

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120222
Local Authority	Leicester
Inspection number	358722
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2010
Reporting inspector	David Edwards

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 of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Lally (Father)
Headteacher	Gerard Hirst
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons and saw 12 teachers. They also met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teacher's planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding procedures. Responses for the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from the 180 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of different groups of learners
- how well the curriculum has been adapted for all groups of learners to meet their different starting points
- the effectiveness of the governing body in influencing the strategic direction of the school
- the sustainability of improvements under the new management team.

Information about the school

Sacred Heart is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than seen nationally as are the numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible to take a free school meal is higher than the national average. The numbers of pupils with a statement of special educational need is in line with the national figure, as is the proportion of pupils overall with special needs and/or disabilities. A high number of pupils leave or join the school at times other than the start or end of year. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception class and part-time time Nursery provision. The senior leadership team has recently undergone a significant change, following the promotion of a member of the team to a post in another school. A pre-school provision is provided on the school site, but this is run independently of the school and therefore subject to a different inspection. The school has achieved the Physical Education Active Mark award.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and inclusive school where pupils enjoy their learning. All groups of pupils, from the least to the most able, achieve well. Pupils from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds work together harmoniously. As one pupil commented, 'This is the school you would hope for'.

Children join the Nursery with skills that are very low compared with those typical of their age. The good quality of teaching and learning and the good curriculum enables all children to settle in quickly and make good progress in all areas of their learning. Close contact with adults is a significant factor in the good progress that children make in their personal development and language and communication skills. This good progress is continued into the Reception class but pupils still have below average standards going into Year 1.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, but attainment overall remains below national expectations; the high numbers of pupils who enter or leave the school partway through the year have a considerable impact on levels of attainment. Many of these pupils arrive speaking little or no English, but the good support that they receive ensures that their progress is accelerated in Key Stage 2, so that by the time they leave Year 6, attainment is in line with national averages. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also benefit from effective support. The most recent tracking information and the work that inspectors saw in lessons indicates that all pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets.

The good quality of teaching and learning and effective care, guidance and support ensures that children have plenty of time to explore, investigate or solve problems for themselves. Teaching and learning are planned to provide exciting and stimulating activities which help pupils to develop their independence in learning. Tasks are generally well matched to meet the varying needs of most groups of pupils. However, the school recognises the need to further develop questioning skills of some teachers so that they can challenge more consistently, develop pupils' own critical thinking and further accelerate their progress, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

Pupils behave well, both in and out of lessons and this makes a sound contribution to their effective learning. They understand their targets well and what teachers are doing to help them achieve these and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is of good quality. It meets the basic needs of all groups of pupils. Teachers are increasing the opportunities for creativity and enjoyment by making links between subjects in order to raise standards further. Opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills so that it has a sufficient impact on their writing skills in Key Stage 1.

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Leadership and management are good at all levels. The visionary and effective headteacher has assembled a team who are supporting him well in the drive to raise standards. The school's own self evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate. The headteacher has revised and added rigour to assessment and pupil tracking procedures to help staff to identify and rectify any underachievement where it occurs. This has had a significant impact upon school standards. A good example of this is the improvement in writing, particularly at Key Stage 2, where attainment is now in line with national expectations. The school is therefore demonstrating its good capacity to secure further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards to above average by ensuring that lessons demonstrate consistently good teaching so that:
 - teachers' questioning of pupils always effectively probes their understanding of the learning that has taken place.
 - the pace of pupils' learning is always sufficiently brisk.
 - the most capable pupils are always suitably challenged
- Ensure that all teachers, especially those in Key Stage 1, provide ample opportunities for pupil discussion so that:
 - they develop pupils' vocabulary to inform their writing and raise standards in this aspect of their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are much lower than is expected for their age. A significant number of children are at a very early stage of learning English. Despite the good progress that occurs throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of effective teaching, care guidance and support, they still enter Year 1 with standards that are below national expectations. Pupils continue to make sound progress in Key Stage 1 through the strong support of teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Their needs are identified early and appropriate support strategies are put into place to help them to succeed. Inspection evidence demonstrates that currently Year 2 pupils are making good progress against challenging targets set by the school leadership.

