

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique reference number | 101239 |
| Local authority | Barking and Dagenham |
| Inspection number | 376530 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 May 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Gulshanbir Kayembe |

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

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 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 | 232 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Brian Tobin |
| Headteacher | Rachel Mahon |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 March 2009 |
| School address | Burnside Road Dagenham RM8 2JN |
| Telephone number | 020 8270 6695 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe

Additional Inspector

Michael Phipps

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors saw 15 lessons taught by eight teachers and made a few shorter visits to classrooms. They held meetings with groups of pupils and heard some reading. Inspectors also held discussions with members of staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. The team observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documents, plans and records related to behaviour, safety and pupils' achievements. As part of the inspection, the team also analysed questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 141 parents and carers.

Information about the school

St Vincent's is an average-sized school with more boys than girls on roll. The large majority of pupils, about 75%, are from a broad range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group are of Black African origin. A quarter of the pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the norm found nationally, though most are fluent speakers of English. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average. However, the number with a statement of special educational needs or receiving support at school action plus is above the national average. Most of these pupils have speech and language difficulties. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected for pupils' achievement and progress. The school has a higher than usual number of pupils who join midway through their primary education. The Nursery is part-time and has morning sessions only.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key findings

- St Vincent's Catholic Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Consequently, they achieve well and are well prepared for their next step in education. The school is not outstanding because inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics mean that achievement in mathematics is not as good as in English.
- Children make good progress in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good progress continues through Years 1 to 6 but is stronger in English than in mathematics. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy support their learning well across the curriculum.
- Teaching is good, although more consistent in English than mathematics. Marking in English is exemplary; however, this is not the case in mathematics. In a few lessons in mathematics, teachers talk for too long and the pace of pupils' learning slows. There are also a few occasions in mathematics when work is not closely enough matched to the needs of different ability groups. A highly personalised approach, resulting in lively engagement of pupils in their learning, are key features where teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently good and they move around the school in an orderly fashion. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their teachers, their learning and each other. All parents and carers responding to the Ofsted questionnaire agree that their children are safe. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by her deputy headteacher and the governing body. The school makes good use of performance management and coaching of staff to improve performance in teaching and the achievement of pupils. Staff track pupils' progress rigorously to identify and support any whose performance begins to slip or slow down.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching in mathematics and raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that work is well matched to the needs of different groups in all lessons
 - providing pupils with clear guidance when work is marked on how to improve
 - ensuring teachers do not talk for too long in lessons and that there are increased opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative.

- Move teaching from good to outstanding by replicating the key features of outstanding teaching and learning more widely across the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children begin school with low levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in aspects of personal, social and emotional development and communication, literacy and language. However, they make good progress in their early learning so that by the end of their Reception Year, although they are still below the expected levels, they are closer to national norms. Those who join with little or no English make rapid progress in learning to speak it because the good use of practical activities helps learning to be much more accessible.

In Key Stage 1, pupils develop reading skills well so that these are in line with national averages by the end of Year 2. They build well on the work on letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and strengthen both their reading and spelling skills as they move through Years 1 and 2. Pupils develop a good range of strategies for reading new words correctly and this supports them well in becoming independent readers. By the end of Year 6, reading standards are above average.

Parents and carers are very positive about the progress their children are making and almost all pupils agree they learn a lot in lessons. Inspection evidence supports this and boys do as well as girls. Good progress in Key Stage 2 leads to secure levels of attainment which are rising steadily, and especially so in English, where the school has had a specific focus. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average but sometimes higher. This is partly because of small cohorts and partly the impact of pupils joining from other schools mid-way through Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that many of these pupils arrive with low attainment and gaps in their education but make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in their learning because their needs are identified early on and they are given effective specialist support. Teaching assistants are well trained to help those with reading difficulties and to support in lessons, and

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have a positive impact on the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There are no significant differences in progress or learning based on ethnicity or other factors. Pupils speaking English as an additional language do well.

In lessons, many pupils make outstanding progress in their writing, especially in Key Stage 1. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were so excited about their work, they could not wait to put their ideas down on paper. Consequently, they wrote energetically, producing text of quality with interesting vocabulary and excellent attention to spelling and grammar. In mathematics, while overall progress is reasonably good, and improving, it is not as consistently good or better as in English. On occasions, pupils spend a little too much time listening to teachers' explanations at the expense of practising how to solve problems by themselves or discussing mathematical ideas with one another. This slows the pace of their learning. Good opportunities for practical work in science help pupils to develop their understanding of scientific principles and ideas. Pupils also make good progress in other areas of the curriculum through good use of the International Primary Curriculum. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology develop well through regular use of computers to support learning in other subjects.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers organise their classrooms effectively for learning and manage behaviour well. They identify clear learning objectives based on their good understanding of pupils' next steps in learning. In the best lessons, expected learning outcomes are exceptionally well matched to the differing needs of pupils. This ensures skilful tailoring to individual needs of resources and tasks that enthuse and inspire pupils and secure high levels of active engagement. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, pupils' imaginations were fired up by watching clips of a popular talent show. These helped them to take on the role of newspaper critics and to plan and produce high quality reviews of imaginary acts. In some good lessons, pupils' engagement, while effective and sustained, is not quite as lively or intense because tasks and resources, though well developed, are not quite as exciting. In mathematics, work is not always closely matched to the learning needs of all groups so it is too hard for some or easy for others.

