

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Finlay Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2PN

Inspection dates

13–14 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced changes in staff and leadership which have led to inconsistency in teaching.
- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across subjects and year groups.
- At times, assessment systems are not used effectively enough to enable teaching to build on pupils' skills.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills on extended pieces of writing across the curriculum.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Middle leaders' skills are not fully developed to improve teaching effectively.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistently tracked and analysed. As a result, leaders are not able to evaluate the progress that these pupils make from their starting points.
- The early years requires improvement. Leaders do not use effective systems for assessing children's progress. Children are not provided with enough activities to challenge them and develop their sense of number.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has acted quickly to identify aspects of the school that need improvement. Leaders demonstrate the capacity to secure further improvement.
- Pupils are well cared for. They say that they feel safe. Safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and show respect for others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least good progress by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - using assessment information to plan activities which provide pupils, including the most able, with sufficient challenge
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise and develop their skills by writing at greater length in subjects across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing middle leaders' skills to enable them to lead improvements to teaching and improve pupils' outcomes
 - developing effective systems to track and analyse the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities from their individual starting points accurately.
- Improve teaching in the early years by:
 - developing effective assessment systems so that teachers can make accurate checks of children's progress
 - making sure that activities challenge children
 - providing more activities to allow children to develop an understanding of numbers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has experienced a significant number of staffing and leadership changes since the last inspection. This has had a detrimental impact on teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Despite this turbulence, current outcomes for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicate that pupils are attaining more highly in reading and mathematics than in 2016.
- The governing body, local authority and archdiocese have brought stability to the leadership of the school by securing the services of an interim headteacher. She has led the school effectively since April 2017. Her work during this time has led to rapid and effective change. Leaders, governors and staff are now steering the school on a sustained course of improvement.
- The interim headteacher has commissioned external reviews of teaching and learning which provide a helpful picture of how well the school is performing. She has a very accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and a clear plan to improve the school further. The interim headteacher has raised aspirations. Staff work well as a team and morale is high. The very large majority of staff who responded to the online survey said that they are proud to work in the school.
- Middle leaders have benefited from recent training from leaders at a local outstanding school. They are developing their skills to lead their areas of responsibility. However, there has not been enough time for these leaders to demonstrate their new skills. Consequently, new strategies are not demonstrating a sustained impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The system for tracking the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not yet fully developed. As a result, leaders cannot analyse and monitor the progress of these pupils from their starting points. The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not used as effectively as it should be. It has a positive impact for some pupils, but not for all.
- Improvements to teaching are being secured through clear procedures for the management of teachers' performance. Teachers have specific targets for ensuring the progress of their classes. Leaders work effectively with other schools within a local teaching alliance to support the staff's professional development. Teachers have found the recent training on writing and moderation of pupils' work to be useful in improving standards.
- Leaders use the sports funding effectively to provide pupils with opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities including football, rugby and rounders.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities such as drama and music. Pupils are also involved in charity work and have the opportunity to participate in trips and residential visits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school and is underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos. Leaders ensure that a culture of tolerance and respect exists throughout the school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about different cultures and religions. British values are celebrated in classroom displays and taught through the personal, social, health and economic education programme. Pupils

are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra teaching sessions to help disadvantaged pupils to catch up.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the school. One parent commented: 'There is a strong spirit in the school, which can come through anything. If there is a problem, teachers deal with it quickly.'
- The local authority has provided good support for the school through a time of instability in staffing and leadership.

Governance of the school

- The governors are passionate and focused on achieving the best for pupils. As one governor commented: 'We want the children to thrive.' A recent review of their work, and support from the local authority, are enabling them to develop their skills further.
- Governors ask leaders searching questions. They have become more robust in holding leaders to account for actions being taken to tackle the decline in performance in 2016. Governors know the strengths and priorities of the school well. They are kept well informed through the interim headteacher's reports.
- Governors have supported the interim headteacher in her efforts to improve the quality of education in the school. They ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the sports funding are used effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Since her arrival, the interim headteacher has improved the security of the site and safety for pupils. Leaders make sure that the single central record is kept up to date and that all required checks are in place. All staff and governors have completed training in safeguarding. Staff have read the most up-to-date guidance on 'Keeping children safe in education'. They know what to do if they have any concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Safeguarding referrals are made in a timely manner and concerns followed up appropriately. Leaders make good use of support from outside agencies.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their children are safe and bullying is dealt with effectively. However, a very small minority of parents expressed their dissatisfaction about the changes made to the school rules and how leaders deal with bullying.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress as they move throughout the school.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of what pupils can achieve. Some teachers do

not use assessment well enough to plan teaching which builds on what pupils can already do. Teachers do not do not move pupils, including the most able, onto more challenging tasks soon enough.

