

# St Vincent's RC Primary School

Monkchester Road, Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE6 2TX

**Inspection dates** 18–19 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although recent improvements introduced by the leadership team have increased the rate of pupils' progress, this is not consistently good across all year groups or over time.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body do not check carefully enough how well their plans and actions are improving teaching and learning, and achievement.
- Pupils' individual targets are not as ambitious as they should be.
- More-able pupils do not always attain the standards of which they are capable because the level of work is not consistently or sufficiently challenging.
- The scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that the quality of teaching over time was variable in the opportunities given for pupils to respond to marking and the way in which work was not always well matched to pupils' abilities.
- In a few lessons teachers spent too long on lengthy explanations which cut down the time for the pupils to work on their own.

### The school has the following strengths

- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress as a result of the effective way the teachers helps them to understand what they have to do better.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour is good; they say they feel very safe.
- Teaching is improving because of the stronger focus now given to its impact on pupil progress.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution in helping pupils to improve.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership have demonstrated that they are capable of improving the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors visited 12 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven different teachers. One was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and records which show the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- The views of three parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account, as well the school's own parental questionnaire, which surveyed 42 parents.
- The views of 17 staff who completed questionnaires about their views of the school were also considered.

## Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Vincent's Primary School is smaller than the average sized school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, but the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is around average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Government floor standards, which relate to pupils' attainment and progress, have been met in 2012.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
  - providing pupils, especially the more able, with suitable tasks that are matched to their level of ability
  - setting more ambitious targets for pupils and making sure that they know how to reach them
  - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' marking so that they learn from their mistakes
  - ensuring teachers spend less time talking to the whole class to allow pupils more time to work by themselves.
- Increase the impact that leaders at all levels have on pupils' attainment and progress by:
  - checking that teachers are setting tasks that are matched to pupils' different levels of ability
  - ensuring that school plans, with actions for improving the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and achievement, include ways to measure how well the actions are bringing about improvements
  - introducing a programme for the governing body to make checks on the work of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- By the time pupils leave the school their attainment is below the national average, but it has improved. Progress across the school is variable and historically not enough pupils by Year 6 have made any better than expected progress from their starting point in Year 2. This means that achievement is not yet good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils in class, but the targets that pupils are expected to achieve need to be more ambitious if more are to make good progress.
- Most children begin school with skills that are well below that typically expected for their age. In Reception teachers and support staff make learning fun for children so that they quickly develop skills to help them to learn the sounds that letters make, write letters and learn words, and so they make good progress.
- Pupils by Year 6 are confident readers. They were able to talk about their favourite books and describe why they liked them. Many pupils read at home and the school encourages them to read to other adults.
- The school's own information from assessments shows an increasing number of pupils are now making better progress than previously. This is because of improvements to teaching and the systems to check on how well pupils are doing. Boys' attainment, which in Year 6 was low, is now much improved and is better than the girls.
- The resources made available from the pupil premium funding have been invested well by the school and are enabling pupils to make better progress than previously. This means that the achievement gap between this group of pupils and other pupils is reducing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as other pupils because of the schemes that have been put in place by skilled teachers and teaching assistants who help them to improve.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. In Year 6 and in Reception, teaching is consistently of a high quality. In all other year groups, while there are examples of good teaching, there are too many lessons in which the match of work to pupils' abilities lacks enough precision and challenge. In a number of classes the same tasks were given to pupils of average ability and to those who are more able.
- There are some weaknesses related to marking. The recently introduced policy, which requires children to respond to teachers' comments in their books using red pens, is not implemented well enough by all teachers.
- In the best lessons enthusiastic teachers use a wide range of resources to capture pupils' interest. In some, however, teachers spend too long talking to the whole class when introducing the lesson and pupils lose valuable time when they could be working by themselves. This limits the progress pupils can make and hinders their ability to practise and improve their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the learning journals, which are shared with parents, show clearly how well the children are doing.
- Teaching is improving because the school has recognised the importance of good training. The practice of making checks on pupils' understanding throughout a lesson is particularly effective in Key Stage 2. Teachers encourage pupils to work together and this allows them to learn from each other. In a Year 5 religious education lesson pupils worked in pairs in a role-playing exercise, followed by small group discussions to describe a situation and share ideas successfully.
- In the best lessons the teachers used techniques to reinforce the expected learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson the teacher made pupils stand and mimic walking

around something to get them to understand what the term 'perimeter' meant.

