



# St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

URN: 103417

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

12–13 June 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

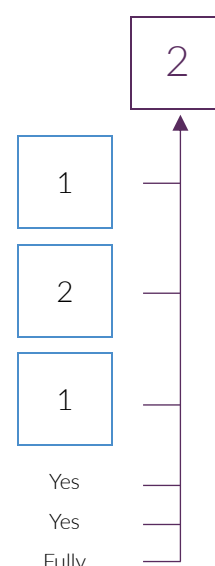
#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



## What the school does well

- St Vincent's is fully inclusive and embraces all its pupils through a genuine culture of welcome.
- Pastoral support is prioritised, and staff work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, are well-supported.
- Leaders are inspiring examples of faith and have embedded a supportive and positive culture where the whole community can thrive.
- Pupils across the school are confident in independently preparing, leading, and evaluating prayer and liturgy appropriate to their age and ability.
- The school works positively with families and the parish to enhance its flourishing prayer life.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that staff and pupils have a secure understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching.
- Effectively plan teaching in religious education so that all lessons extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Develop a wide variety of ways of praying, including meditation and silence.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Every child is valued, cherished, and loved at St Vincent's Catholic Primary School. Christ is at the heart, and love and care permeate every aspect of school life. Pupils are proud to be part of the St Vincent's family, stating, 'We are all brothers and sisters here, and the best thing about our school is how welcoming it is.' Pupils have a deep sense of belonging and actively live in God's family. Pupils value the many opportunities to take on leadership roles relating to Catholic life and mission. For example, the Cafod, Mini Vinnies, and Chaplaincy teams clearly articulate their response to Pope Francis' call, which is evidenced through various practical activities, from the Reception's 'Save our trees' campaign to gardening clubs and visits to local care homes, responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching is a priority which pupils proactively embrace. Pupils know the mission statement and can confidently articulate how it influences them daily to be 'Jesus' disciples on earth'. Staff and pupils highly value the support from the religious education subject leader, who has ensured that pupils are fully involved in shaping the school's spiritual direction through pupil leadership opportunities. This is evidenced through pupil monitoring and feedback, which has resulted in positive changes. For example, monitoring the physical environment has led to enhancing the quality of spaces around the school.

There is a genuine, heartfelt, nurturing ethos shared by all members of staff where compassion is shown towards all, as demonstrated through the staff's coordination of contributions to food banks and providing uniforms to those in need. The school is fully inclusive, and all pupils take an active and full role in every aspect of school life, resulting in confident, happy pupils who know they are loved. St Vincent's has a strong culture of welcome, and staff feel proud to be part of such a supportive family. Staff speak of how their faith has grown and developed with the support of leaders and staff whilst working at St Vincent's. Their pastoral care is strong, with

nurturing experiences provided to all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, recognising all pupils' dignity with respect. For example, breakfast is provided for all pupils daily, and the school invests in a family support worker to support parents in their vocation. Staff freely share their faith, which supports pupils in being proud and confident in articulating their beliefs. Relationships at all levels are strong because staff are strongly supported in their own well-being, empowering them to provide the same care to their pupils. Consequently, staff ensure that all pupils feel respected regardless of their backgrounds. This is also because multi-faith days encourage pupils to share their faiths and cultures, resulting in a fully inclusive and respectful community. The parish priest values the multi-faith celebrations and how they 'allow everyone to feel at home' at St Vincent's.' Parents especially appreciate how inclusive the school is.

The head teacher is an inspirational witness to the faith and readily shares her faith with pupils and staff. Following her example, all leaders lead with passion and enthusiasm. Pupils, staff, and parents recognise and value the school's nurturing ethos, which is genuine, heartfelt, and shared by all. Leaders and governors ensure that the Catholic faith is central to every aspect of school life. They have implemented a curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to make connections between specific subject areas and the school's Catholic life and mission. For example, in design & technology, pupils made bread and soup, which they delivered to residents at Loxton Court, and fruit salads, which they sold to raise money for Cafod.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

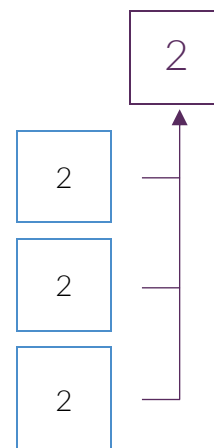
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons, which they engage well in, resulting in good behaviour in most classrooms. However, pupil engagement declines when the pace of learning is slow, and there is too much teacher talk. Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills and link with previous learning are key features in most lessons, and the whole school's focus on knowledge recall has ensured that prior learning is secure. For example, in Year 3, pupils can recall previous learning about the Last Supper and make links with the consecration during Mass; in Year 1, pupils can confidently recall how Jesus went into the desert for 40 days to get closer to God. Pupils' work is of a good standard, and their exercise books demonstrate a variety of activities. Staff effectively model and reinforce vocabulary at the beginning of and throughout lessons, resulting in pupils using appropriate key vocabulary to discuss their learning and articulate their knowledge and understanding.

