

# St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136087
<b>Local authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	382025
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth James HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	611
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joanne Donnachie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zofia Kwiatkowska
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Orchard Road Altrincham WA15 8EY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 911 8040
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 929 4881
<b>Email address</b>	stvincentsinf.admin@trafford.gov.uk

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	St Vincent's Nursery
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	45
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Twenty five lessons were observed and the same number of teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including school assessment data, the school development plan, safeguarding documentation and school policies. They also considered an analysis of 361 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well different groups of pupils achieve.
- The quality of teaching across different classes and year groups.
- How effectively the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils.
- How effective leaders and managers are at all levels.

## Information about the school

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School is much larger than the average sized primary school. It was formed from the amalgamation of St Vincent's Catholic Infant School and St Vincent's Catholic Junior School in September 2010. The headteacher was formerly the headteacher of the infant school.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

The school has a nursery run by the governing body, which was included in this school inspection. The registered provision for childcare before and after school, 'Fun After 4', is run by a separate provider, and is inspected separately.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This outstanding school is successfully providing education and care of the highest quality for all its pupils. All outcomes are outstanding. The school ethos is extremely warm and welcoming, setting high expectations. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One comment succinctly summarises the many positive views expressed: 'This is a fantastic school where children are happy, progress well, and where respect for others underpins everything that is done!' Standards are consistently high and achievement is outstanding. The excellent progress made by pupils is the result of the outstanding teaching they receive. Pupils are highly motivated to learn. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and constantly monitor and assess their progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported exceptionally well. Well-trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning. The school believes each pupil is unique and can succeed, and does everything possible to ensure that they do. As one parent/carer commented, 'This is a wonderful school that celebrates each child as an individual.'

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally polite, friendly and courteous, showing great respect for adults and each other. They show high levels of social responsibility. Attendance is high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Pastoral care is excellent. As one parent/carer remarked, 'The school has a lovely balance between the academic and the pastoral. There is a strong sense of inclusiveness which encourages good levels of family involvement.' The curriculum is enhanced by visits, special events and themed weeks. Visitors help to extend pupils' knowledge of the wider world. A range of extra-curricular activities is offered, including sports, which help pupils to lead healthy lifestyles.

The outstanding and determined leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools has been managed extremely successfully. Together with the highly capable senior leadership team and staff, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to form an integrated community. There is no complacency and leaders and managers continuously identify ways to improve and ensure that the high quality provision is maintained. For example, the curriculum is currently under review. Members of the governing body are exceptionally knowledgeable, loyal and experienced. They take an active and critical part in leading the school. They care deeply about pupils' academic and personal achievements. The

school knows its strengths and knows exactly what it needs to do to maintain high standards. Capacity to improve and value for money are outstanding.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- No significant weaknesses were found. The school should continue with existing plans to review and refine provision, for example, through the ongoing curriculum review.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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Attainment by the end of Year 6 is high. An impressive proportion of pupils reach the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics. Progress, from children’s broadly as expected to above typically expected starting points, is outstanding overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language also make excellent progress in relation to their specific needs and starting points and achieve exceptionally well. This is because work is carefully matched to their level of ability and help from teaching assistants supports their learning very effectively.

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are outstanding. In lessons, pupils concentrate exceptionally well, listen carefully to the teacher and to one another and are confident and motivated learners. They take great pride in their work and are determined to succeed. They particularly enjoy being challenged to think carefully as Year 6 pupils showed in an outstanding mathematics lesson when they investigated square numbers. In small groups pupils were challenged, for example, to find palindromic square numbers and they set about tackling this systematically, rapidly doing the necessary calculations accurately on their whiteboards.

Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development offers pupils varied opportunities to reflect on emotions and experiences. Pupils are considerate, show a keen sense of right and wrong and clearly understand that their actions have consequences. Their outstanding behaviour contributes very well to the school ethos. They say that they feel very safe and that bullying is extremely rare. They understand how to stay safe, fit and healthy. Older pupils, in particular, take very good care of younger ones. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and willingly carry these out. They make an excellent contribution to the school community. High standards and extremely well-developed personal skills, along with high attendance, ensure pupils are very well prepared for their secondary education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is outstanding overall, and lessons are only very rarely less than good. Teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging and have good subject knowledge. Lessons are carefully planned to provide a good range of tasks and activities which meet the needs of pupils with differing abilities and build effectively on their earlier learning. There is a very good balance between valuable group activities that provide opportunities for collaborative work, whole class question-and-answer sessions with very good pupil involvement, and independent work well matched to different levels of ability. This ensures that no time is wasted. Teachers' skilful questioning, clear instructions, astute timing of activities and swift pace keep pupils alert, motivated and eager to participate. Every member of staff demonstrates very high expectations for pupils. Pupils know this and rise to the challenge. Pupils' understanding is routinely checked during lessons. When pupils are working independently or in groups teachers are careful to target their help and support where it is most needed.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It provides high-quality opportunities for pupils to develop basic skills and it is very effectively adapted for pupils with additional needs. Opportunities to develop writing skills through other areas of the curriculum, such as humanities and religious education, are a notable feature. Pupils spoke highly of the very wide range of enrichment activities, including the interesting visits they have experienced.

