

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101652
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	286138
Inspection date	23 April 2007
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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 on roll	
School	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Doreen Grigson
Headteacher	Mrs Deirdre Wright
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001
School address	Harting Road Mottingham London SE9 4JR
Telephone number	020 8857 5134
Fax number	020 8851 3841

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. Vincent's is a one-form entry Catholic, Voluntary Aided, primary school situated within Bromley but on the boundaries of Lewisham, Bexley and Greenwich. Approximately 80% of pupils are Catholic with the remainder being from a variety of Christian denominations and other faiths. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds - the school deprivation indicator is higher than the national average. The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is above the national average. Most of the children starting in the reception class have attended a playgroup or nursery.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Vincent's is an outstanding school. Each year the national test results show that from an average start pupils attain well above average results and achieve outstandingly well. Behind these impressive results are a dedicated staff team, often excellent teaching and an exceptionally high standard of pastoral care. One parent summed up the thoughts of many by saying, 'I could not be happier that my children are lucky enough to be at this school. I am sure that the fantastic foundations in education they are receiving will only promote success in the future.'

Right from the start, the children in the Foundation Stage flourish as enthusiastic learners who enjoy all the school provides. They make brisk progress and are secure in all of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. The pace does not slacken in the rest of the school and remains rapid, culminating in consistently high standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve so well due to the careful use of assessment which pinpoints the next steps in their learning. Whatever their ability pupils' gifts and talents are fostered and those who find learning difficult are given high quality support. One parent with a high ability child wrote, 'I feel the school is catering for my son's needs very well to enable him to achieve his potential. He is thriving at school.'

Pupils' personal development and well being are outstanding. By the time they leave the school, pupils have developed into well-rounded individuals because of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. Behaviour is exemplary and friendly relationships are the norm. One girl said, 'It is easy to make friends because we all get on with each other so well'. Pupils are eager to take responsibility and show pride in everything they do. They are highly equipped for the future to cope with academic and social challenges.

The curriculum covers all subjects exceptionally well and is enhanced by an extensive range of additional activities. The way that the outside areas have been adapted to make them exciting is appreciated by all pupils. The one area, rightly identified by the school, which needs further development, is the library and the range of information books readily available for the pupils. Pupils are cared for exceptionally well and all of them, including the most vulnerable, feel safe and secure. Parents, who enjoy a close relationship with the school, are very pleased about this. As one wrote, 'Communication is excellent between the school and parents.'

The head teacher provides first-rate leadership. She is very ably supported by all staff and developments are driven forward at a very good pace. Teamwork is excellent. Strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified because the school has excellent systems for monitoring its work. There is an unremitting drive to improve. The staff's determination not to rest on their laurels is evident and the school has an excellent capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reorganise the library, and books in classrooms, in order to make information books readily available for all pupils at all times.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school quite rightly grades achievement and standards as outstanding. Pupils consistently attain high standards in English, mathematics and science in national tests at the end of Year 6. Other data which tracks the pupils' performance since they started in the infants, or when

they were in Year 2, shows that they achieve outstandingly well throughout their time in the school.

From a broadly average start in the Reception class children make excellent progress and most achieve expected levels for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 grow in confidence and maturity. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Throughout the school pupils have excellent computer skills and make good use of them for research. Standards in other subjects such as music and art continue to improve as the carefully planned curriculum gives many opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and musical talents.

Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from excellent support. Almost all of these pupils attain at least average standards by the time they leave the school, due in no small measure to the skill of the support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is above average. They enjoy every aspect of school life and participate eagerly in all it has to offer. Their enthusiasm spills over into their appreciation and support of the local and wider communities. Clubs are well attended and pupils speak fondly of their teachers who willingly give up their time and 'are friendly and willing to help'. Sports clubs contribute much to pupils' good fitness levels. Pupils are justifiably proud of their accomplishments in the School Council in helping to organise a skipping workshop and improve the playground equipment which they all enjoy.

