin the school day feeling ready to learn. Staff should regularly review this provision to help enable children to develop and extend practical independence and communication skills, for example by preparing their own breakfast.
- Staff work with a range of partners, including parents, to strengthen their approaches to meet children's sensory needs. All children benefit from regular access to a sensory room, which supports children well with their sensory processing and regulation. Staff should ensure that all children access appropriate sensory and play resources within their classroom, with due consideration given to safety. A minority of children would benefit from increased access to these resources to support further self-regulation and promote independence.

- Almost all children access regularly the newly adapted movement room which enhances physical and movement activities. Staff use this dedicated space well to provide children with learning activities, such as sensory circuits. During these lessons, staff support well children to develop their communication, coordination, spatial awareness, gross motor skills and social skills, including turn-taking.
- Children engage in a range of activities which support their physical wellbeing, for example rebound therapy and outdoor play. Staff have a strong partnership with local sports coaches that enables children to achieve in sports such as indoor curling and boccia. As a result, children develop physical skills, confidence and teamwork. By strengthening access to a range of inclusive sports, children have increased opportunities to develop their skills and to achieve. Staff should continue to explore opportunities for inclusion for children, for example by joining in with peers for physical education.
- Senior leaders engage appropriately with statutory requirements and codes of practice to meet the needs of almost all children. Senior leaders engage very well with staff, families and partners to support children to succeed in school and prepare for the next stage of their educational journey. Staff have established a robust transition programme. As a result, almost all children moving into the school from early years centres settle very well into the new learning environment. Almost all children experience a smooth transition into secondary school. School leaders plan regular review meetings, which include parents and relevant partners, to review children's plans and progress. Senior leaders should ensure that they capture pupil voice within these processes, in line with children's rights.
- Senior leaders fulfil their statutory requirement to consider whether or not to create a coordinated support plan (CSP) for children. In doing so, they consult fully with parents, local authority officers and partner agencies. Senior leaders should continue to build on this approach to develop further parents' and children's understanding of the purpose of a CSP. Senior leaders should ensure that they consider carefully the need for a CSP when there are long term needs which impact on children's education.
- Staff engage in high-quality, relevant professional learning that supports them to meet the health and care needs of children. Staff create clear plans, such as eating and drinking plans and risk assessments, to ensure that all children have their health, care and safety needs met well. Senior leaders lead change alongside partners, such as AHPs. They collaborated very well to trial a pupil activity profile which forms a clear, detailed plan for children's postural support and movement needs. This was a successful initiative and has now been adopted by other schools across the local authority.
- Staff follow confidently child protection and safeguarding procedures. They respond to, report and record any concerns, including health care concerns. Senior leaders should ensure that national guidance on maintaining chronologies is consistently followed. This will help ensure that staff have a clear understanding of children's experiences and that they can identify emerging patterns and risks.
- Senior leaders and staff model inclusive behaviours. They have established meaningful partnerships with local community groups, including a local church and a nearby school. Staff use well these partnerships to support children to enhance their communication and social skills in less familiar situations and with mainstream peers. Staff should continue to increase their use

of community visits and trips to help children make sense of the wider world and learn about other people. School leaders ensure that excursion costs are not a barrier to children's participation.

- School leaders and staff have developed a range of approaches to support the wellbeing of children and their families, for example by hosting regular family engagement events. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used effectively to establish and sustain a project which enhances family resilience, emotional wellbeing and positive communication. Parents benefit from regular opportunities to meet with each other, staff and partners to receive support and information on meeting the holistic needs of children. This child-centred approach has led to positive outcomes for children and families.

Other relevant evidence

- Children do not currently receive their entitlement to 1 + 2 language teaching. Almost all children use or encounter sign-based communication as part of the school's approach to promoting multi-modal communication. School leaders should continue with plans for children to encounter, experience or learn languages meaningfully through topics related to foreign cultures and religious festivals.
- Children's overall attendance is in line with the national average for special schools. In 2024/25, there was 87.8% attendance. This has increased by 2.7% since 2022/23. In 2024/25, 31.1% of children missed ten percent or more of the school year compared with the national average for special schools of 35.8%. Almost all children with persistent absence have significant health needs. School leaders provide effective additional support to children and families to reduce barriers to attendance following extended health related absences. They conduct home visits and make regular phone calls. Staff engage well with health professionals to encourage and facilitate improved school attendance.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.