

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. VINCENT de PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104667

Headteacher: Mr. P. Stewart

Reporting inspector: Dr. B. Blundell  
23868

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 246398  
Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Pitt Street  
Liverpool  
Merseyside

Postcode: L1 5BY

Telephone number: 0151 709 2572

Fax number: 0151 707 8942

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Miss P. M. Mullin

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school for boys and girls, aged three to eleven, situated in Liverpool. There are 159 pupils on roll; the school is smaller than most primary schools. The ethnic background of the pupils is mainly white with U.K. heritage, with a substantial minority being black with a variety of heritages, Chinese, Indian and mixed heritages. Nineteen pupils are at an early stage in the acquisition of English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils identified within the school as having special needs. The nature of pupils' special needs includes specific and moderate learning difficulties, emotional and speech difficulties, and Mosaic Downs Syndrome. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average overall. Pupil turnover is relatively low.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven are well above national expectations. The overall quality of teaching is very good, and leadership and management by the headteacher are both outstanding. The school provides excellent value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils by the age of eleven reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above national averages, despite their lower than average attainment on entry to the school.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are both excellent; the school has a very clear educational direction, both pastorally and academically.
- The overall quality of teaching is outstanding, with a high proportion of excellent teaching; pupils of all ethnicities learn very well indeed.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, coupled with the excellent relationships that prevail in the school, promote a very effective learning environment.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, as is the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- Provision for pupils in the Primary Support Centre is excellent.

#### **What could be improved**

- No issues were identified.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven have improved. The overall quality of teaching has greatly improved; at the time of the last inspection, it was judged to be unsatisfactory in one lesson in every ten. In the current inspection, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be very good overall and often excellent. The key issue, to improve the quality of teaching in Year 6, has been fully met. Assessment systems have greatly improved, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good. The clarification of the role of the deputy headteacher has been suitably addressed and the school now, in addition, has an able assistant headteacher. The school has justifiable ambition to succeed further, and has the capacity to do so. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	C	A	A*
mathematics	B	A	A	A*
science	A	A	C	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

**Standards attained by pupils aged eleven** in 2002 were well above the national average in English and in mathematics; in science they matched the national average. Compared to those attained in schools of a similar type, standards were very high in English and in mathematics, being in the top five per cent of such schools; in science, they were well above average. Over the three years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the school two terms ahead of pupils nationally in English and in mathematics, and nearly six months ahead in science. The school's targets are appropriately ambitious.

**Standards reached by pupils aged seven** in the national tests in 2002 were in line with the national average in reading, above average in writing, and well above average in mathematics. Compared to that in schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and very high in writing and in mathematics, being in the top five per cent of such schools. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the infant phase with standards in line with pupils nationally in reading, nearly one term ahead in writing and nearly one year ahead in mathematics.

**In the work seen during the inspection,** standards for pupils aged seven were above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils aged eleven reached standards well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Whilst other subjects were sampled, there was too little evidence to judge overall standards. The majority of children aged five are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.) Pupils' achievement is excellent. Standards at the school are sufficiently high.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good; they enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is very good. Older pupils look after younger ones appropriately, in their role as monitors.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good; relationships are excellent both between pupils and with adults. There is a thriving School Council, presided over by the head boy and head girl, who are elected by pupils and adults.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Unauthorised absence, which used to be above average, has been greatly reduced by the work of the learning mentor, and is now in line with national levels.

Particular strengths in pupils' attitudes include their hard work and sheer enthusiasm for learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Foundation Stage	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is excellent overall; the skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught indeed; there is a very strong focus on learning. Particular strengths in teaching include teachers' very high expectations, superb class management and the sharing of learning objectives with pupils in most lessons. Pupils' work is marked very well. Classroom support assistants work very well with teachers in planning lessons. The school meets the needs of all pupils appropriately. All pupils are fully included. Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their concentration, productivity and pace of learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are very good throughout the school. The curriculum is enriched with, for example, daily computer clubs, public speaking competitions and the "Discovery Garden" in the nursery.
Provision for pupils having English as an additional language	This provision is very good, with bi-lingual support staff ensuring that pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides successfully for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils very well indeed. The school has a caring Catholic ethos.

The school works very well in partnership with parents, and parents' views of the school are extremely positive, as can be seen from the high return rate of parents' questionnaires. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. The school's grounds are used well to support pupils' learning, as in the "Planet Garden". Resources in the outdoor area for children in the foundation stage support their learning very well across the curriculum. Early morning breakfast clubs and after school clubs further exemplify the school's care for its pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher are excellent. The school has appointed an able assistant headteacher along with the deputy headteacher, providing very clear educational direction.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The manner in which the governors fulfil their responsibilities is excellent. They bring a very wide range of expertise to the running of this school. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the school, is extremely dedicated and competent and outstanding in her commitment to the school. The school greatly benefits from the services of a dedicated school chaplain, who is also a governor.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is excellent. It rigorously analyses its work in external national tests, and uses these findings to improve standards appropriately.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is excellent. These are used very well indeed to support learning.

