

Inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Orchard Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8EY

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and flourish at this exceptional school. Through exciting learning opportunities, children in the early years get off to a flying start. Pupils across the school are nurtured by staff who give them every opportunity to succeed and to shine. They are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

The school sets an extremely high bar for pupils' academic achievement. Pupils strive to live up to these expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils eagerly respond to the school's behaviour expectations. They rarely need reminding to do their best. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in class, during social times and as they move around the school.

Pupils delight in the plentiful opportunities that the school provides to develop their talents and interests. For instance, pupils relish the many clubs that they can attend. They also greatly value the wide variety of sporting activities that the school offers. These include cricket, hockey and table tennis events and competitions. Pupils in the school choir, and those who learn to play musical instruments, enjoy regular opportunities to perform for their parents and carers and members of the wider community.

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

Collectively, members of the governing body and leaders at all levels have successfully ensured that they provide the highest quality of education to pupils, including those with SEND. Governors deploy their wide-ranging expertise to offer high levels of challenge and support to the school. Governors and the school make sure that staff's workload is not affected by school improvement work.

Starting in the early years, the school has expertly and meticulously crafted a highly ambitious curriculum. The key knowledge that pupils should learn is broken down into small, carefully ordered steps so that pupils can build on their prior learning very effectively.

Staff across the school take every opportunity to enhance and ignite pupils' curiosity and thirst for learning. Pupils engage in a wide variety of learning activities with gusto. Through carefully selected cultural trips and visits, learning is enriched and enhanced beyond the classroom. Meaningful links are also made to possible future careers as part of the curriculum. These experiences help to broaden pupils' horizons and aspirations for the future.

Teachers benefit from a highly effective programme of development. This helps them to deliver the curriculum with confidence and ease. Staff ensure that pupils regularly revisit the prior knowledge that they have been taught before moving on to new learning. Staff swiftly identify and address pupils' misconceptions. This supports

pupils to develop an exceptionally strong body of knowledge over time. They progress extremely well across the curriculum.

The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly and they receive expert support. Teachers make effective adaptations to the delivery of curriculum content. This enables pupils with SEND to successfully progress through the curriculum, alongside their peers.

The school has developed a strong culture of reading across the school. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of inspirational texts and authors in all year groups. These books are thoughtfully chosen to fire pupils' passion for reading. In the early years, children enjoy sharing stories with staff. Older pupils are proud of their roles as reading ambassadors and as the poet laureate. They particularly enjoy reading with children in the early years and sharing recommended books with their friends.

The delivery of the phonics programme is particularly effective. The school has carefully selected books that allow children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1, to rehearse the sounds that they already know. Staff make frequent checks on pupils' phonics knowledge, identifying those who need extra help. These pupils receive the additional support that they need so that they learn to read well.

The school has created a climate of warmth, care and compassion that develops pupils' confidence. Pupils behave extremely well. They are highly respectful to staff and to each other. The school has the highest expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality. It works successfully with parents to overcome any barriers that may prevent pupils from attending school as often as they should. As a result, pupils are rarely absent.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values. For example, they talked about the laws and rules of the country and about the importance of democracy. The exciting and unique activities provided by the school inspire pupils to find a talent or interest in which they can shine. In addition, the school fosters an impressively strong community spirit. This is embedded through regular assemblies that celebrate the school values and promote pupils' sense of collective endeavour and belonging. Pupils throughout school benefit from an array of leadership opportunities. Through these roles, pupils develop qualities such as resilience and independence that prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	136087
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10290159
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	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Donnachie
Headteacher	Anita Harrop
Website	www.stvincents.trafford.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 October 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in October 2023. The school's next section 48 inspection is due before November 2028.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. She met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, design and technology, computing and science. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed some pupils' work in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Blay	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Dickson	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Hulse	Ofsted Inspector

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