Pupils' positive attitudes make lessons enjoyable and they willingly contribute ideas, knowing that they will be valued. Polite and considerate behaviour is the norm and is underpinned by a deep concern for others. Pupils' highly developed academic and personal skills prepare them very effectively for secondary school. As one parent wrote, 'Overall, St Vincent's has provided an excellent education and opportunities for my child's development and especially preparation for secondary school.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Throughout the school, the ways that staff identify the gifts and talents of pupils and then provide well matched work means that teaching is exciting and learning moves on at a brisk pace. In the Reception class staff create a very good balance between formal and creative work and encourage the children to be independent. Throughout the school, staff are very good at guiding pupils on how to improve. A particularly good factor in raising achievement is the growing use of self assessment by the older pupils. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils live up to them. Excellent relationships underpin all lessons. Pupils commented that, 'We are always appreciated for the things that we do.'

There is excellent use made of new technologies, such as interactive white boards. These stimulate pupils' interest and, in particular, help promote speaking and listening skills. Another particular strength in teaching is the way that staff question pupils, get them thinking and expect well reasoned responses. These techniques work especially well for support staff working alongside those with learning difficulties. Teachers mark the pupils' work with great care, often

commenting on pupils' self-assessment, and frequently give good advice on how they might improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and provides the pupils with an interesting range of activities and additional learning experiences. French is offered for three year groups and the number and extent of extra curricular activities are strengths. Pupils especially enjoy their studies of environmental matters such as growing potatoes and learning about wild life, including the baby fox cubs just outside the reception class. They enjoy many opportunities for sport and physical exercise and learn about healthy living and how to keep safe. Visitors to the school support the curriculum in a wide range of areas including drama, historic studies and religious and cultural education. The opportunities for pupils to practise their computer skills are very good and clear planning allows subjects to interlink successfully. The range of information books available to the pupils is extensive, but not easy for them to access. The position of the library, and its appearance, are not inviting and as one pupil observed 'not used very often'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support offered by the school to all pupils are outstanding. The very well organised monitoring and tracking systems result in exceptionally good care and advice and the pupils' outstanding personal development. Risk assessment is rigorous and child protection procedures are firmly established. Pupils' needs are identified early and so do not become major hurdles for them to overcome and appropriate help supports their learning extremely well. Teachers use assessment information exceptionally well to plan future work. Pupils with learning difficulties are integrated very effectively into school life. They have clear education plans with appropriate targets for development which are monitored regularly. Pupils are given a 'voice' in the school through the democratically elected School Council. This and the 'Reading Buddy' and 'Prefect' systems prepare pupils very well for active citizenship.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The head teacher's leadership is outstanding. The deputy head and all staff and governors provide excellent support. All staff follow the head teacher's exemplary lead and relate effectively with all pupils, parents and the local community. Teamwork is of a very high quality and everyone plays a valuable part in moving the school forward. Rigorous monitoring keeps track of what is happening in the school so that the care and concern for all pupils, which is their first priority, means all pupils are included in all activities.

There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need further development. The school's self evaluation is accurate and effective. Management at all levels is very good and all staff make exceptional use of data to set challenges for staff and pupils. The School Improvement Plan provides clear guidance on relevant issues for raising standards and takes into consideration support and initiatives from all sources. Governors are involved in this process and they bring a wide range of skills to bear as they act as critical friends, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

The opinions of parents and pupils are valued and frequently acted upon. The highly active Parent-Teacher Association is an asset appreciated by all concerned. Parents value the opportunities for their own involvement and see it as an important feature of the school. One parent summed up the school simply by writing, 'Great School, Great Teachers, Great People.'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Harting Road, Mottingham, London, SE9 4JR

Thank you very much for welcoming me so warmly during my recent visit to your school. Thanks especially to those children who helped me find my way around and those who talked to me during the inspection. I am glad to tell you that I agree with what you told me - St Vincent's is an outstanding school and provides you with a really exciting start to your education. I was particularly pleased with these things:

- Your headteacher and staff do an excellent job in organising the school and looking after you.
- You are all making very good progress with your work.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers. This helps you succeed at school.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.
- Your school council does a great job.

Your teachers are always trying to help you to improve; I have asked them to look again at the library, and quality of the information books you have to use to see if they can be better and more easily available.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for all your help.

I wish you well in the future.

David Marshall (Lead inspector)