

Inspection of a good school: St Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School

Manor Park South, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8AL

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2022

Outcome

St Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils know that they belong to a family. They feel safe and secure because they know that staff care about them. Leaders deal with fallings out and the rare incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils trust staff to help them when they are worried about anything.

Pupils care for each other too. All pupils in the Reception class and key stage 1 have a buddy in Years 4, 5 or 6. Buddies have joint activities, for example reading together. Older pupils keep an eye out for their buddy in the playground.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know they are expected to work hard and behave well. They rise to these high expectations. They develop excellent attitudes to learning as they move through the school. They are eager to do well, and they enjoy their learning. They are confident, polite and respectful.

The school provides a wide range of activities and opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils appreciate these and take full advantage. All pupils in key stage 2 go on a residential visit. Pupils visit museums, art galleries and theatres. They enjoy attending the many after-school clubs that staff provide.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum in all subjects. They ensure that pupils' learning builds in a logical manner on that of the previous year. For example, learning in the Reception class provides a sound foundation for what pupils will study in key stage 1 and beyond. In all years, teachers are clear about the important knowledge that they want pupils to acquire. They revisit key content and this helps pupils to remember what they have learned.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this to explain new concepts clearly. They are quick to spot and address pupils' misconceptions. Their checks focus well on

assessing what pupils have learned. Leaders use this information effectively in order to provide extra help for pupils who need it or to adapt future teaching.

Leaders are determined that all pupils should become fluent readers. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics well from the start of the Reception Year. Most pupils quickly become proficient readers. Teachers regularly assess pupils' learning. They provide effective extra help if pupils begin to fall behind, and this helps them catch up with their peers.

Most aspects of the reading curriculum are effective. For example, pupils are encouraged to read different genres of book and books written by different authors. However, some aspects of the reading curriculum are less effective than they could be. For example, staff sometimes ask younger pupils to read independently when they are not able to do so. For a small number of pupils, this slows their progress towards becoming confident readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify their needs accurately, often soon after they join the school. They ensure that pupils with SEND get the right support. For most, the class teacher or a teaching assistant provides this in class. For a few, staff provide high-quality, small-group or one-to-one support.

Pupils behave well. Their behaviour is often exemplary. Leaders and teachers focus on encouraging and rewarding positive behaviour. Pupils like this approach. Teachers rarely need to use sanctions, and disruption to learning is very rare.

Leaders place considerable emphasis on pupils' wider development. The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum is comprehensive and carefully sequenced. It has a strong focus on helping pupils to maintain good mental health. Pupils learn to understand and manage their emotions.

Staff provide many experiences that enrich pupils' life in school. Music, especially singing, plays an important part in school life. In many subjects, pupils enjoy learning outside in the forest area. They take part in science afternoons when they showcase their learning. They play a full part in the local community. They are pen pals with residents of a local care home. They collect food for a food bank and raise money for many charities.

The school's staff form a dedicated team. They appreciate the care and support that leaders provide for them. Leaders ensure that teachers' workload is manageable. Staff are proud to be part of the school community. Governors support leaders and staff well. They are an integral and valued part of the school.

Leaders work hard to involve parents and carers in their children's education. Parents appreciate this and are full of praise for the school. For example, staff provide opportunities for parents to learn alongside their children in 'stay and learn' sessions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. Leaders have trained staff well. Consequently, staff are alert to the signs that pupils might need extra help. Staff readily pass on concerns to leaders, who deal with them appropriately. Leaders seek support from outside agencies when needed. They are tenacious in getting pupils the support they need.

The RSHE curriculum helps pupils in all classes to learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to stay safe when online or using social media. They learn, in an age-appropriate way, about healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some elements of the reading curriculum are not as effective as they could be. This means that some pupils could be learning to read and develop a love of reading more effectively than they are currently. Leaders should ensure that all aspects of the reading curriculum contribute effectively to pupils' learning to read and enjoyment of reading.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 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.

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	111358
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10241939
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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Dobson
Headteacher	Bernadette Groarke
Website	www.stvincentsknutsford.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2019.
- There have been several changes to the governing body in recent years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Catholic school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders. He held discussions with six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. He held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in other subjects with leaders. He considered the school's work to support pupils with SEND.
- The inspector discussed safeguarding with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector scrutinised policies and records relating to child protection and examined the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspector spoke with several members of staff, including those who have recently joined the teaching profession. He considered the responses from staff to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. He observed the school at these times. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the day and considered the responses, including written responses, to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, 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