Where teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they plan various purposeful activities to provide all pupils, particularly those with additional needs, the opportunity to be successful; this is particularly evident in Key Stage 1. Encouraging and supportive adults are used effectively in lessons to ensure all pupils can access the learning and make progress. They skilfully support pupils by reinforcing the learning objective and vocabulary and scribing or giving emotional support when needed. Teachers use questioning effectively to engage pupils and check understanding in some areas, but this is not consistent. Teachers celebrate pupils' achievement, which leads to good motivation levels; consequently, pupils are keen to learn more and do their best. Feedback is used effectively to help pupils recognise their learning successes in line with the school's marking and feedback policy. Teachers understand the importance of religious education lessons in fostering pupils' spiritual development. Where feedback is used especially well, pupils are given the opportunity to develop their spirituality and make links between their

religious education lessons and how to live like Jesus. Teachers model tasks well to ensure pupils understand the activity; however, these tasks do not always allow for sufficient challenge. In addition to opportunities for spiritual reflection in lessons, appropriate challenge is provided when teachers have a detailed knowledge of what they are teaching and the direction of learning in each unit of work. When children are engaged, staff use questioning and collaborative discussion to enhance their learning.

Leaders ensure that the diocesan scheme for religious education is delivered fully and there is a long-term plan in place for teachers to follow. The subject leader has a clear vision for religious education; he is enthusiastic about driving change and an excellent role model for teaching and learning. Staff value his support and opportunities for development. The subject leader has planned the curriculum to provide staff with clear core knowledge using unit markers. Along with a focus on recall, this has ensured that pupils' prior knowledge is consolidated. However, staff now need further support in sequencing lessons within each unit of work to balance knowledge retrieval, deepening, and purposeful spiritual reflection. The school works closely with other local schools by sharing teacher training opportunities. The parish priest, also the subject's link governor, is a frequent visitor to the school, and staff value the enrichment he brings to lessons. Through a well-designed monitoring programme, leaders are clear of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and use this to drive improvements. Governors are fully involved in monitoring and self-evaluation. They visit the school regularly, ensuring they have a good knowledge of the subject's strengths and areas for improvement. Robust data analysis ensures that pupil underperformance is addressed through termly pupil progress meetings.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

Pupils are deeply engaged in various prayer opportunities at St Vincent's, demonstrated by pupils' reverence, respect, active participation, and joyful singing. A variety of hymns, both modern and traditional, are used throughout the school. Pupils' participation and engagement demonstrate that prayer and liturgy are prioritised, and high-quality prayer is firmly embedded. Pupils show confidence in successfully planning, organising, leading, and reflecting on well-constructed prayer services. Pupils and teachers have a consistent structure for planning and leading prayer, which is used across the school, resulting in pupils being able to talk about their prayer experiences confidently. They know the traditional prayers of the Church, appropriate to their age. Across the liturgical year, different ways of praying are explored, which helps them to understand how it influences prayer, including the use of scripture and liturgical music.

Prayer is at the heart of St Vincent's. Staff and pupils value the high-quality prayer opportunities provided to them. Staff recognise that St Vincent's is 'a community that finds strength in faith and prayer.' One pupil said, 'When I close my eyes, I feel Jesus next to me.' The school mission statement is a form of prayer, said, sung, and signed at the start of each day, helping to make it accessible to all. Adults are highly skilled and confident role models in prayer, supporting pupils effectively. They freely share their faith and knowledge to enhance prayer services. Music is an integral part of prayer, and pupils sing joyfully. Opportunities for worship are embedded within the school timetable and reflect various prayer opportunities, promoting pupil involvement. The prayer garden is used by staff and pupils for moments of spontaneous prayer and special times of the liturgical year, such as praying the Rosary during May. Pupils value the prayer spaces in their classrooms and around the school. They regularly review their effectiveness, changing them to link with the liturgical year. Opportunities for parents to join in the celebration of prayer

in school are well-planned and attended. Regular opportunities for prayerful silence, reflection, and meditation are not yet provided as a matter of routine to all pupils.

The school has implemented a progression policy that is effective in building up pupils' participation skills and is used throughout the school, ensuring that pupils are involved in independently planning, delivering, and reviewing prayer appropriate to their stage of development. The excellent role modelling of the head teacher, religious education subject leader, and senior leaders results in staff who lead prayer with genuine skill and passion, acting as inspiring role models for other staff and pupils. They confidently link appropriate scripture and examples of saints' lives to the school's values and virtues, resulting in pupils being able to do this confidently. A clear document detailing the expectations for pupil-led prayer throughout the school, which supports the development of skills reflective of their ages, is in place. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils set up the prayer areas, lead set prayer responses, and read confidently from the Bible. Pupils enthusiastically take prayer reflections home to live out the message with their families. Key liturgical events, including holy days of obligation, are celebrated in school. Governors and parishioners attend many of these events, ensuring their views are included in leaders' self-evaluation processes. Leaders and governors ensure that resourcing prayer and liturgy is a high priority when setting budgets. Consequently, staff and pupils are exposed to high-quality prayer experiences, enabling them to develop a relationship with God.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	103417
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	330 3310
Full postal address of the school	Vauxhall Grove, Vauxhall, Birmingham, B7 4HP
School phone number	0121 675 2359
Headteacher	Tarah O'Brien
Chair of governing board	Fiona Lane-Costello
School Website	<a href="http://www.stvincentsbham.co.uk">www.stvincentsbham.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Bernadette Corbett  
Kerry Cox

Lead  
Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement