

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105243
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377210
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Pye

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	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary-Anne Yearn
Headteacher	Martin Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Pye
Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Philip Martin

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons or part-lessons, taught by 15 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, teachers, support staff, members of the governing body, and representatives from the local education authority. They observed the school's work, looked at school development planning, progress monitoring documentation, and also pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also analysed 59 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by staff and by pupils in Key Stage 2. No responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available to the inspectors to aid inspection planning.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-size primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is low. The school meets the current government floor standard.

The school is a nationally accredited Healthy School and also holds the Activemark, Artsmark, Investors in People award, and the Inclusion Quality Mark. As an Eco School, it received the Silver award recently.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. Pupils thrive in an inclusive environment. All staff work very successfully to enable pupils to overcome any barriers to learning. As a result, pupils achieve exceedingly well. The school has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection. Parents and carers have high regard for the school's work. This is evident in many positive comments from parents and carers, such as 'My child is making amazing progress'.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and rapid progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is successful in closing any gaps in achievement by different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make extremely good progress. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is high when compared with the national average in English and mathematics. Pupils develop quickly into confident, avid readers by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Because of the excellent quality of teaching and a highly effective, enriched curriculum, pupils make significantly better progress than most other pupils nationally. Teaching is characterised particularly by a consistent approach to planning well-matched, challenging tasks to support each pupil's learning.
- Pupils behave very well and want to learn. The school monitors behaviour very closely and pupils feel very secure in the knowledge that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils know they are listened to and feel a sense of ownership of and take pride in their school.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior leaders know very well the school's strengths and areas for development. Leadership of teaching and the management of performance are outstanding. The 'Coaching Champions Project' ensures that teachers and teaching assistants skills are reviewed and developed consistently. Staff have been innovative in order to reach their aspirations and to ensure that the children receive a memorable education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring all activities provide sufficient stimulus to promote children's outstanding development.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and is reflected in the progress they make in lessons, in their books, and in the high-quality display work found throughout the school. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels and understanding that are expected for children of their age. By the end of the Reception Year, because of good provision, most children exceed the levels expected nationally for their age. However, tasks and activities do not always provide sufficient stimulus to accelerate children's learning beyond this.

In Year 1, pupils continue to learn the basics of reading through structured work in letters and sounds. They make excellent progress. In lessons, pupils use a range of strategies successfully, including contextual cues, to understand what they are reading. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics is high, when compared with the national average. As pupils move up through the school, consistently outstanding teaching results in pupils sustaining the excellent progress. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have achieved outstandingly well and their attainment continues to be high in reading, writing, and mathematics. These results have been sustained over the last three years because the staff have been innovative in providing help and resources, such as the virtual learning environment that enables parental involvement, to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve exceptionally well. The few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve equally as well as their peers. Parents and carers have an accurate view that their children achieve very well and that their particular needs are met. 'My child has gone from strength to strength', sums up the views of most.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers have a very positive view of teaching. The inspections found teaching to be outstanding because staff work together exceptionally well as a team to develop their skills. They deliver very effective teaching and learning experiences to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. All staff have high expectations and an excellent grasp and knowledge of individual pupils' abilities. Teachers have exceptionally good subject knowledge and prepare lessons thoroughly, employing a range of resources and strategies, which make lessons enjoyable. For example, in a Year 6 class, children experienced a dimly lit classroom environment with stimulating virtual visual aids portraying a mystic land. This helped promote discussion with their 'clever friend', leading to well-crafted enhanced sentences such as, 'The dark spires cut through the gloomy mist like daggers'. Planning is matched carefully to groups and individual pupils, who are often supported with the excellent help from skilled teaching assistants. This was very evident in a Year 1

mathematics lesson, when pupils worked cooperatively in different 'challenge groups' to find the change they would receive after spending money. From talking to pupils, it is clear that they enjoy work and other activities that they find challenging. Such an example of very effective practice was seen in another Year 6 class, which involved pupils measuring quantities of ingredients to make a pizza. While doing this, they had to respond quickly to 'scale up and scale down' the recipe according to the teacher's challenge, which ensured learning was reinforced constantly.

