

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7 1EJ

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors are committed to the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need development.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They said that adults will help them if they have any concerns.
- The school provides a warm, caring and nurturing environment, underpinned by strong Catholic values.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They value opportunities to develop their professional skills.
- Leaders and teachers check pupils' progress regularly. Pupils who are falling behind receive additional support and help to catch up.
- The curriculum is a strength. It engages pupils' interests, and is broad.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and polite.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through a wide ranging extra-curricular provision.
- The early years provision enables children to achieve well.
- The progress pupils make in reading is below the national average.
- Leaders do analyse pupils' performance. However, they do not always act quickly enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make equally strong progress.
- Teaching does not typically provide sufficient challenge to enable pupils to achieve the progress of which they are capable, especially the most able.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the focus on reading to enable pupils to make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Ensure that leaders review pupils' progress robustly to make sure that all groups of pupils make equally good progress, especially the most able.
- Ensure that teaching and assessment consistently challenge all pupils to achieve their best.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher ensures that strong Catholic values are at the heart of the school's work. Leaders are committed to ensuring that the learning environment is one where pupils are cared for and supported to achieve their best.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and areas that need to improve further. They recognise that some aspects of the 2018 outcomes were not good enough, for example in reading and mathematics. Positive action is being taken to address these areas.
- Leaders use data well to check the progress that individual pupils make. However, they do not routinely check the overall progress that some groups of pupils are making, for example the most able. This does not enable leaders to identify trends in the performance of groups of pupils, which may require focused and swift action. The school has worked more closely with other schools this year, to check that the school's assessment information is accurate.
- Middle leaders are relatively new in post, but are increasingly taking responsibility for leading improvements in their areas.
- Teachers value the opportunities they have to work with colleagues from their own and other schools, and to share best practice to develop their professional skills. Staff who are new to the profession feel supported and enjoy their work.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used well to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils. In addition, the school uses the sports funding well to increase opportunities for physical exercise.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. It provides a range of well-thought-out opportunities, which develop pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, pupils particularly enjoy attending forest school one day a week. Pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 enjoy and are stimulated by learning history, science and religious studies.
- Leaders have put in place an interesting range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in sports activities and dance events. They grow their own fruit and vegetables. These activities enable pupils to develop additional skills and qualities.
- British values are strongly promoted through assemblies, the curriculum and visits out of school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about visiting the Houses of Parliament, and participating in a mock trial at the Royal Courts of Justice.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The Vincentian Values, which include respect, fairness and responsibility, are central to daily school life. Pupils have a reflection space and a prayer garden, which they designed. They spoke with maturity about how they have learned to show compassion during conflict.

Governance of the school

- Governors support events at the school, and are committed to the well-being of pupils. They are clear about their statutory responsibilities. They ensure that the funding to

support disadvantaged pupils is spent well and has a positive impact on outcomes for those pupils.

- Governors understand their responsibility in relation to safeguarding pupils and have received the relevant training.
- The governing body have a good understanding of the priorities of the school. They receive regular information from the headteacher and other leaders. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school, and that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff receive regular and relevant training. They understand how and where to report any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare.
- Working relationships between staff who have specific safeguarding responsibilities and outside agencies are appropriate to safeguard pupils' welfare.
- Pupils said that they feel safe, and that there is always an adult they can talk to if they are worried about anything. They said they can also use a 'worry box' and a reflective journal if they need help with anything.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to write for different purposes. They are encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils are confident to edit their work, and improve it. As a result, pupils' work shows examples of high-quality writing and strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers develop pupils' phonics skills effectively. Pupils use their phonics skills well to decode unfamiliar words when they are reading. Leaders have put in place a range of methods to develop pupils' reading, which are having a positive impact. These include purchasing more interesting and challenging books, and inviting an author into school. However, progress in reading, particularly for the most able pupils, remains a key priority for the school.
- In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to develop their reasoning skills. Pupils make strong progress when questioning is used effectively to help them to explain their reasoning. However, some pupils feel they are capable of tackling more difficult work across a range of topics.
- Teachers' feedback and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work follow the school's policy. As a result, most pupils have the opportunity to address misconceptions and strengthen their knowledge and understanding.
- The school has a clear assessment policy, and pupils are assessed several times throughout the school year. Pupils' work is checked against that of other pupils in different schools to ensure that teachers assess accurately. Any pupils who fall behind are given additional support to make improved progress.

