

St Vincent's Voluntary Catholic Academy

Queens Road, Hull HU5 2QR

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The skilful and resolute leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school designate and the hard work of the whole school team have transformed learning since the school converted to become an academy.
- The school has rapidly improved because senior leaders and trust directors have tackled previous weaknesses with rigour.
- Leaders' and directors of the trust's continuing ambition to eradicate underperformance and to provide the best experiences for all pupils is translated into action, and this means the school is continuing to improve.
- The school benefits from a highly positive and caring culture in which kindness is promoted and valued.
- Outcomes for pupils are now good. Current pupils are mostly making strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Children in the early years are making a solid start in their learning. They benefit from a stimulating and engaging learning environment, working happily and cooperatively together.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils learn quickly and can apply their skills across all subjects. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders' planned and agreed actions to improve teaching still further are not yet consistently applied in every class.
- Occasionally, some teachers do not provide work that is suitably challenging for pupils, including the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils. As a result, some lose concentration and become distracted, and their progress can slow.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have respect and care for each other and are polite and friendly. They display excellent manners.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, work well together and are motivated to succeed.
- Some directors of the trust are new to the school and are still developing in their understanding and knowledge of it.
- Leaders have detailed plans to improve the school still further. Nevertheless, these plans lack a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching, and on the progress pupils make in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - ensuring that work is well matched to pupils’ needs and abilities and provides suitable challenge, especially for most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils
 - checking that agreed whole-school initiatives and actions to improve teaching are implemented consistently across every class.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - ensuring that planned actions for school improvement link clearly to improving the quality of teaching
 - checking that such planned actions are sharply focused on the measurable progress pupils make in their learning
 - ensuring that directors of the trust continue to develop in their knowledge and understanding of the school, and the specific issues and challenges it faces.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and the head of school designate have been unwavering in their determination to secure an excellent standard of education for pupils in the school. Alongside trust directors and senior leaders, they have worked tirelessly and successfully to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the rates of progress pupils make in their learning.
- Teachers work well together, are supportive of each other and appreciate the collegiate approach taken to school improvement in which they can share good practice and their successes in teaching. Teachers share leaders' ambition to provide the very best for the pupils in school, and are enthusiastic to see further improvements.
- Leaders and directors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what it needs to do to be even more successful. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are carefully planned, incisive and detailed.
- Leaders' plans for further improvements reflect a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and detailed, but lacks a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching in school. Targets set do not align closely with the progress pupils make in their learning.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced, and it is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. It is increasingly linked to the local culture and heritage in Hull, given the high proportion of pupils who arrive at the school from other countries. It provides varied and meaningful opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their writing skills. The curriculum is designed to ensure that it provides many opportunities for pupils to make visits out of school across the region such as to an art gallery, the seaside or the docks.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of after-school clubs such as crafts, modern foreign language, music, choir, Irish dancing and a selection of minority sports such as badminton, darts and table tennis. Pupils' interest and engagement are enhanced by 'enrichment weeks' for foundation subjects such as sculpture as part of an art project. These weeks also involve parents and carers in their children's work.
- Leaders have managed pupil premium effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils through additional members of staff and training for key members of staff to provide additional support. The positive impact of these actions is seen through the good progress now made by disadvantaged pupils across school, including the most able disadvantaged.
- Pupils' good personal development is in part due to a curriculum and school ethos that strongly contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons and in assemblies, the promotion of British values such as democracy and the rule of law prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Their individual needs are identified early and their progress, which is good, is tracked accurately. Consequently, the special educational needs funding is used effectively by

leaders.

- Links with parents are good, with many making positive comments when responding to the inspection online questionnaire. Parents say that they know the school promotes equality of opportunity well and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind, a view shared by inspectors.
- The physical education and sport funding for schools has been used well. Sports coaches have delivered lessons in school and provided access to various sports clubs outside of school, such as table tennis and badminton. This has also provided professional development opportunities for staff as they work alongside coaches in physical education lessons.
- The school receives appropriate and timely challenge and support from the trust's improvement partner which has effectively supported leaders in making the substantial improvements seen in the school since the previous inspection. The school has also benefited from cross-school collaboration with other schools within the trust, sharing ideas.

