

# St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

Elton Head Road, Sutton Heath, St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 5BT

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 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 make good progress from their varying starting points and they achieve well.
- Teaching quality is consistently good, and at times outstanding.
- Pupils are safe in school. They enjoy their lessons and behave well. Their attendance is improving rapidly. Parents agree that their children are safe and cared for well.
- School leaders have brought good improvement since the previous inspection.
- The governing body challenges and supports the school well.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good and, consequently, teaching overall has improved significantly.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils could reach higher standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching for it to be outstanding overall because pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own progress. Expectations regarding tidiness of work are sometimes too low and pupils are not given the opportunities they need to use computers routinely in the classroom to help their learning. The best practice is not consistently used throughout the school to demonstrate outstanding teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons and parts of lessons.
- There were discussions with staff members, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority who had previously worked with the school.
- Inspectors also took account of 32 responses from parents via the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; the school's view of its work, including the quality of teaching; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding information.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by school action.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Pre-school provision, managed by the governing body, is available for children prior to entering the Reception class. This is funded separately from the school and was not part of this inspection.
- The school meets government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- In order to raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
  - making sure that the best practice in teaching is used consistently as a model for all lessons throughout the school
  - enabling pupils to use technology more frequently in lessons to help them learn by themselves
  - giving pupils more opportunities to check their own work and set their own targets so that they are clear about how to improve
  - raising expectations with regard to the way pupils present their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils enter the Reception class, their skills are typically below those expected for their age. This situation is beginning to change, however, because of the school's work alongside the pre-school. This is helping to get children off to a better start, but is not yet showing clear impact on those children currently in the Reception class. Children make steady progress. When they enter Year 1, they broadly meet expectations in some areas and fully meet them in personal, social and emotional development. Their communication and mathematics skills though, are still a little below expectations.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2 in 2013, all reached at least the expected level for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, showing good improvement from the previous year from their starting points.
- The rising trend is also evident in Years 3 to 6. Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average, and improving, especially in writing. Pupils achieve well across the range of subjects. Nevertheless, school leaders, including governors recognise that standards could be pushed higher.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics shows an untypical dip in 2013. Nevertheless, the school worked hard with the unusually high proportion of pupils in the year group with special educational needs and those who joined the class outside the normal time. Pupils continued to achieve well in writing and to make expected progress overall in English and mathematics from their different starting points. The proportion who did better than expected, based on the school's unvalidated results, is also close to the national picture for the previous year.
- Pupils' current work throughout the school shows a good picture of progress in writing and mathematics. The school's assessments indicate that standards are on track to continue the trend of improvement at the end of Year 6.
- Progress in reading is picking up in Key Stage 1 owing to the impact of the effective phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) programme introduced by the school. Year 2 pupils use their phonics skills well to make sense of unfamiliar words and generally read confidently. They are interested in books and enjoy reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils select their reading from a suitably wide range. They are clear about the kinds of books they enjoy and can access the information they need for their learning.
- The most able pupils are suitably challenged and all make at least the progress expected of them. In the most recent national tests, a small number of pupils achieved the higher Level 6 in either writing or mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous year's results.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are provided for well. Assessment data show that those supported at school action and school action plus performed better than the national average for those groups and made good progress from their relatively lower starting points.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium also achieve well. Their progress, along with all others in the school whose circumstances are considered to make them vulnerable, is checked with particular care to ensure their equality of opportunity. School assessments, as well as pupils' work, show that those known to be eligible for free school meals are challenged well. All pupils achieved expected standards in 2013 and about half of the group did better than expected in either English or mathematics. Any gaps in the attainment of these pupils and others in the school are closing year on year.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved over time and leaders have overall dealt effectively with the issue from the previous inspection about challenging all groups of pupils sufficiently. Lessons are always interesting and because of the very good relationships, teachers get the best from all of pupils.

