

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

Pitt Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L1 5BY

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Almost all pupils make excellent progress at all key stages throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and staff, at all levels throughout the school, have very high expectations of pupils. This underpins pupils' excellent achievement.
- This is a very inclusive school where pupils are extremely well cared for through the school's excellent pastoral care systems. Bullying is rare and pupils feel very safe.
- Pupils are very polite and well mannered. Their behaviour and their attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- Attendance is above the national average and has continued to improve over recent years.
- The curriculum is planned to meet pupils' individual needs and prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. It also very effectively supports pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of leadership and management from the headteacher, senior leaders and governors is a strength of the school. Their commitment and determination to drive the continued improvement of teaching and pupils' achievement is an inspiration all staff, pupils and parents.
- Subject leaders and key stage managers do not have enough opportunities to take a more effective role in further school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Two observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked closely at the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's data on pupils' progress and work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors met with three members of the governing body, school staff and had telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils and listened to some Key Stage 1 pupils reading.
- The inspectors took account of the 63 responses from parents recorded in the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 39 responses to a parental survey carried out by the school in January 2012.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Catherine Beeks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Vincent de Paul is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a before-school breakfast club for some pupils. It is managed by the school's governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone extensive refurbishment to the majority of the school building.
- The school is a member of the Liverpool Learning Partnership.
- The school accommodates a Pupil Support Centre on the school site that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the role of subject and key stage leaders by involving them more fully in checking the quality of teaching to enable them to more effectively contribute to school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in numeracy. Some children's social and emotional development skills are exceptionally low. The first-rate teaching in Nursery and Reception classes enables children to make excellent progress. By the end of the Reception Year, the vast majority of children have developed skills that are typically expected for their age across all areas of learning, with a few achieving above that level.
- At Key Stage 1, the excellent progress made by pupils continues. Pupils say they enjoy reading and read regularly at home and school. They read with enthusiasm and confidence. They talk about events in the story and give reasons for the actions of the characters. This is helping to support their learning across a range of subjects and topics. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average.
- Between Years 3 and 6, pupils continue to make better than expected progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is well above the national average. In 2012, all pupils achieved at least Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving above Level 4 was well above the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Pupils are continuing to develop their mathematical skills extremely well through real life problem-solving activities that involve them fully.
- Current school data show that from Year 2 to Year 6 the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress from their varying starting points is increasing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are no significant gaps in pupils' attainment and progress between different groups of pupils, including those supported by pupil premium. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support such as one-to-one or small-group work focussing on literacy and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils and sometimes make even better progress than their classmates.
- Lesson observations, listening to pupils read and scrutiny of work confirm that current pupils are making outstanding progress.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching, throughout the school, is very well organised and planned. Work is set at precisely the right level for all pupils to achieve well. Teachers' high expectations and enthusiastic teaching fully involves pupils in their learning. The outstanding teaching provides pupils with many opportunities to become actively involved in lessons.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a clear focus on improving basic communication and numeracy skills. As a result of excellent teaching, children make outstanding progress. Teachers use the outside provision and structured play to support learning well. This provides children with exciting activities that stimulate them so they are attentive and enjoy learning.
- The whole-school reading programme is very effective and is accelerating the development of pupils' literacy skills across all key stages.
- Pupils respond well to their very well-organised guided reading and phonics sessions. Pupils make good use of their phonic skills (linking letters to the sounds that they make) to help them read difficult words. This enables pupils to make excellent progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects is first-rate. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were using their mathematical skills to find the cost of arranging a child's birthday party and in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were using their computer skills

to research and find the costs for organising a class trip to the cinema.

- Pupils' work is regularly marked with written comments that use praise to encourage and give guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants form very good relationships with teachers and their pupils. They are used very well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra help. In these lessons, pupils develop their skills and make progress that is consistent with all other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is impeccable. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered and are very welcoming towards visitors.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and enjoy their lessons. Some pupils said, 'We love everything about school ... teachers, the work and playtime' and 'It's the best school ever!' The relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and adults are exemplary. This promotes positive attitudes to learning and enables pupils to work well together or to get on sensibly with their work by themselves.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, all pupils learn about 'stranger danger', how to use the internet safely and how to swim.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying. They report that bullying is rare and any instances are quickly resolved. Pupils feel confident to talk to an adult if they have any concerns.
- The responses to the parental survey carried out by the school are positive. They indicate that the vast majority of parents agree that pupils behave well in school, that they are not bullied and that they are well cared for at school.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop as responsible individuals. For example, as play leaders or as buddies to help younger pupils. Members of the 'Bright Ideas' group have been actively involved in suggesting improvements to the outdoor areas, such as the adventure playground area. Pupils are also actively involved in raising money for charities, such as Comic Relief, Kids in Need and Distress, CAFOD and to support the education of two children in Malole, Zambia.
- The excellent pastoral system ensures that pupils are cared for well. Effective partnerships with parents and external agencies are a strong feature of the school. Children who display any cause for concern are identified early and this ensures that appropriate support is provided. The school's support for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable is very effective.
- Some pupils attend the before-school breakfast club. Here, pupils are very well supported through effective supervision and a range of activities in a lively, caring and secure setting. Their manners and regard for each other are exemplary.
- Attendance has been improving steadily over recent years and is above the national average. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time, which mirrors their positive attitudes towards learning and enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body know the school exceptionally well. They have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for further development. There is rightly a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, which are its main priorities.
- Regular observations of lessons and systems to check and improve the quality of teaching and learning are effective and provide teachers with accurate feedback on their performance. This information is used well to provide a relevant programme of staff training, and to advise the governing body about teachers' pay awards. However, the school does not always make full use

of subject leaders and key stage managers in its processes to help check the quality of teaching, identify best practice and to identify areas for further improvement.

- The school's robust systems for checking pupils' progress are very effective. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and additional support is provided. This shows the school's commitment to offering equality of opportunity for all its pupils.
- The curriculum is extremely well planned so that it meets pupils' interests. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills and prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.
- The recently refurbished classrooms and general learning areas, together with displays of pupils' work, provide a stimulating learning environment that has a very positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The school also offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include activities such as sports clubs, music, cookery and residential trips to Shropshire, North Wales and France. These activities also help them to extend their range of academic and social skills and contribute significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's membership of the Liverpool Learning Partnership is beginning to have a positive impact to further support school leadership and management and provide further training opportunities for staff.
- The school has benefited from the local authority's effective and valuable advice and support to develop further the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well because of the information they receive and from regular visits to the school. This enables them to effectively challenge and support school leaders at all levels. They understand the connection between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for pay progression. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's finances. This includes allocating the pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support and additional resources to improve the literacy and mathematical skills of pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104667
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	411750

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Mullin
Headteacher	Philip Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2007
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