

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

Hammersmith Gardens, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5RG

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. They support one another and know that it is important that everyone is treated equally and supportively. One pupil summed up the views of many when she said, 'Boys and girls are treated fairly in lessons based on their knowledge and how they are getting on.'

Pupils are enthusiastic when discussing what they have learned. Trips and events help them develop a deeper understanding of what they have learned. Pupils work hard and live up to teachers' high expectations. Pupils value challenging work. They enjoy teachers' quizzes, which help pupils know what they need to improve.

Pupils demonstrate the school's values in the way in which they treat one another. They behave well and are polite. Pupils told inspectors that leaders deal with unacceptable behaviour and bullying so that these do not reoccur. Pupils know whom they can talk to if they have worries. They feel that their concerns are taken seriously. This helps pupils to feel safe.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. They are specific about what pupils should know and understand from the Nursery class to Year 6. Subject leaders have put in place a well-organised curriculum for each subject. They are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. Leaders know what is working well and what needs to improve further.

Teachers present difficult ideas clearly, and pupils understand these. Teachers ensure that all pupils receive well-timed support. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they already know. This helps pupils to make connections when learning something new. Pupils are excited by the work they do and can recall in detail what they have already learned.

School leaders are committed to developing pupils' enjoyment of reading. Teachers have selected engaging texts for their classes. The youngest children are involved in choosing the book that their teacher will read. Time is set aside to read together as a class. Children get off to a good start with reading in early years. Staff make sure that pupils use their knowledge of sounds well to become accurate and fluent readers. Less confident readers receive the support they need so that they can catch up. Teachers ensure that reading books used for practice match the sounds pupils already know.

Leaders and staff know that owing to interruptions caused by the pandemic, some pupils in Year 2 and key stage 2 have not yet learned phonics well enough. Leaders have effective support in place for these pupils. However, some support staff are not delivering the phonics programme as consistently well to support these pupils.

Staff work with determination to ensure that all pupils succeed in school. Teachers provide the support needed for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to take a full part in lessons. Leaders identify pupils with SEND early and accurately. Leaders work with teachers, parents and carers, and external partners to create well-thought-through support plans. Teachers use this information to ensure that pupils learn successfully.

There are positive relationships between members of the school community. People treat each other with respect and are polite. The school's values have been embedded in meaningful ways and are understood by all. Pupils use these values in how they behave and treat each other.

Pupils engage in their lessons and respect the views of others. Staff make their expectations about behaviour clear and pupils respond positively to this. All staff are consistent when using the behaviour policy. Pupils trust staff to manage any misbehaviour effectively and to treat them fairly. As a result, pupils learn without disruption in lessons.

Leaders have incorporated trips and workshops that are well chosen and closely linked to learning in class. These enrich the pupils' understanding and raise their aspirations for what they can achieve when they grow up. Before the pandemic, leaders provided many opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and trips and to assume positions of responsibility at the school. Leaders are currently rebuilding the opportunities for clubs, trips and activities.

Teachers welcome the support and training they have received. This includes support from the trust and the partner school. Staff appreciate leaders' positive actions to reduce workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide frequent training to ensure that staff are fully aware of the risks to children and what signs to look for. Staff have a strong understanding of their responsibilities. Staff are vigilant and report safeguarding concerns in a timely manner.

The process for reporting concerns is easily accessible for all adults in school. Leaders for safeguarding know the families and the community well. Leaders make sure that the right professional support is in place to help families who need it.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe. It is the focus for assemblies and events, such as internet safety day. Pupils know how to stay safe when online.

Governors regularly review safeguarding procedures. The records of checks carried out to ensure that adults are safe to work with pupils are well kept.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Restrictions put in place during the pandemic limited the enrichment programme that leaders made available to pupils. Pupils and parents would welcome the return of these opportunities. Leaders should continue to develop their enrichment programme in line with pupils' abilities, interests and aspirations, so that pupils have opportunities to undertake roles of responsibility and develop their talents.
- Some support staff have had targeted training and guidance in the school's early reading programme. This helps them to support the pupils they work with, particularly those learning to read. Other support staff have not had bespoke training and do not have the same skill and confidence to deliver additional support to pupils. Leaders should ensure that all support staff have the training they need to provide high-quality support to pupils.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, to be good in September 2013.

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	145325
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10227556
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Davies
Headteacher	Steve Chiswell
Website	www.stvincentshr.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Vincent's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2018. When its predecessor school, which had the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has a Nursery class for three- and four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, the early years leader and groups of staff.
- The inspector spoke to two members of the governing body, including the chair. He also spoke to the chief executive officer of St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust and the school improvement adviser.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, looked at curriculum planning, reviewed pupils' work, listened to pupils read and spoke with pupils and teachers about their lessons.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils and spoke to other pupils informally.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The inspector also spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The inspector considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Eardley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022