

# Inspection of Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1NJ

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Many pupils are very happy here. They feel valued as unique individuals. Respecting differences is incredibly important. There are high levels of respect towards anyone who is different. Pupils are keen to share their views and opinions. They know their peers will listen attentively to them while they do this.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils work hard to reach these expectations. They behave well during lessons and in their free time. Older pupils help younger children to settle into the school day by supporting them to play games at the breakfast club. The dining hall is an enjoyable place for pupils to eat and chat with their friends about their day.

Pupils are proud to be a part of the school community. Members of the pupil parliament value the opportunities the school provides for them to make a difference. They are proud to represent the school at events such as laying the wreath at the Remembrance Day service.

Helping those less fortunate than them is something pupils are eager to do. The school listens to pupils' ideas on how to do this. Events such as fundraising for local and national charities supports pupils' strong moral purpose to help others.

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

The school has recently re-designed the curriculum in many subjects. The curriculum clearly identifies the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember from Nursery to Year 6. The school has sequenced this knowledge into a sensible order. This means lessons provide pupils with the opportunity to build on their learning over time. For the most part, many pupils have a secure understanding of what they have learned.

The school provides useful training for staff to develop their subject knowledge. Where this training has been most effective, teachers carefully introduce new content to pupils. They check that pupils have the prior knowledge they need to access this new learning. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. For example, in mathematics, pupils use their understanding of number to solve more complex mathematical problems. There are, however, occasions where teachers introduce new content before pupils are ready. In these instances, pupils have some gaps in their knowledge. Teachers do not adapt their teaching as well as they might. When this happens, pupils do not access the new learning as well as the school wants them to.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND with precision. This identification happens when children join the school in the early years. Useful training and guidance help staff to understand how to support pupils with SEND. Teachers carefully tailor activities so pupils with SEND can successfully access the

curriculum. For example, purposely planned opportunities for children in the early years to play with their peers, helps to develop important social skills.

A love of reading flows through the entire curriculum. Carefully chosen books provide pupils with a varied and rich reading diet. Children in the early years start learning to read as soon as they start school. Sharing stories and language is an important part of the day in both the Nursery and the Reception classes. Pupils who find reading hard are identified promptly. Well-trained staff then provide effective help. This enhances pupils' confidence and fluency when reading.

The school promotes the wider development of pupils in a range of ways. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum helps pupils to learn about positive relationships. Opportunities to represent the school in sporting events and as part of the school choir broaden pupils' experiences further. Visits to local places of interest, contribute to deepening pupils understanding of subjects learned in school.

Pupils typically behave well during lessons. They concentrate on their work and are excited to learn. They also attend school frequently. The school quickly addresses concerns if a pupil's attendance becomes an issue.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have carefully managed the introduction of new approaches to the curriculum. This has supported staff to manage their own workload and wellbeing. Staff are very proud to work at the school. They appreciate the way leaders support them.

The monitoring of the new curriculum is in its infancy. In some subjects, the school has only just begun to check how well the curriculum is working. Leaders at all levels are aware of this. They understand the importance of developing how subject leaders monitor their subjects so they can identify where they might make improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are some instances where teachers introduce new content before pupils have secured their understanding of the important prior knowledge they need. When this happens, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that make it hard for them to access new content. The school should ensure staff have the knowledge they need to be able to identify the gaps pupils have and adapt their teaching accordingly.

- In some subjects, where the curriculum is new, the monitoring of the effectiveness of these curriculums has just begun. Some subject leaders have only started to understand where the curriculum is working well and where it needs to improve. The school should ensure they provide subject leaders with the knowledge and guidance they need to identify how to improve the quality of education in their subjects.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117498
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294985
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	438
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Sloan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alexandra Whitty (acting headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk">www.stvincent.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been recent changes to leadership across the school. The acting headteacher took up the post in September 2023. Previously she had been deputy headteacher since April 2022.
- The acting deputy headteacher took on this role in September 2023 having previously been the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo).
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils on site.
- The school runs nursery provision for children aged three and four.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act was in March 2023. The next section 48 inspection will be in 8 years.

## 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, the SENCo, subject leaders, staff, governors, a representative from the local authority, a representative from the diocese and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- Inspectors also considered curriculum design, met with pupils and reviewed pupils work in art. Examples of work from history, geography and science were also reviewed.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, school development plans, records of visits from the local authority and the diocese and school policies.
- Inspectors considered 104 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with parents as they arrived at school.
- There were 142 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors also spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 42 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors also met with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

## **Inspection team**

Michael Williams, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bryony Surtees	Ofsted Inspector
James Adkins	Ofsted Inspector

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