- Teachers' planning is good. They use their good subject knowledge effectively, know pupils well and work very well with teaching assistants to ensure that all pupils, whatever their abilities are, suitably supported in lessons.
- Such teamwork helped to produce an exciting science lesson in which Year 5 pupils achieved exceptionally well. A teaching assistant took over part of the lesson and very skilfully helped pupils to observe the effect of mixing an acid (vinegar) with an alkali (chalk). This motivated pupils into exploring other some effects of carbon dioxide resulting in some excellent learning, including some new scientific language, and development of scientific enquiry skills.
- Leaders recognise the value of using the skills from the best teaching as a model for others in order to lift the quality from good to outstanding.
- Teachers use electronic whiteboards skilfully to capture pupils' interest and keep up the pace of the lesson. Leaders fully agree that opportunities for pupils to use 'hands on' technology to help them learn independently are too limited.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well and some outstanding teaching of phonics was seen in Key Stage 1. Again, the way that teachers prepare work for different abilities is a strong feature of lessons and contributes to pupils making good progress. Mathematics lessons begin with a lively warm-up and there is always plenty of time for active investigation and problem solving. Some of the impact of good teaching in literacy can be seen in the good quality of writing across different subjects on display.
- Teachers use assessment information well to track pupils' progress and set new targets. They question pupils well and check their learning effectively during lessons. Not all teachers consistently involve pupils sufficiently in checking their own progress and setting their own next steps for improvement to help them learn for themselves. Sometimes the guidance pupils have from teachers' marking is not helpful enough.
- Teachers maintain high expectations of what pupils can manage in a lesson and there is a good range and volume of work to be seen. Some work is poorly presented, however, and has a limiting effect, if not checked, on pupils' sense of achievement and personal pride in their work.

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

- Pupils say that the school is a happy place. Those new to the school are warmly welcomed and some recently arrived pupils are proud to have been elected to the school council.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. They enjoy the range of their learning and the opportunities to achieve well in music and art, as well as sampling the many after-school sports on offer in addition to their usual physical education lessons. Sports clubs are well attended and pupils fully understand the important contribution that physical education makes to their personal well-being.
- Politeness and good manners are one of the school's trademarks. Pupils' good behaviour in lessons ensures generally positive attitudes to learning and they conduct themselves well around the school. This reflects the strong Christian values embedded in the school's aims.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils recognise right from wrong and respect the feelings and backgrounds of others. Cultural development was given a valuable boost in Year 6, for example, when pupils listened to stories told by a senior citizen and historian about the 'St Helens Pals' regiment who fought in the 1914-18 war.
- Trusting relationships with each other and the adults who look after them give pupils their sense of being safe in school. This is a view fully shared by their parents. Pupils firmly state that there is no bullying or offensive name-calling and say that if there were, 'the teachers would stop it'. Pupils are very aware of the dangers linked to internet use and other potential risks that they may encounter outside of school.
- Attendance is checked very robustly by the school and there are good systems in place to encourage pupils to attend. The school works diligently with parents on this issue. As a result, attendance shows signs of good improvement for the current year to significantly above average, whereas it has been below average in the past.

- Through the school council, pupils are given a voice in school matters, including the appointment of new staff members. They willingly take on extra duties, such as caring for younger pupils during break-times. By the time they leave Year 6 pupils are well prepared socially and emotionally to face the challenges of their next schools.

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

- Leaders have maintained and strengthened the qualities seen in the previous inspection. Staff teamwork is a strength and through that there is a strongly shared commitment to providing the best for all pupils.
- The school has worked effectively with the local authority in the past, for example, to boost the teaching of literacy and to improve teaching quality generally. The local authority now offers the school lighter-touch support, recognising leaders' ability to manage school improvement effectively.
- Good management of teaching and learning has been central to the school's progress. The headteacher set clear standards and expectations in the past for all teachers resulting in the less effective teaching being eliminated and the overall quality improved. Senior leaders give good support in checking the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching and learning and have gained an accurate view of its work.
- Good systems to check the performance of staff have played their part in improving both pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Well-planned professional development, which has brought new ideas and better skills, has been an essential factor. Expectations, especially with regard to pupils' progress, have been raised and teachers are aware how increased salaries are linked to successful performance whatever their role in school.
- Middle managers, with responsibility for different subjects, have more accountability than they had previously. They work well together to develop their subjects and improve on what they can provide for the pupils. This work has enlivened and enhanced the curriculum providing some exciting ways for pupils to learn and teachers to teach. There are also now systems in place for teachers to track pupils' progress in subjects other than literacy and numeracy in order to raise overall standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body challenges the school by setting ambitious targets for the headteacher's performance and follows them up vigorously. The school's academic performance is checked against that of schools nationally and the school's development plan is reviewed at each governing body meeting to see that priorities are being addressed. Governors fully understand their responsibilities regarding checking on the use of the pupil premium funding and its impact on those pupils eligible. They check individual pupils' progress rigorously to make sure that their spending on additional teaching support is giving value for money by closing those pupils' attainment gaps. The recently allocated Primary School Sport funding is used to develop pupils' skills and enthusiasm for physical activity and to enhance teachers' skills so the subject can be better taught. There are also plans to review the impact of this funding to check that is used efficiently. The governing body has a clear overview of the quality of teaching in the school and how it is managed and linked to salary structure. Finances are managed well and other statutory duties are fulfilled efficiently. Safeguarding arrangements meet all 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>	104812
<b>Local authority</b>	St. Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	426218

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>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Denis Kerr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678570
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