Levels of support and care provided for pupils are exemplary. Staff know pupils and their families very well and each pupil really matters as an individual. Specific, high-quality support and pastoral care very effectively target pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who need additional challenge so they all develop and progress equally well.

### *These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

As one parent/carer commented, 'This is an inspirational school which thrives under a phenomenal headmistress.' The headteacher has successfully led the amalgamation of the previous schools, carefully utilising the strengths of the staff. She plays a pivotal role in inspiring staff and encouraging pupils to achieve their best. She is an excellent role model for staff and pupils, setting high standards and skillfully steering the school to achieve her vision. There is a strong sense of common purpose and excellent teamwork among all staff. Leaders and managers monitor teaching and learning rigorously. The two deputy headteachers provide highly effective support to the headteacher, together with the newly formed group of curriculum leaders.

Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, make sure that any discrimination is effectively challenged, ensuring there are equal opportunities for all. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet requirements. Parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress and several gave specific examples of school staff providing exceptional support to their children and families. Partnerships are used very effectively, especially in terms of support for pupils with additional needs. The school promotes community cohesion well, most especially in terms of the school and local communities. National and global links are less well developed. The governing body brings a wide range of valuable expertise to its work. Members have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school and are highly committed.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery and Reception classes provide very safe, stimulating, and welcoming environments. Children are eager to learn and they make excellent progress from their starting points. Their behaviour is outstanding and contributes well to their achievement. In the Reception class children are involved highly effectively in their learning, choosing their activities and working independently. They show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. Excellent relationships exist between adults and children. All children develop a very good understanding of

how to keep safe and stay healthy. Activities are varied and creative, meeting the needs of all children well. Activities are very well planned and are adjusted in line with continuous assessment. Staff are skilled and sensitive in their approach. In the nursery the key worker system works very well, building close relationships with children and families. There is a very good emphasis on developing personal and social skills. Very detailed policies and procedures ensure that all welfare requirements are securely in place. Learning journals provide very valuable records of children's learning and achievements. The highly effective leadership and management of both the Nursery and Reception classes have brought about substantial improvements.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

The very high return rate and the fact that parents and carers responses to the questionnaire were hugely positive show the high esteem in which the school is held. Most of the comments were extremely supportive of the school, especially about the quality of care and teaching. One comment that exemplifies this is: 'We are absolutely delighted with St Vincent's and feel that Mrs Kwiatkowska and her staff are totally committed to providing a safe, happy and challenging environment for the children. Parent communication is excellent'. An extremely small number of parents/carers raised different individual concerns.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Vincent's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 361 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 611 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	264	73	93	26	1	0	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	273	76	83	23	1	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	195	54	146	40	10	3	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	213	59	127	35	9	2	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	250	69	99	27	6	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	222	61	120	33	7	2	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	243	67	111	31	2	1	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	208	58	123	34	8	2	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	222	61	119	33	10	3	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	208	58	131	36	9	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	191	53	145	40	7	2	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	269	75	80	22	5	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	274	76	73	20	6	2	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



17 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Altrincham, WA15 8EY**

Thank you very much indeed for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. We were extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour. We were very pleased to receive so many questionnaires from your parents and carers. One commented: 'St Vincent's Primary is a happy, caring school with extremely dedicated staff,' and we agree.

We found your school to be an outstanding school. The headteacher, staff and governing body work extremely hard to make sure each one of you is cared for exceptionally well, and you all achieve as well as you possibly can. You make outstanding progress in your learning because the quality of teaching is outstanding and there are many interesting activities for you to do. As a result, the standards you reach by the time you leave Year 6 are high. You make excellent progress, whatever your different abilities and needs. You all work very hard in your lessons, enjoy your learning and cooperate very well with each other. You told us that you feel very safe. We were very pleased to hear about the way older pupils help younger ones, and the work of the Eco committee and school council.

Your headteacher has told us that even though your school is excellent she is always looking for ways to improve it even more. We have asked her to continue her to do this with all the staff. We are confident that you will continue to do your very best. You should be very proud of yourselves and your school.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth James  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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