

Inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Finlay Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2PN

Inspection dates: 18–19 September 2019

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are happy, kind and enjoy their learning. They make the most of the wide range of experiences the school has to offer and achieve well. Pupils told us about the wider opportunities that the school provides. For example, they spoke enthusiastically about the regional choir performance, their sporting achievements, residential visits and the range of clubs they can join. They feel proud and lucky to be a member of the school.

Pupils at the school benefit from highly supportive staff, who care for them and get to know them well. Pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils behave well. Their learning is hardly ever disrupted during lessons. Bullying is not tolerated.

Pupils rise to the high expectations of staff. They listen carefully in class and do their best. Teachers give pupils the confidence to improve and make progress. Teachers provide well for pupils' individual needs.

Parents and carers appreciate the openness of the school. They value the opportunities that the school provides to share their children's learning with them. Parents enjoy events organised by the school, such as the summer festival and 'lunch with a loved one'. A typical comment from a parent described their choice to send their children to St Vincent's as their 'best decision'.

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

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the curriculum since the last inspection. Overall, the curriculum now builds pupils' knowledge and skills well. The aims of the curriculum fulfil the school's mission to inspire all pupils to learn and fulfil their potential.

Teachers think carefully about the resources that they use to interest pupils and fire their imagination. Pupils enjoy learning. Teachers give pupils precise advice on how to improve. Pupils understand the standards that they are expected to reach. Teaching assistants are skilled at helping pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has the same high expectations for all pupils.

In some subjects, such as history, pupils cannot recall previously learned knowledge as well as they could. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities to revisit previous learning. The curriculum plans include knowledge and concepts which are more demanding over time. Teachers, however, do not consistently encourage pupils to apply their new knowledge in different situations. In physical education, for example, pupils learned the techniques of the chest pass but could not say when that pass would be most useful in a game.

Leaders make sure that children in Reception and Year 1 learn to read as a priority. The vast majority achieve the expected national standard in the end of Year 1 phonics check. Pupils' reading skills improve year on year. Older pupils develop a

love for reading because they are encouraged to read for pleasure. Pupils have access to interesting books that capture their imagination.

English and mathematics are planned and taught well. Leaders have also ensured that pupils find other subjects interesting and relevant. For example, in history pupils learn about how local landmarks, such as the Warrington Town Hall, have been influenced by ancient civilisations. In Spanish, pupils remember key vocabulary, such as numbers and days of the week using fun methods. They learn simple greetings through song and picture prompts.

Children in Reception make good progress. Most reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception year. Children are well prepared for Year 1. Staff make learning both indoors and out interesting and fun. Children learn to cooperate and listen well. They are happy and safe. However, teachers do not fully build on what children already know when they start school. This means that their planned next steps are not always appropriate.

Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to enhance their personal development. Pupils learn to value themselves, each other and differences between people. New arrivals to the school are welcomed. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about other faiths and cultures. They learn about those less fortunate than themselves. The charity fundraising events, such as cake-baking, are very popular.

Leaders, including governors, make sure that all pupils access the broad range of opportunities provided. They are committed to ensuring that disability or disadvantage are no barrier to achievement. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND achieve well and thrive.

Senior leaders are highly respected and valued by staff and parents. Staff say that they are allowed to 'flourish'. Leaders care about the well-being and workload of staff. Governors use their skills and knowledge to oversee the school's work effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe place and that pupils are well cared for. All staff, including governors, are trained well in matters relating to safety.

Leaders ensure that staff understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Leaders are well aware of the local safeguarding issues. They provide a well-thought-out curriculum to help pupils to keep safe, including when online. Leaders monitor the welfare of pupils meticulously. They make effective use of local professionals, such as family liaison officers and mental health workers, to help pupils and families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the curriculum is planned and implemented well, it could be improved even more. This is because some of the planned learning is not sufficiently demanding to allow pupils to apply their new knowledge to improve their skills. Teachers should ensure that the curriculum plans are demanding enough to help all pupils to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills.
- Inspectors noticed that while pupils were good at remembering key facts and new knowledge in English, mathematics and science, this was not always the case in other subjects in some year groups. Pupils therefore found it difficult to understand new learning in class because teachers had not provided them with enough opportunities to revisit previous learning. Therefore, teachers must ensure that they plan to help pupils embed new knowledge in their long-term memory more effectively in all subjects.
- In early years, the curriculum is thoughtfully planned to meet the interests of children. However, teachers do not make the most of what children already know and understand when they start school. For some children, the curriculum that they are taught at the start of Reception is not demanding enough because their knowledge and skills are further ahead. Therefore, teachers should strengthen their assessment of children at the start of Reception so that they can cater for different needs more effectively.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	111376
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10110894
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Win Douglas
Headteacher	Dominic Vernon
Website	www.stvincentsprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	13–14 July 2017

Information about this school

- The headteacher and chair of governors started their positions in September 2017, after the last inspection.
- The school is of Roman Catholic character. It is supported by the archdiocese of Liverpool, which provides school improvement services. The school received a section 48 inspection in November 2018.
- The number of pupils on roll has declined since the last inspection due to the local authority's decision to reduce the number of classes per year from one and a half to one.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. We also met with subject leaders and a number of other school staff. We spoke with governors, a local authority representative and the school's improvement adviser. We also spoke with a headteacher from a local secondary school by telephone.

- We carried out a full scrutiny of reading, history, science and mathematics throughout the school. This entailed visiting lessons, speaking with the pupils and teachers, looking at pupils' work and talking with the subject leader of each subject.
- I spoke with the designated safeguarding leader and evaluated the quality of documentation regarding pupils' safety. I reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and checked the single central register. We spoke with staff, pupils and parents, examined the Ofsted online surveys and checked the bullying logs to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the school.
- A wide range of inspection activities were used to evaluate pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes. These included observing pupils' learning in personal, social and health education, speaking with pupils and observing their behaviour in and out of class.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jean Tarry

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