

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

Vauxhall Grove, Vauxhall, St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, West Midlands B7 4HP

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are keen to come to school because they are happy and feel safe. Pupils behave well and are respectful. Relationships at this school are strong. Staff care deeply about pupils. Everyone understands and models the school's mission statement, 'we are all brothers and sisters'. Together, everyone ensures that the school's Catholic values, including patience and compassion, shine through all aspects of school life.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' academic and personal development. They want all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn well and be prepared for their next steps. In the past, pupils did not achieve as well as they should have. Leaders have made the right changes and pupils at the school make strong progress in most subjects.

Pupils relish the opportunity to be a leader. This includes as head boy and girl, liturgy leaders, anti-bullying ambassadors or a member of the school parliament. They enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities on offer, which includes clubs for art, crochet, basketball and football. Pupils are respectful of difference and celebrate the many different cultures that make up their school family. Pupils are adamant that anyone is welcome at their school regardless of religion, race or disability.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This begins in the early years. They have set out the most important knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject and when this should be taught. Pupils learn to understand and use subject-specific vocabulary in their spoken and written responses. In most subjects, the planned curriculum is being implemented well so that pupils can build knowledge and skills. Leaders have firm plans in place to improve how well a small number of foundation subjects are being taught so that pupils can achieve as well as possible in these subjects. Some subject leaders are new to their roles

and there is variability in their subject knowledge and experience. Senior leaders provide effective support and training so that subject leaders can check the quality of education in their subjects. This ensures that they know what needs further improvement.

Teachers check how well pupils have learned what they have been taught. They use this information to address any gaps in learning. This is working particularly well in mathematics and ensures that pupils are making much better progress than in the past.

Leaders prioritise reading. They ensure that staff are trained to teach phonics well. Children start learning to read as soon as they start in Reception and practise reading books that include sounds they know. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are given the right support to catch up. Older pupils talk with confidence about the books they are reading.

Children settle quickly into the early years. Leaders ensure that school staff, parents and carers work as partners to support children's learning. For example, parents are invited to workshops to find out how the school teaches reading. The environment is welcoming and well-resourced. However, there is variability in the quality of practice between the early years classes. Therefore, not all children progress with their learning as well as they should.

Pupils understand the school rules and say that behaviour is positive most of the time. They are polite and well-mannered. Pupils say that everyone gets along well with each other, and that bullying is not a problem. One pupil summed up the views of others by explaining that this is because 'pupils at this school are kind-hearted'. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard to produce their best work.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life. Teachers know the needs of pupils with SEND and adapt tasks so that this group of pupils can learn alongside their peers. A small number of pupils experience a personalised curriculum that is well-matched to their needs. Leaders work closely with specialist services such as speech and language therapists to ensure that this is high-quality provision.

Leaders plan carefully for pupils' personal character development. For example, they learn about the importance of equality, fairness and how to be a good person. Pupils are proud of their work to help others in the community, including visits to care homes for the elderly and hosting lunch for refugees.

Governors know what the school does well and what needs to improve. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel that leaders support, appreciate and invest in them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The knowledge and leadership experience of some subject leaders is too variable. Some are new to the role and have not yet established their understanding of what is strong in their subject and what needs developing. The school should continue to provide support to ensure that all leaders have the knowledge and skills they need to lead their subjects equally well and monitor curriculum implementation effectively.
- There is not a consistency of high-quality practice in the early years. This means that some children do not progress with their learning as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that early years practice is consistent, so that all children have a meaningful learning experience that fully meets their needs.

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 February 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	103417
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294483
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Costello Lane
Headteacher	Tarah O'Brien
Website	www.stvincentsbham.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Catholic primary school. The last section 48 inspection was conducted in March 2017.
- The headteacher took up the post in September 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, met with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with senior leaders and members of the governing body. They also spoke with the school's improvement partner and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector met with pupils to understand their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and around the school. The inspector looked at behaviour and bullying records and leaders' analysis of these.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. The inspector also considered pupils' attendance at school.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being and considered the views of staff, pupils and parents, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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