Teachers' marking is positive and helpful, guiding pupils to their next learning steps. The effective, tailored curriculum enables teachers to utilise themed days and other activities and events very well. These enrich pupils' experiences, stimulate their curiosity and make learning a most memorable and enjoyable experience. For example, during 'Takeover Day', pupils apply formally for adult roles within the school and swap roles for a day. Similarly, they make the most of the locality, including working with the local history club to produce a school drama, acting out the burning of the local mill by the Luddites. The outstanding range of learning makes a significant contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding because teachers nurture it and adopt a consistent and effective approach to behaviour management. Pupils understand what is expected of them and respond very well by being polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils were confident to talk about their experiences of school and share their views. They say that behaviour is always very good and that they feel free from bullying in any form, including racism. This is also the view of parents and carers.

In lessons, pupils' engaging behaviour contributes very well to their overall learning and complements the effective teaching. The curriculum provides substantial opportunities for pupils to develop empathy, as well as respect for each other and themselves. For example, the school council helped coordinate the 'Project Palestine', with the aim of helping other children smile! Pupils also learn how to manage risk well through initiatives such as the 'Forest School' and they learn to care for animals and their environment through the well-designed outdoor learning resource. Older pupils have strong opinions and a mature awareness of how to keep safe in a variety of settings within their locality and in a wider context, including the use of modern technologies, such as computers and mobile 'phones. They expressed confidence in the 'helpful' adults around them, who help to keep them safe.

Pupils take on wider responsibilities readily. For example, Year 6 pupils act as 'gardeners' to the younger children to ensure that they always have someone to play with during playtimes. Parents and carers are very positive about the excellent behaviour and safety and support the school by ensuring their children's attendance is consistently high.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, with the very effective support of all senior leaders, gives the school strong leadership and direction, with a clear focus on continually driving up achievement. Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously and the information gained is used to deploy teaching assistants, modify the curriculum and, where necessary, develop teaching strategies. These factors ensure that pupils succeed academically and personally, whatever

their interests and special abilities. This is an inclusive school, which promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils very effectively and which tackles any discrimination scrupulously.

Self-evaluation is robust and accurate, providing an excellent basis for improvement planning. All staff work exceptionally well together as a team to implement the school aims and priorities consistently. Consequently, they have developed a curriculum which is tailored to the needs and interests of the pupils and reflects very much the values of the parents, carers, and community. Pupils' achievement is underpinned by an exemplary model of staff development. The 'Coaching Champions Project' involves all staff and builds successfully on the many strengths found in the teaching staff. Leaders promote the consistent and effective use of the virtual learning environment, which helps direct pupil's learning and allows pupils to support each other's efforts mutually.

The governing body has a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members of the governing body and senior leaders check closely on security and ensure safeguarding measures meet statutory requirements. Individual governors visit the school regularly and support and promote the school's contribution to the community. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding. For example, children wrote lyrics for a song about the Luddites that clearly demonstrated passion and stirred emotions. As part of the Olympics theme, pupils from another school led an assembly about Belgium before handing over the 'torch'. The pupils from Sacred Heart then handed the 'torch' on to another school, leading an assembly about Mexico and in this way helping to widen their cultural awareness locally and globally. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. The school serves the pupils and the community extremely well and has exceptionally good capacity to improve.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Bolton, BL5 3DU

Thank you all for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed the tour of the school with some of you and looking at the vibrant displays you have produced. You were very polite and kind. We would also like to thank those of you who came to talk to us on Tuesday lunchtime, telling us about how you use the virtual learning environment. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour around school and the way you support each other confidently in class.

Sacred Heart is an outstanding school. You are right to be proud of it. You are making excellent progress in your lessons and you enjoy learning. By the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, your attainment is well-above average and you make outstanding progress to reach this point. You have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe. The adults who work with you care for and look after you extremely well. In turn, older pupils look after younger children very well. Your school is skilled at developing your outstanding spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are very proud of you and they are always looking for ways to make the school even better. We would like to help them with this, so we have asked your teachers in the Reception class to ensure all activities help the children to learn even faster.

Thank you again. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pye
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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