

St Vincent's RC Primary School

Monkchester Road, Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE6 2TX

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Leaders' clear plans for improvement have not yet had time to secure pupils' good achievement, including in the early years.
- Standards are below average across the school and too few pupils make good progress, especially in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school remains wide.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Occasionally, work is not sufficiently well planned to challenge all groups of pupils. Pupils are not always moved on to harder work quickly enough.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work or given enough time to act upon any advice given.
- The targets for pupils' progress in the school's plan for the future and for teachers' performance are not rigorous enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good or better progress to close the gaps in their learning.
- When school leaders monitor the quality of teaching there is not a strong enough focus on pupils' learning and progress.
- Some leaders are still developing their skills. As a result, some key areas identified for improvement have not improved rapidly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- In 2014, more pupils than in the recent past reached the standards expected for their age at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 6 made good progress in Key Stage 2.
- There is some outstanding teaching of writing over time. Pupils are encouraged to write regularly in English and other subjects.
- Pupils are helped to see the links between subjects and enjoy the topics they learn about.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They care extremely well for one another and say they feel very safe.
- Attendance has improved and is average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It offers sensitive care and support and provides very well for pupils' well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their understanding of British values.
- The headteacher and the governing body have ensured the school has improved in the past year. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured assessment is accurate and introduced clear systems to check how well the school is doing.
- As a result, there is more good and outstanding teaching, behaviour has improved and the school is a safe and lively place to learn.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. The inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during assembly, lunchtimes and break times.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons taught by eight teachers and a sports coach. They listened to groups of pupils in Year 1 read. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons.
- The lead inspector conducted three lesson observations jointly with the headteacher. He also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on her findings regarding the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be published. However, inspectors spoke informally to parents to gather their views about the school.
- Thirteen staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucie Stephenson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average. The term disadvantaged is used to describe those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority. Both these groups are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. The proportions of pupils supported through school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average.
- The school hosts breakfast, lunch-time and after-school clubs run by school staff, volunteers and external coaches.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- There were disruptions to staffing last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to close the gap for disadvantaged pupils, raise standards and rates of pupils' progress, especially in mathematics and in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring work is planned at the correct level of challenge for all groups of pupils, especially in mathematics and as pupils enter Year 1
 - ensuring that when pupils are able to, they are moved on to tackle harder work
 - ensuring that pupils are given clear information about how they can improve their work and act upon that advice.
- Ensure children make good progress in the early years, by:
 - ensuring activities that children choose for themselves, indoors and outdoors, have clear learning intentions that ensure children make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum
 - further developing the assessment of children's skills and abilities so gaps in their learning can be identified and addressed.
- Increase the impact of leaders at all levels on pupils' attainment and progress, by:
 - ensuring the targets for pupils' progress in the school's plan for the future and teachers' performance are rigorous enough to ensure pupils are helped to make good or better progress
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is clearly focused on the impact it has on pupils' learning and progress over time
 - further developing the skills of the senior leadership team so that leaders are helped to bring about improvements.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the school. While plans have not yet had time to ensure that this is a good school, there have been recent clear improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Assessment across school is accurate and teachers understand how to measure pupils' progress. There are now more exciting experiences for pupils in their lessons and in activities and learning outside lessons. As a result, behaviour and attendance have improved.
- The school is a caring, safe and calm place, which enables teachers and pupils to improve their skills.
- The headteacher has an extremely clear view of the school's strengths and the areas where it needs to improve further. She has tackled inadequate teaching and established a senior leadership team which has accepted responsibility and accountability for areas of the curriculum and their own classes. There has been effective ongoing training for teachers.
- However, some leaders who are new to their role are still developing their skills. As a result, some key areas for improvement have not improved rapidly enough.
- The school's plans for the future have appropriate areas for development and clear procedures to check their impact regularly. Salary progression has been used to begin to improve teaching and raise standards because teachers are very clear that they will only be rewarded when their pupils have done as well as, or better than, they should have done.
- However, the targets for pupils' progress and attainment in these plans and in teachers' performance are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good or better progress to close the gaps in their learning.
- The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching. She understands what constitutes good teaching and judges it accurately. She is clear in her feedback to teachers, who respect and welcome her advice. She is well supported in this by other senior and middle leaders who regularly monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning through observing lessons and looking at pupils' work.