- Teaching assistants are contributing to the improved progress of pupils and they skilfully improve reading in particular. They are well trained and make sure that pupils learn well. They explain things and what they need to do rather than doing things for the pupils to make sure that they understand.
- Homework is regular in numeracy and literacy and pupils are encouraged to read at home. By the time pupils are in Year 6, most pupils are confident readers and the school tries hard to develop the pupils' love of books.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well and this view is supported by the vast majority of pupils and parents as well as the staff. Pupils do say that there are sometimes disagreements on the playground, but that these are sorted out quickly.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. Each class has 'ambassadors' who welcome visitors and explain what the class is doing.
- Pupils say there is little bullying of any sort and school records show that the numbers of incidents of poor behaviour has declined dramatically in the past three years. There have been no exclusions for at least three years.
- Pupils are attentive in class and enjoy school. They are keen to take part in lessons, particularly when they are given the opportunity to work on their own or with a partner. Occasionally, pupils say there are minor examples of misbehaviour but that it does not slow or interrupt the learning of the majority.
- Both teachers and support staff handle pupils well and sensitively deal with any who have behaviour problems and encourage them to behave well.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they say that there is a big fence and good security with lots of adults around who they trust. Older pupils are aware of the possible dangers posed by using computers and with mobile phone messages. In Reception children understand that they must wash their hands before lunch, 'to get rid of the germs'.
- Attendance is broadly average and very few pupils are absent for prolonged periods of time.
- The school has introduced a popular and different reward system, which allows pupils to be rewarded with points that they can spend in the school shop on toys and small games. The pupils, however, are encouraged to give some of their earned points to their peers to say sorry if they have upset them. This encourages pupils to think more carefully about their own behaviour.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Some areas of teaching which require improvement, such as in the way in which work is matched to the individual needs, are not checked closely enough by senior leaders. The school's plan to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching lacks detail on how school leaders will measure, each term, how well actions taken are improving them.
- The headteacher's enthusiasm, drive and determination have been successful in improving some areas of teaching. Lessons are now more focused on pupil progress. The school has a good team of senior leaders who have introduced termly meetings to discuss how well pupils are doing and sessions that allow teachers to coach others and pass on good ideas. Pupils in danger of falling behind are identified quickly by school data and extra help is put in place. One pupil said he was helped to improve his reading and demonstrated that now it was much better.
- Strong partnership with the National College for School Leadership, which helps to develop teaching and learning, supports the school's efforts to improve further.
- The local authority has provided useful guidance for the school and has helped with systems for checking the quality of teaching.
- The school helps all pupils to have an equal opportunity to succeed and tackles discrimination

successfully. The pupil premium funding, for example, is used very well to promote the achievement of the pupils it is designed to help.

- The curriculum is well mapped out and is based on series of topics. These are linked to popular visits to places such as Holy Island.
- Promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is seen as being extremely important. In the corridors there are encouraging statements on posters to make pupils think, such as, 'I know that it is ok to make mistakes'. The school's Christian status was celebrated in an enthusiastic hymn service led by the headteacher, who is a good role model for the pupils.
- The schools' arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good understanding of the overall strengths of the school as well as areas which need further development. They have been strengthened with new recruits. The local authority has provided good training for them and to enable them to better understand data and information on how well pupils are doing. They are aware of the quality of teaching and performance management procedures and recognise the importance of linking teachers' pay with improving pupils' progress. They manage the school budget well and they have a sound knowledge of the achievement of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding. They are supportive of the school but their role in making checks on how well the school is doing is not yet well developed.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108514
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle Upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	405177

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

<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>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alice Dack
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sister M. Josepha
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2655049
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