- Pupils have limited opportunities to practise writing at length, especially across different curriculum subjects. Staff are receiving additional support from a local teaching school alliance to improve the teaching of writing.
- Strategies to improve the quality of teaching are having a positive impact and this is evident in the improvements in the progress of pupils.
- Teachers use an improved system of teaching phonics. It enables pupils to learn how to sound and blend unknown words. Pupils can make inferences and predictions about how books might end.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with staff and this contributes significantly to the quality of pupils' learning. One pupil commented: 'Teachers are really nice and challenge you.' The work in most pupils' books is neat and well presented.
- In most lessons, teachers use effective questioning to check what pupils already know and then guide pupils' thinking towards new learning. Pupils cooperate well and share their ideas enthusiastically when asked to.
- Most teaching assistants are well deployed to provide effective support for pupils. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and know what is expected of them so that they are able to support pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. A typical comment from pupils is: 'I wouldn't change anything. We love the chances to play on the school field and the freedom to run around.'
- Pupils are polite, cheerful and welcoming to visitors.
- All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they liked coming to school and that they feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different types of bullying. Pupils say that bullying and name-calling are rare. Pupils are confident that staff would help them if they did have a problem.
- Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on a range of issues and celebrate each other's achievements in assemblies.
- Leaders encourage pupils to value diversity and to respect the views of people with different faiths. Pupils' work is celebrated through vibrant and colourful wall displays.
- Pupils say that they enjoy eating healthy foods at breaktimes.
- Pupils' leadership skills are developed well through the school council and as play leaders. Pupils are proud of the improvements that they have brought about, for

example the purchase of recycling bins.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils from different age groups get on well with each other. Pupils play sensibly and socialise well together at break and lunchtimes. At the end of lunch, pupils line up quickly in silence and follow their teachers sensibly into class. This leads to a calm start to the next lesson.
- Pupils work hard in lessons. They take pride in their work and in the school.
- Behaviour logs show that incidents of poor behaviour and exclusion are very rare.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and they are punctual to school. Leaders know individual pupils and their families well and work closely with them, engaging the support of the education welfare officer. The pupil premium funding supports eligible pupils to attend the breakfast club and after-school clubs. The impact of these initiatives is that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils do not make consistently good progress. Overall, pupils are increasingly making better progress than previously. However, for some pupils, there are still gaps in their knowledge and skills as a result of underachievement in the past.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. No pupils gained greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, pupils are making the progress that they should from their starting points. A greater proportion of pupils are currently working at the expected standards for their age.
- In 2016, pupils in key stage 2 made progress that was broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally in writing. Pupils made weaker progress in reading and mathematics. A whole-school focus on these subjects is proving to be successful. In mathematics, pupils develop a strong understanding of concepts such as prime numbers and factors. Provisional results for 2017 show an improvement in attainment, in reading and in mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- Current pupils' progress in writing remains slower than in other subjects. Scrutiny of pupils' work and current assessment information shows that there are signs of improvement for some year groups. Provisional results for 2017 show a dip in attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2.
- The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inconsistent. The progress of some of these pupils is improving but, for others, progress is still too slow. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress when they work closely with an adult.
- The most able pupils do not consistently attain the standards of which they are capable

because they do not move on to more complex tasks when they are ready.

- The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check indicate that the proportion meeting the expected standard is in line with the national figure. Pupils enjoy the daily reading opportunities and appreciate the wide range of books that they can borrow from the school library. Pupils are taught to develop their comprehension skills effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively and make at least the same progress as other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The pupil premium grant is being used effectively to support their needs.
- The work in pupils' books shows that progress across the wider curriculum are inconsistent between subjects.
- Leaders work closely with local secondary schools to ensure that transition arrangements are smooth and effective.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Last year, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. This represents good progress from children's starting points. However, in the current Reception Year, children are not making enough progress from their starting points. Not enough children are on track to reach a good level of development that will prepare them well for Year 1.
- Changes in the assessment system mean that the accuracy of systems are not fully secure this year. As a result, children do not receive the right levels of support and challenge to enable them to make better progress.
- Teachers do not provide children with enough opportunities to develop a sense of number.
- Outdoor spaces and indoor classrooms are spacious and well-resourced and have a good range of equipment to enable children to learn, play and explore.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve the quality of the early years provision. The interim headteacher and staff have recently worked with early years advisors to improve provision.
- Early reading and writing skills, including phonics, are taught effectively. Most children can form letters correctly.
- Teachers set clear expectations of behaviour. Children enjoy working together by taking turns and sharing resources. They behave sensibly indoors and outdoors.
- Children are safe and well cared for. Teachers ensure that all statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- Early years pupil premium funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged children make good progress.
- Teachers communicate well with parents. Parents are informed about their children's learning through drop-in sessions and open mornings.
- The very large majority of parents who spoke to the lead inspector were happy with the early years provision. One parent commented: 'The children's manners are

beautiful. My child loves it here.'

School details

Unique reference number	111376
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10024304

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Harrison
Interim Headteacher	Dee Denton
Telephone number	0192 572 6544
Website	www.stvincentsprimary.org
Email address	stvincents_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, including those who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The archdiocese, local authority and governing body have secured the services of another interim headteacher from September 2017 until a new

substantive headteacher is appointed in 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a number of classes and attended a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of workbooks throughout the inspection to evaluate pupils' learning over time.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views. Inspectors met with pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life. Inspectors heard some pupils read in Year 3 and Year 6.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, a group of staff and members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority and a representative from the archdiocese.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding information, minutes of governing body meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, the school's checks on the quality of teaching, external reviews by consultants and the school's action plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account 90 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 88 free-text responses received from parents. Parents' views were also gathered through discussions at the start of the day and during the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the seven responses to the staff questionnaire.
- No responses were received to the questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Parker	Ofsted Inspector
Helen O'Neill	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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