- The school recently reviewed its approach to homework, after consultation with parents, carers and pupils. It is early days, but most pupils we spoke to said that homework supports their learning in lessons.
- Sometimes, teachers do not plan activities which consistently challenge pupils well enough in their learning. This reduces their ability to achieve higher standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand the 'Vincentian Code', which is effective in promoting pupils' compassion, care and love. Pupils said that they follow these principles, which guide them in their approach to school and learning.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. For example, through the school parliament, as anti-bullying ambassadors and, in Year 6, the 'mini vinnies', whose slogan is 'turning concern into action'.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of their social responsibilities, and are eager to raise money for charities and support needy causes. For example, pupils have chosen to support local food banks, MacMillan Cancer and Water Aid.
- Pupils told inspectors that that they feel safe in school and know how to keep safe, for example when online. They said that they learn about how to keep safe as 'independent travellers', to help them go home on their own from school. Pupils said that bullying is rare and that, if it does happen, it is dealt with effectively.
- The majority of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and from parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the school. One parent said: 'The school is a very nurturing environment. Staff promote the Catholic ethos by supporting good education, alongside the teaching of good values.' However, some parents expressed concern that the school does not deal well with bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have put new systems in place to help teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Most pupils are clear about the school's expectations of their conduct, and they understand what is right and wrong in school. They said that behaviour is much better this year.
- Pupils are very polite, courteous and respectful when speaking to visitors, staff and each other. The school environment is calm and orderly.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision behave well and attend regularly.
- The number of pupils who are excluded from school is below the national average. The school has a range of approaches, including 'restorative justice', to help pupils to manage their behaviour.
- Whole-school attendance is above the national average. Leaders ensure that

attendance is good. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is well below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth across the three subjects was in line with the national average.
- At the end of key stage 2, pupils made average progress in writing and mathematics, but below average progress in reading. Pupils' attainment in the spelling, grammar and punctuation tests, at the end of key stage 2, was above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 did not make the same progress in reading and mathematics as their peers from similar starting points. They made better progress in writing than their peers.
- Most-able pupils did not make the same progress as their peers from similar starting points in reading and mathematics, both at key stages 1 and 2. The progress of most-able pupils remains a key priority for the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make less progress than their peers, regardless of their starting points.
- By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the national standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average.
- The work in pupils' books shows that most pupils, including those with SEND, make good progress from their starting points. This is supported by the school's current assessment information for all year groups.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, across the curriculum, is improving relative to their peers.

Early years provision

Good

- New leaders in the early years are knowledgeable, and have high aspirations for children. Many children start Reception with skills below those expected for their age.
- Staff have strong relationships with the children. As a result, children develop positive routines, enjoy their environment and settle into Reception well. Links with parents are effective in supporting this.
- Teachers have a good understanding of children's needs and provide a variety of interesting activities which encourage them to learn. The new outside space is safe, well equipped and inviting. Behaviour is good, and children play happily with their peers.
- Well-trained staff support children effectively with their learning. Phonics is well taught and reading is encouraged. In their mathematical work, children develop strong

counting and number skills.

- Currently, some children find writing difficult to master. Recent decisions to give more opportunities for children to write are beginning to have an impact on the quality of writing.
- Strong assessment practices identify children who need additional support, and those who are ready to progress further. Teachers use this information to plan for children's next steps in learning, and to adapt the curriculum, if necessary.
- In 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average.
- Work seen for current children shows that most are making strong progress towards achieving a good level of development. This is supported by the detailed assessment information provided by the school.

School details

Unique reference number	101334
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10058995

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Gradwell
Headteacher	Marie Tuohy
Telephone number	020 8959 3417
Website	www.stvincentscatholicprimarymillhill.org.uk
Email address	office@stvincents.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 July 2008

Information about this school

- The school is of a religious character and is part of the Diocese of Westminster.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects throughout the school. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work. They observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtimes, and at lesson changeover times.
- Documentation, policies and the school's practices were scrutinised, in particular with regard to behaviour, bullying, safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, two governors and members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and formally, including during visits to lessons.
- Inspectors considered the views of 74 parents who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of 26 staff and 164 pupils who completed Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Sarah Parker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sahreen Siddiqui	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector

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