- However, there is too little focus on the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning and progress over time. As a result, pupils' progress remain variable across school and teaching requires improvement overall.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively to create links with other schools and to support the school's new involvement in competitive team sports. The funding has been used to employ coaches who have introduced new sports such as football and basketball. Coaches are also helping develop teachers' own expertise in teaching physical education. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons. This is contributing well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- While the school focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, it also now provides many interesting opportunities for pupils to broaden their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their understanding of British values through, for example, the study of geography, history and science, and through a range of educational visits.
- The school welcomes the support and advice it receives from the local authority and from its education partner. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and assessment in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have rigorously reviewed their impact and now offer robust challenge and strong support to the school. They say that the Chair of the Governing Body is very knowledgeable. He is well supported by other governors who understand the school because they have relevant professional expertise. They have clear areas of responsibility which they regularly check through a programme of school visits. Governors have clear systems to closely check plans for the future, the quality of teaching, the achievement of pupils and the curriculum although these have not yet been fully effective in ensuring that this is a good school.
 - Governors understand the arrangements to check on teachers' performance and any rewards for good teaching. The budget is well managed, for example, additional resources have been targeted on improving the early years provision. They keep a close eye on the way in which the pupil premium funding and the primary physical education and sports funding are spent. They are aware that while the sports funding has had a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being, the pupil premium funding, whilst beginning to help disadvantaged pupils improve their progress, has not yet had the necessary impact on their attainment. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been cleared as suitable to work with children and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Inspection evidence shows that behaviour is good in lessons, around school, in assembly and in the dining hall. Indeed, when pupils are fully engaged in their learning their behaviour is excellent. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and is typically good, although occasionally a very few pupils can be disruptive in lessons. Sometimes pupils' attention in lessons wanes when they have to wait to get started on activities or work is not hard enough.
- The school's records show that instances of poor behaviour are rare and have decreased significantly. This is because pupils have been involved in making school and class rules and so understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour on their learning. There is also good support and advice offered to the very few pupils in school who find good behaviour difficult through play therapy. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions in the past three years.
- Pupils show clear respect for one another, are very polite to adults and keen to talk about their school and their work. Older pupils show maturity and enjoy taking on responsibilities as school councillors, looking after children in the Reception class and as playground friends helping others play safely and enjoyably together. The school council has developed the playground equipment, been involved in appointing teachers and raised funds for charities.
- Pupils develop good social skills through the many opportunities to learn together in the classroom and recently introduced school clubs. They particularly enjoy learning together when they have the chance to do role play and debating activities. They enjoy singing and dancing together in assemblies.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and pupils are certain that pupils are safe and happy in school. There are rigorous procedures to ensure that this is indeed the case with all adults offering highly effective and sensitive care to pupils.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe. They are very aware of different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and racist name-calling. They say that there is very little bullying and if incidents do occur they are quickly dealt with. Pupils look after one another very well and are able to solve any problems between themselves or by asking their friends or adults to help them.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is average. The school has clear systems to check attendance and encourage pupils and parents to see the importance of coming to school. It is also because the changes to what pupils learn about mean that they now enjoy their learning.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, while there is clear evidence that it has improved in the past year, its impact on pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet consistently good in all classes and for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics requires improvement because too often work is not well planned to ensure that all groups of pupils are able to engage with tasks or that the most able pupils are engaged in challenging activities quickly enough. While some pupils are questioned well and make good progress when they are learning alongside their teachers, some misunderstandings are not addressed quickly enough when pupils are working independently or with their friends. New plans to improve pupils' number and calculation skills have not yet had time to raise standards or rates of progress.
- There is some outstanding teaching of writing over time. Activities are extremely exciting and engage pupils very well. For example, pupils are highly motivated by their visits to the forest and local museums and when they learn about the rainforest and the Tudors. These experiences help them to develop their ideas for writing through research, debate and role play. They are clear about the skills they need to develop, and are encouraged to write regularly and at length in English and other subjects. This helps them to make extremely rapid progress in closing the gaps in their writing skills.
- However, pupils' progress in writing requires improvement overall because this excellent approach is not yet shared between all teachers, in all classes and for all groups of pupils. This is most evident in Key Stage 1. Because pupils enter Year 1 with skills and abilities below the expectations for their age, it is taking longer for them to reach a point where they can begin to make good progress. Work is not always at the right level of challenge for different groups of pupils and opportunities are missed to encourage the most able pupils to develop their ideas.
- The school's marking policy is used consistently to help pupils understand how successful they have been in their work. Teachers' marking is less clear in helping pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve and they are not always offered sufficient time to act upon any advice given. While pupils are given targets for improvement they are not specific or rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils can close

the gaps in their learning.

- Recent improvements to the teaching of phonics and reading are helping pupils make more rapid progress in their reading and gain greater enjoyment from it. However, this remains variable across school and too few pupils currently in school are at the expectations for their age in reading.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved in the past three years and more pupils than in recent years attained the standards expected for their age. However, too few do better than this and standards remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provisional data indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 in 2014 are below average in mathematics, reading and writing. Good teaching in Year 2 helped these pupils catch up some lost ground. However, overall pupils made the progress expected of them from starting points which were below the expectation for their age when they entered Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen in the past two years and are now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, from starting points which were average at the end of Year 2, pupils made the progress expected of them, but too few pupils in Year 6 did better than this in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has addressed this issue. Provisional data indicate that in 2014 Year 6 pupils achieved the standards expected for their age overall in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils than in recent years achieved standards that were above this. Good teaching and well-targeted support in Year 6 helped pupils made good progress from their starting points at the end of Year 2.
- However, across the school, pupils remain below the expectations for their age and too few make or exceed the progress expected of them. This is because improvements to the quality of teaching have not yet had time to secure good or better progress for all age groups in all subjects. It is also because the targets for pupils' progress in the school's plans for the future and in the management of teachers' performance are not rigorous enough to ensure that pupils make up the ground lost in earlier years.
- Evidence in pupils' books and the school's data about pupils' progress show that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain standards that are well below those expected for their age. While improved teaching is helping these pupils to catch up with their learning, too few pupils have yet made good progress from starting points at the end of Year 2.
- The school has introduced plans which have been successful in ensuring that pupils are now making up for lost ground in their reading. Scores in the reading check for six year olds increased significantly in 2014. As a result, most pupils have a clear awareness of letters and the sounds they make and understand how this helps them to read words which are new to them. However, in most year groups pupils are below the expectations for their age.
- In 2013, the most able pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them and attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Unpublished data indicate that in 2014 more of the most able pupils than in the past made good progress and achieved the expected standards for their age. The most able pupils currently in Year 6 and across the school have been clearly identified. However, as yet work is not always well enough planned to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged and they do not get on to hard work quickly enough.
- In 2013, disadvantaged pupils made the progress expected of them. However, too few of them did better than this. Their attainment was half a year behind all pupils across the country and one term behind other pupils in the school in reading. They were two terms behind all pupils across the country and one year behind other pupils in the school in writing. They were two terms behind all pupils across the country and two terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics.
- Provisional data indicate that in 2014 more disadvantaged pupils than in the past made and exceeded the progress expected of them. This is due to the school spending pupil premium funding on programmes to develop these pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This is beginning to have an impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils but because of their lower starting points the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils remain wide, particularly in reading and writing. They were four terms behind other pupils in the school in reading, five terms behind in writing and two and a half terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the progress expected of them because the improved teaching and support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants has not yet time to ensure they are closing the gap between themselves and other pupils quickly enough.
- The school is now very clearly focused on identifying any pupils who are at risk of falling behind and

concentrates on ensuring that more pupils make at least good progress. While there is a delay between the recent improvement to teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement, this demonstrates that the school is spending the pupil-premium funding effectively and clearly shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- In the Reception class, in 2014, children made expected progress from starting points that were below those typical for their age. As a result, too few children reached a good level of development as they entered Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision have improved but still require further improvement. This is because the early years leader does not have a daily involvement with the Reception class and this hinders robust monitoring and her rapid identification of areas for development. Recent improvements to the assessment of children's skills and abilities are helping the teacher and teaching assistant to target learning more closely to the skills of different groups of children. However, this has not yet had time to ensure all groups of children are making good progress over time.
- Children make good progress when they are learn directly with their teacher or teaching assistant. They are questioned well and receive clear explanations about their learning, for example when counting or learning the sounds letters make. However, activities that children choose for themselves do not always have clear learning intentions, and new resources for outdoor learning have not yet been in place long enough to ensure children make good progress overall.
- There are now clear procedures to involve children and their parents before they start school. Most children quickly learn the routines of the Reception setting and are ready to learn. However, some children find this more difficult because there are too many interruptions to learning, for example, taking a morning break which disrupts the routine of children playing and learning together.
- Children from a widening range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds play well together and, along with their involvement in collective worship, this contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Adults ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are met. Children learn to understand how to stay healthy through playing safely on equipment, eating fruit and having hand washing routines.

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	108514
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	442226

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Willcock
Headteacher	Angela Ness
Date of previous school inspection	18 December 2012
Telephone number	0191 265 5049
Fax number	0191 265 6859
Email address	admin@stvincents.newcastle.sch.uk

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