

Inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle

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

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at St Vincent's Catholic School deliver on their commitment to provide quality education in a caring environment. Leaders express high expectations for all pupils. They inspire pupils to do their best. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Positive learning behaviours are taught from Reception class. Staff ensure that pupils new to school settle into routines quickly. Pupils learn how to use equipment, take turns and respect one another. Throughout school, pupils are kind and considerate. Pupils in Year 6 relish their role as buddies to younger pupils. All pupils spoken to say that they feel safe and happy in school. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that adults will help them deal with any concerns that they may have.

Pupils access a rich curriculum that celebrates the heritage and the people of the region. The educational visits, linked to the subjects being studied, help in bringing the topics to life for pupils. For example, visiting an estate garden to see the work of Capability Brown gives pupils an understanding of the scale of his work. The visits contribute strongly to pupils knowing more and remembering more.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for all pupils starting from Reception class. They have a clear rationale for the curriculum design based on providing pupils with memorable events. This supports pupils in their academic learning and widens their cultural experience. In Year 6, pupils enjoy a residential visit to Lindisfarne when studying the life of St Cuthbert. They are immersed in life on a small island that is very different to Walker. Teachers deliver the curriculum in a well-considered way.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding of their learning and what they can do. They recap on subject knowledge at the beginning of lessons. Pupils confidently recall prior learning using technical vocabulary. Pupils are keen to give answers to teachers' questions and contribute to discussions, even in early years. This helps pupils make more connections in their learning.

Leaders encourage pupils to read regularly at home, and many do so. They have a wide variety of high-quality books to choose from. These include dual-language books. Staff take pupils to the local library so that they learn how to access books in their own time. Leaders ensure that there is a structured approach to teaching pupils to read. Pupils read books that are closely linked to their phonic knowledge. This boosts their confidence. By the end of key stage 2, pupils read fluently and accurately. They are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Leaders seek advice from partner agencies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Additional adults in class assist pupils in many ways, for example by supporting reading. They help to break down the learning into manageable pieces. Pupils with SEND have individual support plans. Some of the plans lack short-term, realistic targets and suggested teaching strategies. Parents and pupils do not contribute to the plans. Leaders work with the local nursery providers, parents and services to ensure a smooth transition for all pupils moving into Reception Year.

Pupils have high expectations for their own behaviour. They are courteous and polite. Leaders work with families to highlight the importance of coming to school. Pupils enjoy school life and attendance rates are high. Pupils develop an understanding about their own mental health needs and those of others. Many pupils benefit from the therapeutic services provided in school.

Leaders provide a wealth of after-school clubs such as fencing and archery. Pupils study three major world religions and have an excellent understanding of what it means to be a person of faith. Through activities such as 'Mini Vinnies,' pupils learn to be charitable. In the personal development curriculum, pupils learn about relationships, drugs education and careers. Pupils have difficulty in recalling their learning about fundamental British values and protected characteristics such as age and disability. The curriculum features some work on anti-social behaviour tailored to the specific local context. Opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss some aspects of life outside of school.

Members of the governing body are well informed about the strengths of the curriculum. They ask challenging questions of senior leaders and undertake various monitoring roles. The trust offers advice and support to school leaders. School leaders have worked with trust leaders to strengthen planning for pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and staff are up to date with safeguarding training. Staff use the systems in place to report any safeguarding matters. The designated safeguarding lead is tenacious in following up any concerns, such as pupils missing school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online. They also learn about road safety through cycle and pedestrian training. Although leaders tailor the personal development curriculum to include aspects of contextual safeguarding, pupils do not have specific lessons on gang culture. Some pupils express concerns about groups of teenagers that they encounter. They are uncertain about how to deal with such situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is broad and well received by pupils, some local contextual safeguarding risks are not consistently covered in sufficient depth within the curriculum. Pupils are not fully prepared to deal with some of the challenges they face. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum includes wider activities to raise pupils' awareness of local contextual risks and how to mitigate these.
- Leaders do not ensure that the pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and the protected characteristics is sufficiently well developed. Pupils cannot articulate what the British values and protected characteristics are and why these make a difference to everyday life. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with the necessary opportunities to further develop their understanding of British values and protected characteristics.
- The individual plans for some pupils with SEND are not consistently specific enough to inform teachers of the exact next steps required. Pupils and parents do not routinely contribute to the plans or the reviews. Leaders should ensure that the targets for each pupil with SEND, and the teaching strategies to support them, are specific. Leaders should include parents and pupils in the planning and review of individual plans.

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	148979
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10268022
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
Headteacher	Angela Ness
Website	https://www.stvincents.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is one of 39 academies that form the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school is a member of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and has a Christian character.
- A section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was carried out by the diocese in June 2018. The school was graded outstanding.
- The school does not use any alternative education provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- St Vincent's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in April 2022. When its predecessor school, St Vincent's RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with the early career teacher, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with a representative of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views on the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors spoke to parents about their views on the school. As well as speaking to parents at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanne Shaw

Ofsted Inspector

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