Particular strengths in leadership and management include the great commitment of the headteacher and senior management team. The school administrative officer is outstanding. The school's administrative officer and administrative assistant are efficient and between them they help to ensure the smooth running of the school. Lunchtime assistants and catering staff create a happy atmosphere at the mid-day

break. The accommodation is well maintained by a most dedicated caretaker and cleaners. The school makes the very best use of the accommodation that it has; it displays pupils' work to very good effect. The school's application of the principles of best value is excellent.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with any queries.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Parents feel that the school sets high expectations.</li> <li>• They are very happy with the way that the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• They judge the overall quality of teaching to be good.</li> <li>• Parents feel that the school helps their children to mature and be responsible.</li> <li>• They are happy with behaviour at the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns raised.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Pupils by the age of eleven reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above national averages.**

1. Results of national tests for pupils aged 11 in 2002 show standards in English and mathematics that were well above national averages. In science, standards matched the national average. Compared to those of schools of a similar type, results were very high in English and in mathematics, being in the top five per cent of such schools. In science, results were well above those found in such schools. Girls have generally performed better than boys.
2. Over the years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the school, on average, two terms ahead of pupils nationally in English and in mathematics, and six months ahead in science. Pupils currently aged 11 are exceeding national expectations in all three subjects.
3. When the performance of recent 11-year-old pupils who stayed at the school throughout the junior phase and compare it with their results when they were aged seven, we find that they have generally made very good progress overall.
4. In English, the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening of pupils currently aged 11 are all well above national expectations, as a result of the very good teaching, coupled with the very positive attitudes of the pupils. Pupils in Year 6 are able to construct “one-sided” arguments very well. They draft their ideas thoughtfully in a quiet, purposeful writing atmosphere, and adapt the teacher’s suggestions appropriately in their own work. Pupils engage well in discussion. Pupils at the end of Year 2 reach above average standards in their cross-curricular work on the island of Struay, which is used to support their literacy work to very good effect indeed. They use simple sentences and volunteer suggestions in class enthusiastically. Throughout the junior classes, pupils are given regular spelling tests on banks of “similar words”. This is greatly helping pupils’ learning and driving up standards. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have in excess of sixty spellings per week!
5. In mathematics, pupils aged 11 work out the value added tax on goods with proficiency. They tackle searching questions involving a change in the rate of the tax, such as “What is the difference in the overall cost of an item if the tax rate changes from 17.5 per cent to 17.25 per cent?” They are clear and concise in their mental strategies, and are able to explain clearly how they arrive at their answers. They show appropriate understanding of probability and probability scales. Seven-year-olds recognise simple number sequences and extend them appropriately. They understand the key words in problems. Pupils in the school have a good and prompt recall of their multiplication tables, and this is greatly helping their learning.
6. In science, pupils aged 11 carry out investigations competently, as when they investigate what is meant by a saturated solution, using a variety of solutes. Pupils record their work very well throughout the school, using clear scientific diagrams; knowledge and understanding of key scientific terms is a real strength. Seven-year-olds plan and carry out investigations using fair tests. They discuss their ideas sensibly, as when working out the

best growth medium for a given corn. Pupils use correct scientific vocabulary throughout the school, and this practice is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

**Leadership and management by the headteacher are both excellent; the school has a very clear educational direction.**

7. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management. He is utterly committed to the care, in all senses of the word, of his pupils. He ensures that he knows the strengths and weaknesses of all his pupils, taking every opportunity to be with them. He has a very clear strategic vision for the school. Put simply, he wants the absolute best for all his pupils in all spheres. This is reflected in the school motto 'Serving with love; Striving for excellence'. The recently appointed assistant headteacher is very capable and has already contributed effectively to the leadership and management of the school. The long-serving deputy headteacher and committed manager of the 'Primary Support Centre' are the other members of an extremely effective senior management team. The key issue in the last inspection, to clarify the role of the deputy headteacher, has been well addressed. The school is very well placed for further improvement. The school's priorities for further development are most appropriate.
8. The very competent coordinators for literacy and numeracy have monitored and evaluated teaching through the school. Teaching and learning through the school have been monitored by the headteacher, giving teachers constructive written and verbal feedback, with areas for improvement indicated where appropriate.
9. The governing body is extremely committed and brings a powerful range of expertise to the school. It is exceptionally effective in its function as a critical friend. Governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school, and of those areas with potential for development. The chair of governors, who was formerly a headteacher, comes into school very regularly, liaising informally with the headteacher. Her commitment to the school is outstanding. Governors monitor the way in which the curriculum is taught appropriately. The school chaplain provides very effective spiritual leadership for the school. She is in school every day, supporting pupils with a variety of needs and has created a most uplifting 'Pax' room, where pupils can experience calm and tranquillity.