Governance of the school

- The board of directors are earnest and forthright about school improvement, and bring a wide range of professional and educational skills and experience to the school. They benefit from detailed information and reports from leaders.
- There have been recent changes to the scheme of delegation within the trust. As a result, many of the board of directors are new to St Vincent's. They have made a fast start in getting to know the school and the issues and challenges it faces. More time is needed for them to get to know the school in detail.
- Directors have ensured that a strong team of leaders are in place, and are determined and passionate to see the school thrive. They appreciate the importance of collaborative working between schools in the trust and are confident that successes in the other schools will benefit the ongoing work and drive for further improvements in St Vincent's.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly, happy and confident manner of the pupils at St Vincent's.
- Policies, procedures and records are of high quality and up to date. Summary records of concern are comprehensive and detail actions and timescales. All staff are appropriately trained and have access to well-written policies and guidance. As a result, they have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.
- The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff, and leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is much improved since the school converted to become an academy. The impact of teaching on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is reflected in the strong progress pupils now make in each year group.
- Lessons are usually lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination. For example, in Year 5, pupils' use of drama and performance enhanced their understanding of chosen vocabulary when reading part of a poem they had written on a chosen animal.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge and structure learning effectively. Pupils in Year 6 were able to find the mean, median and mode of a set of numbers because the lesson built carefully on existing knowledge and the teacher highlighted selected pupils' methods as a model for others.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and stick closely to the school's behaviour policy. Very occasional low-level disruption is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Work is usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and teachers are skilled at adapting and changing plans based on ongoing daily assessments of how well pupils grasp learning. On some occasions, work does not provide sufficient challenge, especially for most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are taught daily and consolidated regularly. For example, Year 4 pupils were converting units of measurement and rounding to the nearest millimetre, effectively using their knowledge of place value.
- Pupils write with enthusiasm and imagination, often because their writing is linked to the text or topic they are studying. Year 1 pupils enjoyed learning about conjunctions based on their class book, 'Wild' by Emily Hughes, and then used conjunctions to make more interesting sentences and enhance their story writing.
- As a result of the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children are getting off to a fast start in their reading. Adults are skilled in delivering well-structured lessons, pitched well according to pupils' reading skills. Strategies to teach reading to pupils for whom English is an additional language are successful.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and are skilled at giving timely help and support to individuals and groups of pupils. They work well as part of the teaching team at St Vincent's.
- Minor inconsistencies remain in the extent to which some teachers implement agreed whole-school actions and initiatives relating to teaching, for example in the application of the school's marking and feedback policy. These are quickly being resolved.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and work happily and cooperatively in lessons. They are becoming skilled at reviewing each other's work as part of the school's 'peer critique' initiative.
- Pupils thrive in the positive, well-ordered and caring school environment. Displays are bright and attractive and support learning well. Collaborative artwork around school celebrates love, forgiveness, kindness and charity. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and promoted very effectively. The school motto of 'kindness is the key to all hearts' typifies the ethos and values of the school very well.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at all times, including online. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very good. Other cultures are promoted alongside the 'language of the week', where pupils learn about countries such as Poland and China, as well as a few words in their languages.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships in school and high levels of trust between adults and pupils ensure that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite, courteous and have good manners. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily and can turn to 'playtime leaders' if they have any concerns.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and most work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning, and the very few instances of misbehaviour are deftly addressed.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is monitored closely every week. There are a range of strategies, including meetings with parents and free breakfast club places, and a wide range of rewards and incentives for pupils to attend. The rates of attendance are slowly improving, but remain below those found nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Progress and attainment have improved rapidly since the school converted to become an academy. Evidence from work in pupils' books, which matches the school's own tracking data, shows clearly that pupils are making consistently strong progress in English and mathematics, as well as in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils are making consistently strong progress across Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2016 Year 2 national testing was above national figures in writing and mathematics, and slightly below in reading. A similar proportion of pupils to that found nationally were working at greater depth.

- A large majority of pupils achieved very well in the 2016 national phonics screening check, representing good progress, given that for many of these pupils English is an additional language. The proportion who met the standard is very close to that found nationally.
- Progress is continuing to accelerate across key stage 2. In the 2016 national assessments, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who met the expected standard was above that found nationally in reading and mathematics, and similar in writing. Current pupils are making strong progress in their learning from their individual starting points in most year groups, with a much larger proportion working at standards for their age.
- The progress of the current most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils largely matches that of their classmates, and has accelerated since the start of the school year. A larger proportion of pupils could be working at greater depth if work set is consistently challenging to stretch their understanding.
- As a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils in each year group make good progress in English and mathematics. Although the number of disadvantaged pupils is too small in every year group to make any reliable statistical comparison, this small number of pupils achieve well.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils through activities which are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where needed, detailed individual support plans are in place, with challenging targets. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is largely good from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are eager to explore and learn. They enjoy opportunities provided to investigate and learn happily together. Their behaviour is consistently good. Children are encouraged to take turns and to consider others.
- Effective induction arrangements for children new to the school and the 'family group' system promote good personal, social and emotional development, allowing children to make a fast start in their learning.
- The vast majority of children start the early years with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, especially in speaking and communicating. As a result of good teaching and provision, careful observation and good questioning, children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Adults observe children carefully and build upon their interests. They carefully support children's learning through prompts and skilful questioning and work alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions. Activities and resources are chosen carefully, such as developing role-play areas based on real-life experiences for children. This has a marked impact on improving children's spoken language.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are promoted very effectively. In the sessions observed, children used apparatus to help them double single-digit numbers, but were further challenged to double larger numbers. Other children recorded

numbers that were one less or one more than two-digit numbers.

- The experienced and skilled early years leader understands the learning needs of young children and has successfully created an effective team of adults who share the same passion and drive to see young children thrive. She has a clear understanding of the strengths in early years, and has identified key areas for improvement such as ensuring that next steps in learning for children are individualised and specific.
- The early years team are skilled at providing activities that promote children's much-needed development in speech and communication, modelling language effectively.
- Leaders are vigilant in all aspects of safety and safeguarding children's welfare. Judging by the confidence and fun with which children play and learn, they clearly feel very safe, secure and happy.

School details

Unique reference number	140848
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	10031931

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mrs Vanessa Nolan
Executive headteacher	Mrs Karen Siedle
Head of school designate	Mrs Philippa Donnelly
Telephone number	01482 342645
Website	www.stvincentsprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head@st-vincents.hull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Vincent's Voluntary Catholic Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is a member of the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust. The trust is governed by a board of directors.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is well above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Early years provision is full time in the Reception Year.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which is the government's minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including two lessons observed jointly with the head of school designate. In addition, an inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read, and inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside the executive headteacher and the head of school designate.
- Inspectors held meetings with directors of the trust, the executive headteacher, the head of school designate and other members of the teaching staff. They also held meetings with pupils from the school council and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils, and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 parental responses to the online questionnaire, and the 28 responses to the online questionnaire for staff. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Cook

Ofsted Inspector

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