

Inspection of St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School Pitt Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L1 5BY

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 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. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto, 'serving with love, striving for excellence', permeates the way in which pupils and staff treat one another. Differences between people are celebrated. Pupils who arrive at the school from different countries are welcomed with open arms. Pupils are very proud of their school. They feel well cared for by staff who know them and their families well. Pupils are friendly and polite, showing patience and understanding to one another. Pupils, including children in the early years, know that they are expected to behave well and they do so. As a result, the school is calm and purposeful.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning. They benefit from the support that they receive to flourish socially and emotionally. This ensures that they are ready to learn. Pupils achieve well, especially by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils are proud of the leadership roles that they hold. They vote for school council members who help with the organisation of charity fundraising events. Prefects help to keep the lunch hall tidy and litter pickers take care of the school grounds. In addition, pupils enjoy participating in a range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as running, dance, chess and guitar clubs.

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum. In key stages 1 and 2, the subject curriculums set out the most important knowledge that pupils need to gain. This gives teachers the information that they need so that pupils can learn all they need to know. However, in some areas of learning in early years, the curriculum guidance that staff receive is not as helpful. The small steps of learning that build to the end-of-year goals are unclear. This hinders some children from learning all that they need in order to be fully prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

In most subjects, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress through the curriculum well. Teachers check what pupils have learned so that misconceptions are addressed quickly. However, in a small number of subjects, some pupils are not able to build successfully on previous learning. This is because teachers have not identified gaps in pupils' knowledge that have been caused by weaker curriculums in the past.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. This starts as soon as children begin in the Nursery class where they are actively encouraged to join in with songs and rhymes. They enjoy listening to their teachers read familiar stories aloud so that they can identify and talk about the characters that they know. In the Reception class, the phonics programme starts swiftly. Children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1, learn the sounds that they need to know to help them read. Staff select books that are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils already know. Pupils like to read and they know why it is important to become a good reader. Older pupils read with accuracy and expression.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Staff are well trained and adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils behave well and are a credit to the school. They approach their lessons with a positive mindset. In class they listen intently to their teachers and one another. They relish learning new knowledge and skills.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. This has been a particular priority as the COVID-19 pandemic left its mark on pupils' social and emotional development and their mental health. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They also find out how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong.

The school invests in developing the expertise of staff. This gives staff the strong subject knowledge that they need to teach well. Teachers value the training that they receive. They also appreciate the care and support that the school offers to support their well-being and workload. Governors know the school very well. They give support and challenge which enables the school to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some pupils have gaps in important knowledge which have not been identified. This was due to weaknesses in the previous curriculums. This means that, on occasion, pupils are introduced to new learning without their prior knowledge being secure. This hinders them from learning all that they could. The school should ensure that gaps in learning are identified so that new knowledge and skills can build securely.
- In some areas of learning in the early years, the curriculum is unclear about what children should know and be able to do. This hampers staff's ability to build on children's prior learning. As a result, some children are not fully prepared for Year 1. The school should ensure that the early years curriculum clearly identifies what staff should deliver and children should learn so that they achieve success in all areas of learning.

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	104667
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10337619
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	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Eithne Proffitt
Headteacher	Lisa Salters
Website	www.stvincentdepaulprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2013, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in November 2018. The next inspection is scheduled to take place in the 2025/26 academic year.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school provision each day.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

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

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, science and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority and the archdiocese.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. They looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Olivia Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Gower-Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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