**The overall quality of teaching is outstanding, with a high proportion of excellent teaching; pupils of all ethnicities learn very well indeed.**

10. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is outstanding, with a high proportion of first class, excellent teaching. Examples of very good teaching were seen in every class in the school. Teaching standards have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' learning is the top priority in lessons, and mirrors the effectiveness of the teaching throughout the school.
11. Pupils know and understand the precise purpose of all their lessons. At the outset, the teachers explain in appropriate language what the learning objectives are for the lesson. At the end of each lesson, the learning objectives are looked at again to see how far they have been achieved. This was a particular feature of all literacy and numeracy lessons observed, including those in the foundation stage, and such practice is very effective in increasing the rate of pupils' learning.

12. Time is used very well indeed in lessons because everybody realises what they have to do. This was particularly evident in a very briskly paced numeracy lesson for the upper juniors. In an excellent science lesson for Year 2, the teacher made use of a rather 'scary bee', the size of a tea-pot, to cogently illustrate pollination. Teachers' marking of pupils' books is of a very high quality indeed, and includes points for further development.
13. Planning is very effective at this school. Teachers manage their classes superbly; expectations are high in terms of both behaviour and standards of work for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
14. The outdoor area for children in the foundation stage has been successfully developed to foster children's learning. Children take part in structured play with very clear foci as learning points. A large tree is be-decked with numbers to learn, which sway in the breeze; children love to explore the "Discovery Garden".

**Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour coupled with the excellent relationships promote very effective learning.**

15. Pupils' attitudes are very good indeed. They behave very well and really want to learn. They mirror the enthusiasm of their teachers and really enjoy coming to school.
16. Pupils take part in question and answer sessions eagerly, as in an excellent history lesson for Year 4/5 pupils. They were shocked to hear of the treatment of some children in Victorian times and empathised with the work of the scavengers in the wool factories.
17. Relationships both between pupils and with adults are excellent. Staff treat pupils most respectfully, and this respect is reciprocated by the pupils. Pupils help around school; the older ones, as monitors, for example, look after younger pupils. Pupils in Year 6 nominate pupils to stand as candidates for head boy and head girl. This often results in closely fought elections, with candidates producing passionate election manifestos. The winners have automatic places on the vibrant School Council. This is one example among many of a factor greatly aiding pupils' self esteem and personal development.

**The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good as is the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented.**

18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. The coordinator for special needs, who is the assistant headteacher, is very effective in her work.
19. Pupils have top quality individual educational plans with very clear targets for improvement. The targets are reviewed regularly. The quality of the plans for these pupils means that teachers and support staff can tailor their teaching more accurately to meet the needs of these pupils. This leads to the pupils making very good progress. Helpfully, pupils have exercise books in which they record work carried out towards their targets.
20. Those pupils who are gifted and talented are identified at an early age and given individual learning plans. These encompass a wide range of areas, from art to physical education. Pupils with advanced physical skills are provided with fencing lessons. In

English and mathematics, 11-year-old pupils have been successfully entered for level 6 papers. (Level 4 is the nationally expected level.) Pupils who show promise across the curriculum are “fast tracked” rather than being held back by their peers. For example, the current Year 6 class has on its roll five high attaining Year 5 pupils; this is most appropriate.

**Provision for pupils in the Primary Support Centre is excellent.**

21. The school has a most effective Primary Support Centre that admits pupils from other schools who have a range of difficulties. Twelve pupils are admitted for six week periods, after which they return to their original school, with support being given by St. Vincent de Paul staff in the transfer period.
22. This provision is of an excellent standard. The teaching is first class and pupils quickly have their self-esteem raised. Teachers concentrate on very structured, formal methods of instruction, and, where possible, provide the pupils with extra knowledge and understanding, so that when they return to their original schools, they could be ahead of their peers.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- No issues were identified.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

23

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

8

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	12	2	0	0	0	0
Percentage	39	52	9	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	17	142
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	101

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	36

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	*	*	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (75)	95 (100)	95 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (92)	95 (100)	95 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	10	11	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	19	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (84)	95 (88)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (76)	95 (76)	100 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

\* indicates that figures were too small to be statistically reliable.



**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	68	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	22	0	0
Chinese	13	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	18

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	190

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	598,149
Total expenditure	601,320
Expenditure per pupil	3,782
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,479
Balance carried forward to next year	45,306

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	140
Number of questionnaires returned	111

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	24	1	1	5
My child is making good progress in school.	86	14	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	27	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	42	2	2	8
The teaching is good.	73	23	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	28	3	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	16	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	28	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	77	15	2	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	70	24	1	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	20	1	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	29	5	2	5