

St Vincent de Paul RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101144
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	276460
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2006
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Moruzzi Mr Jack O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Morpeth Terrace London SW1P 1EP
Telephone number	02076415990
Fax number	02076415901

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This one-form entry primary school is of average size and draws pupils from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster. It is closely linked to neighbouring Westminster Cathedral. It is situated in an inner city area near Victoria Station and is culturally diverse. Most of the pupils come from local housing estates. Almost two thirds of them speak English as an additional language, the main one being Spanish. The proportion of pupils whose families claim free school meals is broadly average. Fewer pupils are identified as having learning difficulties than is normally found. The school has strong links with local businesses.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve the outdoor areas for the Foundation Stage, ensuring that there is a covered shelter for all-weather work, large climbing apparatus for physical development and more frequent access for the Reception children.* The governing body should ensure that risk assessments for all visits are recorded in writing and kept safely.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, and this is reflected in their thorough planning. Together with their experience and expertise, teachers bring a real enthusiasm to their work and enjoy excellent relationships with their classes. Pupils rise magnificently to the challenges they are set and want to achieve their best. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote captions and labels about the process of fossilisation after a lively discussion with their teacher about fleshy parts rotting away! The school is a hive of activity, as each room buzzes with a joy of learning. Pupils readily work together and help each other. In some classes pupils take turns to be the 'chief listener'. Their role is to help other pupils with queries. Accurate assessment of pupils' progress enables teachers to plan work which meets all levels of ability. Children and pupils are quickly assessed when they join the school. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are very well taught, and encouraged to learn in their first language as well. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and excellent support is put in place. As a result, they make very good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. It is exciting and vibrant and very well adapted to meeting the needs of all pupils. There is a clear focus on pupils gaining basic skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT, but the school instils a great love of learning so that pupils just think they are having fun. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' personal development, including issues raised in assemblies. On one occasion, pupils discussed the nature of democracy with reference to what sized footballs they would be allowed to use in the playground! The school celebrates the rich diversity of its pupils' backgrounds, for example in teaching Spanish and Mandarin. It takes every advantage of its location to visit a wide variety of places of interest, and is often involved in imaginative projects with other schools, including singing. Pupils benefit from the support of a great many volunteers, including parents and staff from local businesses.

They help with reading and trips, and have built attractive gardens to improve the playground. There are many clubs and other activities that enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

Pupils are nurtured very well, and care is excellent. The learning mentor, in particular, makes a very important contribution to the well-being of pupils, and is accessible for anyone who has any worries. She is a great support to those children who face particular difficulties. Child protection procedures are robust and very well implemented. While there are informal risk assessments for visits, these are not recorded anywhere, which leaves the school vulnerable in the event of an accident. Pupils feel well cared for and safe as a result of the trusting relationships they have with staff. Teachers guide pupils very well in their learning. Personal targets help many to make rapid progress. The superb relationships between staff and pupils create a dynamic learning environment, in which pupils are not afraid to take risks. As one parent commented, 'The teachers go the extra mile to encourage the children.' Another parent said there is a great sense of a family community.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection****Pupils**

We very much enjoyed visiting your school, and we would like to thank you for the huge welcome you gave us and for making us feel so much at home. It was good to be able to chat with you about life in school. You were very friendly and helpful and your smiles were as bright as the sunshine!

We think you have every reason to be happy, because we think your school is absolutely brilliant! You are learning so quickly, and the teachers are very clever at making your lessons interesting and fun. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour, and how polite everybody was, and by how well you treated one another. It is clear you love your school, and are very proud of it. We think you reach high standards in your work, and there is lots for you to do. We like the way people come in to help you. You sing beautifully, and we are pleased that you are able to do this in the Cathedral and the Royal Albert Hall as well as in your basement! Mr. O'Neill and all the adults have worked really hard to make your school such a fantastic place, and I think that when they read this letter out to you in assembly you should give them all a big cheer.

We have told the teachers that it's about time they did something to improve the play areas for the Nursery and Reception children. We've also said that when they take you on visits they need to write down all the things they've got to remember so they don't forget anything and so that you stay safe. We are sure they will welcome your suggestions for how the outside areas can be made more fun. You may be able to help them plan your visits, as we know you go to a lot of exciting places. We are sure you will all do really well, because it is such a great school. Many thanks again for giving us the privilege of being able to enjoy it with you.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector