

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	111358
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310577
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Weir
Headteacher	Mrs R Moores
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	Manor Park South Knutsford Cheshire WA16 8AL
Telephone number	01565 633637
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Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Paragraph 3, line 3, text change.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following aspects were investigated: the standards reached in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 and the progress pupils make overall; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; safeguarding of pupils and the academic support and guidance they receive; the quality of teaching; and leadership

and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff, pupils and governors; and scrutiny of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. The vast majority of pupils who attend are White British but an increasing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language attend the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. Before- and after- school care is provided by the school. The school has achieved Activemark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools and Eco School awards as well as the Inclusion Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Inclusion is the heart of this outstanding school. Pupils' excellent all-round achievement is rooted in the exceptional care, guidance and support provided for each one of them. Parents express the view that St Vincent's is the embodiment of what a primary school should be. Outstanding leadership has resulted in high quality teaching and learning and well above average standards throughout the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and, consequently, their personal development thrives. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils' general behaviour and their manners and politeness are exemplary. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. There is a buzz of genuine enthusiasm when pupils describe the exciting range of activities they enjoy, from French and Spanish lessons to sports and residential visits. Pupils' excellent achievements in music, dance, and art and design are celebrated convincingly in their first rate end-of-year performances for parents. Pupils are fully aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and how they can be maintained. They have their own allotment in the school grounds and harvest the vegetables they grow.

Ample opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities ensure that they develop the important life skills they will need to be active community members. Pupils created a prize winning exhibit for the 2007 Royal Horticultural Show. Their current garden, containing a water feature designed by Year 6 pupils, is to be reassembled in the school grounds as a memorial garden. The school council gives pupils an active voice in school affairs, including staff appointments. Eco council members, playground 'boredom busters', librarians and team captains, for example, all successfully play their parts in the day-to-day running of the school. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 pupils are confident and self-assured both socially and academically and are extremely well prepared to secure their future economic well-being.

When children join the Reception class their skills and knowledge are typical for their age. Pupils make excellent progress as they move through the school. Standards at Key Stage 2 were well above average in 2006. In the national tests in 2007 there was a dip in overall performance. This was due to an untypically small group in which there were a significant number of pupils who experienced social and emotional difficulties. Nevertheless, achievement in that year was notable in that every pupil reached at least the level expected for their age in English and mathematics. As a result of its extremely effective tracking arrangements, the school had predicted this outcome. There has been no complacency by the school. Robust self-evaluation ensures that swift action is taken to identify future needs. Resources have been successfully targeted. School assessments and provisional data for 2008 indicates that the well above average standards seen in 2006 have been exceeded this year in English, mathematics and science, representing outstanding achievement for this group of pupils.

Pupils' learning is rapid. This is due to the outstanding quality of teaching they receive. Teachers' planning and preparation for lessons is highly effective. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own learning by sharing tasks among their group and pooling ideas for debate or writing afterwards. They rise to the challenges set for them. Pupils' independence as learners as well as their mathematical skills were challenged very well in Year 6, for example, when they went into the school grounds to calculate the actual heights of trees and buildings prior to drawing a plan to scale. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught exceptionally well and make excellent progress in relation to their individual needs. Their

progress is checked frequently to make sure targets are suitably challenging. Daily nurture group sessions help the most needy to settle into work. There is also outstanding daily support for pupils who learn English as an additional language. Their language development sessions are linked closely to the vocabulary they will need to help them understand their classroom topics. An impressive measure of pupils' achievement is that non-English speaking pupils who join the school invariably gain the nationally expected levels for their age in English in national tests.

The school's very effective self-evaluation, although reflecting caution in some aspects, is the result of all leaders' participation in the monitoring and evaluation of its overall performance. Governors share fully in the process. They provide excellent support and challenge for the school in helping to set its future direction. By managing finances efficiently and ensuring that spending is linked to its priorities, the school gives outstanding value for money. The exceptional and inclusive leadership of the headteacher means that the aspirations of pupils and staff, with regard to standards, the quality of care and curriculum provision are continually raised. The school has met its very high attainment targets for the current year and equally challenging targets have been set for the future. Senior leaders fulfil a crucial role in analysing data and tracking pupils' academic performance. Outstanding teamwork ensures that assessment information is fully shared with teachers and used by them to maintain the effectiveness of their teaching and to drive up standards and achievement. Leaders have developed excellent partnership links with schools and colleges which promote pupils' enterprise skills and work in the community very well. The school has progressed in all areas since the last inspection and has ensured that all required safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The school has excellent capacity to maintain its current quality.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Highly effective management of Foundation Stage provision ensures children's rapid progress. When children enter Reception their skills are in line with expectations for their age. They move into Year 1 having achieved all of their expected goals in all areas of learning with a significant number exceeding expectations. Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Parents report that children are keen to come to school. This is borne out by the enthusiasm they show for activities such as recording their singing on a disc or playing amicably with others in the outside area. Daily sessions focusing on letters and sounds greatly increase children's confidence with reading and writing skills. They happily browse through books, listen to stories and write meaningfully about the bean plants they are growing or how they made their animal face masks. Children's progress is monitored and assessed through very well planned learning activities, some of which are adult led and others chosen by children for themselves. Reception staff carefully observe and record what children achieve and time is spent at the end of the day in evaluating progress and planning the next steps. Parents are full of praise for the Foundation Stage because of the way children settle and make progress. They feel that they are made to feel welcome and appreciate the dialogue with teachers as much as they did the lessons linking letters and sounds which the Foundation Stage leader recently put on for them.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I'm sure you will remember that I inspected your school recently to find out how well you are learning. I must thank you very sincerely for the wonderful welcome you all gave me and the way you greeted me throughout the day. It was a pleasure to spend the day with you. I could not help noticing how happy you all are to be in school. I am not in the least surprised because you are all so beautifully behaved. You really do take care of one another and your manners and politeness are a credit to you. I was delighted to find out how regularly you all attend school. That's very important so keep it up. I hope every class wins the honour of looking after 'Buzzy Bee' at some time.

You have an outstanding school because your headteacher and teachers are excellent in the way they help you to achieve so well. In fact, all of the grown-ups in school take extremely good care of you. There are some wonderful opportunities for you to learn new and exciting things.

Your parents, teachers and school governors are just as proud of your school as you are and are always working very hard to make sure that that your school stays as good as it already is.

Well done everyone. I hope, Drama Club, that Buzzy Malone went well and that not too many people got seriously 'splurged'! Good luck to all of you.