

# St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Finlay Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 2PN

**Inspection dates** 20–21 June 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Children start school with skills typical for their age. They make good progress in their learning.
- As a result of good teaching, standards in mathematics and English are above the national average by the end of Year 6. This has been maintained over time.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by staff in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well in lessons and around the school; they are polite and courteous to each other and to all adults.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers a wide range of local, national and global experiences for pupils in order to stimulate their learning. This has improved since the last inspection.
- All leaders, including governors, are committed to continually improving teaching and learning and they share a strong desire to help every pupil achieve as well as they can.
- The governing body supports and challenges the school to continually improve, by rigorously analysing the performance of all staff and pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' rate of progress is not as fast in some classes as it is in others.
- A small amount of teaching does not meet the learning needs of all pupils, especially the most able.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and saw 20 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed teaching assistants working with pupils.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, teaching and classroom support staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects. Discussions were held with pupils in lessons about their work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records, including home school diaries.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including national assessment data, the school's own data, records of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress, the school's view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and external reports from the local authority were reviewed.
- Responses from 43 parents to the on-line questionnaire were taken into account (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Jones

Additional Inspector

Allyson Ingall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is smaller than average.
- A very small number of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium when compared to the national average. The pupil premium is funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a low proportion from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low compared to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher and an assistant headteacher support other local schools.
- There are a number of new governors, including a recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body.

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

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement, especially that of the most able, even further by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to work independently and to access appropriate tasks quickly in lessons
  - ensuring that work is always well matched to pupils' needs so that they build on their existing skills rapidly
  - making better use of the most effective teachers to model good and outstanding practice for other staff in the school in order to improve their practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Almost all children enter the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly in line with the expectations for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, most children achieve the expected levels, with some exceeding those expectations.
- Good progress and a brisk pace of learning continue in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, so that pupils' achievement is above the national average. This has been consistent over the last five years. From the school's assessment records and from the observation of pupils' work in lessons and in their books, this looks set to continue.
- Pupils' attainment is above national expectations in Key Stage 2. Since the untypical dip in attainment in 2012, the school has quickly put actions into place for additional support for pupils and made sure that progress has been swift and that their attainment has improved. Pupils' work and the school's assessment data show that almost all pupils are now on course to reach the expected level and although some will reach the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics, the most able pupils do not always make the best possible progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress from their starting points. The school provides many opportunities and additional support that is well focused and matched to their varied and sometimes complex needs. Their progress is regularly checked to make sure that the support can be adapted and changed accordingly. Teachers and additional support staff have high expectations for these pupils.
- The very few pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress. There is little difference in the attainment of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and that of all other pupils. The very small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers and attain in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they read widely and often. The teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 has improved and pupils achieved well in the recent Year 1 phonics check.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good and some outstanding teaching secure pupils' good achievement. The majority of teachers meet the individual learning needs of all pupils well. In lessons where teaching is at least good, teachers skilfully and rapidly increase the rate of learning when they recognise that pupils have understood the work set. However, not all teaching follows this highly effective practice. In a few lessons the pace of learning slows because tasks are over directed, and pupils are not allowed to flourish as independent learners.
- In the more effective lessons, teachers plan carefully to improve pupils' understanding, rapidly matching the learning task precisely to pupils' ability, including the most able. However, this is not evident in all classes, where the most able pupils are not always challenged to make the best possible progress.
- Teachers use questioning well in order to gain a clear understanding of how effectively pupils learn. This was evident in an excellent lesson when the teacher probed younger pupils' understanding of using two adjectives together in a sentence to describe how animals move. Pupils moved forward rapidly in their skills and understanding.
- Teaching assistants work successfully with teachers to support and improve the learning of all pupils well, most particularly those who have special educational needs. These pupils' attainment improves because teaching assistants support and encourage them well.
- Adults provide pupils with many opportunities to learn through exciting activities that are matched to their interests. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children worked well together and with great enjoyment and developed their language skills when acting out a story. In Year

6, pupils shared their thoughts and feelings about the story of Romeo and Juliet and gave insightful suggestions and opinions.

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

- Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons and around the school are good. Pupils are courteous and friendly. They show respect for each other and for adults reflecting the strong Catholic ethos of the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe. When moving around the school, they behave well. At break times and lunch times, pupils play happily and safely with their friends. Pupils are able to explain what bullying is. They recognise concerns regarding internet safety and the issues connected with social networking. They are confident that there are numerous adults to talk to if they have any worries.
- Attendance is above the national average and has remained so consistently over time. Persistent absence is low and the school follows up any absence rigorously. Good attendance is promoted well and there is clear guidance for pupils and parents about the importance of attendance and the impact on pupils' achievement.
- Most parents who expressed a view indicated that behaviour is good. They believe that their children are kept safe and several speak with pleasure about how their children's additional needs are well supported.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are tolerant and supportive of each other. They understand other faiths and cultures and use their personal qualities to explore the experiences and feelings of others within the local and wider communities.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders share a determination that the school will continue to improve. Following the recent dip in standards in Key Stage 2, the school has worked closely with external agencies, including the local authority, with the specific aim of raising pupils' achievement. This has been central to guiding the considerable improvement in the last year. This support has been effective and changes have resulted in raising pupils' attainment and demonstrating a secure capacity to improve still further.
- The headteacher is well supported by the effective senior leadership team. There has been robust performance management of teachers, which has focused on improving the quality of teaching, including providing staff with clear targets, training and development opportunities to improve.
- Rigorous analysis of the school's performance has led senior leaders to accurately recognise the appropriate priorities for further improvement. There is an appropriate school development plan with clear priorities that are shared by all leaders and staff.
- The checks made on teaching and learning are thorough and have led to improvements in quality. The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection.
- School leaders know who the best teachers are in school and recognise how important it is for them to share their knowledge and expertise with others. There have been opportunities for teachers to work together to review and discuss their teaching. However, this has not yet been effective enough in using the best teaching to model good and outstanding practice for other staff.
- Teachers understand the Teachers' Standards and are clear about their accountability for the improved attainment and progress of pupils. Increases in salary are related to classroom performance.
- The local authority supports the view that leadership is good. The headteacher and an assistant headteacher have supported other local schools to improve school leadership, including acting as

headteacher for a time.

- The leadership of the school is striving for further improvement and together with all staff there is a good team approach that focuses on ensuring the best for every pupil. The recently revised rich and diverse curriculum is used well by many teachers to enhance pupils' learning through creative and stimulating learning experiences.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The newly constituted governing body has quickly become a good team. They have taken on roles and responsibilities that match their individual skills. Pupils' achievement is a key focus and governors meet regularly to review the progress towards the targets set in the school development plan or for staff and pupils.
- Governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know how well the school is doing when compared with other schools nationally. The headteacher provides clear guidance and documentation that governors can access and this helps them to ask questions and hold the school to account. The key priorities for improvement are understood and governors are clear about the areas for development.
- The governing body uses the limited amount of pupil premium funding wisely and makes sure that it is targeted appropriately.
- Governors are continuing to develop their effectiveness in checking on and evaluating the effectiveness of any initiatives implemented. All essential policies are in place and the governing body ensures that safeguarding meets the statutory requirements.

## 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>	111376
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	412968

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>	280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michelle Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Greg Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 726544
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