Teachers in all lessons use questioning skilfully to probe and extend pupils' thinking. Teaching assistants come to lessons well briefed and successfully support individuals and small groups, particularly those with disability or special educational needs. In English, teachers provide clear and precise comments on what pupils need to do to make their work better. However, in mathematics, though books are marked and work is corrected, written comments for next steps in learning are less well developed. Despite this, almost all parents and carers agree that their children are well taught. Pupils say lessons are fun.

Teaching and learning are well supported by the school's curriculum. The writing programme is used exceptionally well to promote pupils' written work. Reading is

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taught well, with good attention to letters and sounds. The International Primary Curriculum provides a clear framework for teaching subjects such as geography and history. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the balance between activities chosen by children and those led by adults is good. Pupils' social development is well promoted in most lessons through, for example, the use of 'talk partners' and group work. Teachers use their strong relationships with pupils to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well which in turn engenders self-confidence and raises self-esteem.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour in lessons and their excellent attendance support their learning well. Even when required to listen for extended periods, younger pupils do their best to concentrate and older ones remain well focused. On the few occasions when pupils bubble over with excitement and start to talk at once, they respond rapidly to teachers' requests to be more orderly. School records indicate that behaviour is typically good. Pupils say that they get on well with one another and that, as one pupil put it, 'the school is like one big family'. On occasions some fall out with one another but pupils are increasingly effective in resolving minor issues by themselves. This helps to maintain the good relationships amongst them.

Incidents of bullying are infrequent and pupils are all clear about whom to go to should they have a concern. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that behaviour in the school and in lessons is good. The school's rewards and sanctions policies are well understood by pupils and applied consistently by staff. Behaviour is consistently well managed across the school and, in the rare instances a more serious issue occurs, such as bullying, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils are adamant that name-calling or bullying on the basis of race, or other forms of prejudice, is wrong and rarely happens. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet or when riding a bicycle. Parents and carers are highly positive about how well the school looks after their children and all agree that children are safe at school.

Leadership and management

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher sets a firm and clear direction for development that is well focused on raising achievement. Systems for tracking pupil progress are well established and frequent meetings to examine how well pupils are achieving mean that the school picks up any signs of underperformance quickly. Leadership of special educational needs is effective, with very timely identification of difficulties. Senior leaders, including the Early Years Foundation Stage co-ordinator, make good use of information from monitoring of teaching and learning to feed into plans for professional development and in setting performance management objectives for staff.

The governing body oversees the school's work effectively and asks challenging questions. It is developing their monitoring role further by becoming more actively

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involved with the school. It also ensures that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school has made good progress in addressing issues from the last inspection and in improving provision especially for English. A successful curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A number of initiatives to improve provision in mathematics are already being implemented, though have yet to have full impact. For example, a new and more robust calculation policy has been developed and this has improved staff confidence in teaching how to solve problems. Given its past record, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

The school pays good attention to equal opportunities. The engagement and outcomes for different groups of pupils are well monitored. The often wide gap in attainment between boys and girls when they begin school is narrowed considerably by the end of Year 6 because of the focused and targeted support provided to boys. The school addresses discriminatory behaviour, such as occasional racist behaviour from pupils, decisively.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Dagenham RM8 2JN

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your school recently and for sharing your views with us. We really enjoyed talking to you and observing you in your lessons. Your school is giving you a good education and this ensures that you make good progress in your learning, especially in your reading and writing. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a good start to their education and enjoy the practical activities provided for them. These help them to develop their knowledge and skills.

You told us how much you enjoy school and this is reflected in your high levels of attendance and the enthusiastic way you get on with work in lessons. You also told us that you get on well with one another. We were impressed with how well you talked through problems and ideas with a 'talk partner' in lessons and noticed that this really helped your learning.

Staff look after you well and you appreciate the help they give you. The way in which help is provided for pupils who find learning difficult is really good. Those of you with a special educational need are well supported and make good progress as a result.

Your headteacher and other staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have asked the school to do two things.

- It should help you to do better in mathematics by making sure that you work at the right level for your needs and that teachers show you how to improve. It should also make sure that teachers do not talk for too long so that you have enough time to practise doing problems on our own.
- It should make sure that teaching gets even better by building on the examples of the best teaching across the school.

To help your school improve, continue to do your best work at all times and keep up your high level of attendance. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe
Lead inspector

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