

Inspection of a good school: St Vincent's RC Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 2021

Outcome

St Vincent's RC Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if the inspector were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic about attending this school. St Vincent's is a place where pupils feel safe and learn many new things. They know that their teachers care about them and want them to do well. Pupils say that bullying doesn't happen, but if pupils fall out, adults help them to resolve their differences. Leaders have created an environment where everyone learns together. Staff show expertise and passion when teaching and make learning interesting and 'real'. By the time they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for the future.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are strengths of the school. The atmosphere around school is calm and the pupils are eager to learn. All pupils are polite and well-mannered. Pupils mix well with each other during lunchtimes and breaktimes. Teachers have high aspirations for all pupils. Pupils work hard to do well for themselves and their teachers. Pupils are provided with experiences to motivate them to learn. Pupils' learning stretches beyond the classroom and includes residential and educational visits and visitors, which are planned into the curriculum. A range of after-school clubs brings new experiences, such as fencing and archery, to broaden pupils' skills. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are excellent.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They appreciate that, as one parent remarked, 'All staff go above and beyond to help pupils' development and ensure they feel safe and happy when at school.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are determined to provide all pupils with a high-quality educational experience, regardless of pupils' backgrounds or barriers. Consequently, they have created a school in which learning is ambitious, interesting and purposeful. Pupils, regardless of their

additional needs or ability, develop well personally and remember what they have been taught. Leaders know the pupils well and have thought carefully about what and how they teach. Planned learning outside the classroom in mathematics, such as the Fiver Challenge, is incorporated into lessons and the wider curriculum experiences to inspire pupils and help them apply their skills and knowledge. There is a highly consistent approach to teaching mathematics through the school. In lessons, pupils go back over key knowledge they have previously been taught. Pupils show thorough understanding of the methods they are taught and are confident when tackling problems. They say the methods they have learned make solving problems easy. Teachers know and understand the whole curriculum across the school in each subject. Therefore, they build on pupils' previous knowledge successfully.

Reading is a priority. Children are taught to read as soon as they enter the school. Teachers use information from assessments to ensure extra support is given to pupils who fall behind to help them become more confident readers. Pupils enjoy reading during shared story time. Teachers use this as an opportunity to develop pupils' wider spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. For example, they learn about the rights of refugees in 'No Ballet Shoes in Syria'.

In Reception, children settle into school life quickly. Staff have high expectations. Children get off to a fast start when learning their sounds and the skill of forming their letters. Staff provide many opportunities for children to write independently.

Leaders across the school have developed and established a well-structured curriculum. They use educational research and what they want pupils to know to inform curriculum planning. In history, the content is sequenced chronologically, with concepts threading through each year group. As a result, pupils learn how to think critically and balance evidence. Pupils enjoy learning about important events and characters in the past, especially those related to their local area, such as coal mining and shipbuilding.

A strength of the school is how it develops pupils' life skills and values. Staff are trained well to support pupils' mental health. Teachers model respect and kindness and pupils pay close attention to the needs of others. The school participates in 'Money Wise', where they learn the value of money and benefits of saving. Staff pay attention to what pupils say about important life values such as relationships. Leaders ensure pupils have the knowledge and understanding they need to form loving, stable relationships.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. Teachers know the needs of each pupil and write plans to support pupils to help them achieve their best. Teaching assistants provide expert help for pupils with SEND, making learning manageable for pupils.

Teachers say that leaders take practical measures to support their workload. Regular meetings occur to support teachers in managing their workload. They feel valued and well supported. Every member of staff shares in the values of the school and the aspirations for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established clear policies and thorough systems to make sure pupils are safe and well supported. They say keeping children safe is at the heart of what they do. The right checks are completed on staff before they start to work at the school. Staff know the policies and procedures that have been put in place to protect pupils from harm. They know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Regular training gives staff the knowledge they need to recognise the signs of abuse. When concerns are raised, leaders take action quickly. Leaders work closely with families to minimise the risks to pupils. The curriculum is planned well to help pupils keep themselves safe.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	108514
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10200225
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Willcock
Headteacher	Angela Ness
Website	www.stvincentsprimary.com
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Vincent's RC Primary School is a voluntary-aided Catholic school.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 26 and 27 June 2018.
- The school has a breakfast club. The provision is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. This involved talking with senior leaders, subject leaders and class teachers about how these subjects are taught. The inspector visited a range of lessons to see this in action, talked to pupils about what they have learned and looked at their work.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum in other subjects, and the wider work of the school, with senior leaders.

- Meetings were held with the leader responsible for early years and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector had a short conversation with the school improvement adviser and a telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The inspector met with five governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector watched pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day.
- The views of parents were considered from 25 free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector studied the responses to the staff online questionnaire.
- The inspector examined documentation provided by the school. This included scrutinising documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the single central record, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation and the school development plan.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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