The more effective teaching at Key Stage 2 accelerates pupils' progress, so that they achieve in line with national expectations by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. During the inspection a Year 6 class enjoyed the challenge of exploring a poem in a religious education lesson and demonstrated their enjoyment in learning and their creative thinking by eloquently enacting their interpretation of parts of the poem. Pupils are proud of what they do and they try hard to do well. This is evident in the quality of presentation of their work. They trust staff to help them should they have any concerns. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They report that they know of little bullying or harassment and that incidences of poor behaviour or racial taunts

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are rare. Pupils from many different races and cultures are mutually supportive of each other. They respect and celebrate the cultural diversity of the school.

Pupils contribute well to the school community, for example as school councillors or play leaders and they readily raise money for the range of charities that they and the school select. They understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They readily participate in the many sporting clubs on offer. The strong social and moral ethos encompasses the school. It has very strong links with the church, which is situated on the same site. Pupils look after each other and know the difference between right and wrong. As a result pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. Pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning. The rise in attainment and the way that the school is helping pupils to improve their learning habits means they are soundly prepared for their move to secondary education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching and learning, and a well-planned curriculum that brings different subjects together into topics, successfully secure the good progress pupils make, both academically and personally. The curriculum is further enriched by a good range of visits and visitors, often related to topic work, and a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities covering, for example, sports and music.

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Teachers generate a positive ethos in the classroom. They relate well to pupils, boost their confidence and find different ways of motivating them to succeed. For example, the imaginative use of role play in a Year 6 science lesson was helping pupils to have a firm understanding of the effect of the earth's rotation and its passage around the sun. This helped them to effectively model day and night. Pupils successfully learn a range of information, communication and technology skills and are given plentiful opportunities to develop these skills in different subjects. The school has taken effective action to ensure a consistent approach to teaching throughout the school. Thus planning is generally detailed, with appropriate references on how work will be adapted to the differing needs of pupils. Teachers identify what needs to be learned in lessons and share these objectives with pupils so that they can evaluate how well they are learning. Planning is generally used constructively to evaluate the success of lessons and what the next steps in learning should be. There is good feedback to pupils during lessons and marking is effectively used to explain what has been done well and what can be improved. In some lessons, particularly in presentations and discussions with the whole class, teachers miss opportunities to engage all pupils. Questioning, sometimes misses pupils or does not challenge them at the right level, particularly for higher attainers. This was evident in some writing lessons and at such times pupils become slightly restless and the pace of learning slows.

Teaching assistants are usually well briefed and well deployed and they make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Arrangements for the care of all pupils, from the least to the most vulnerable, are well organised and effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides very good direction for the school. He has assembled an influential team who have high expectations for pupils. Leadership is promoting a high quality of care and a good education for all pupils. The inclusion of all pupils is central to the leadership vision and its effective dismantling of barriers to pupil achievement. School self-evaluation is accurate and the rigorous assessment and tracking of pupils is helping to set clear priorities for learning. Senior and middle leaders are monitoring the standards of teaching and learning through lesson observations, which enables them to share and celebrate the good practice which leads to pupils making better progress in some classes. The school is good at promoting community cohesion which leads to racial harmony and pupils developing understanding and respect of each others' cultures. The school has good local and national links and is developing contacts with schools abroad. It recognises the need to strengthen these links further.

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The governing body make a strong contribution to the good safeguarding procedures in school. The school is vigilant in ensuring that all staff are properly vetted for working with children and protects pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, as seen in the good progress of all groups of pupils. Good partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies contribute well to pupils' academic and personal progress.

The governing body have good insights into the working of the school and are knowledgeable. They are supportive of the school, but challenge it when the need arises. They plan to become even more involved in setting the strategic direction of the school in the future. Examples of this are the formation of an attendance panel, which has helped to raise pupil attendance to satisfactory and their involvement in the structure of the new senior leadership team. The governing body now have plans to become more involved in pupil progress meetings, by undertaking pupil interviews to ascertain their views about progress and learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and leads to good pupil outcomes; as a result children thrive in a stimulating, safe, happy and caring environment. There is a good balance of adult led and child choice activities. Staff use assessment information well in order to set targets and there is an effective ongoing monitoring system which encourages children to make good progress in their work, from their low starting point on entry to the Nursery. Children are consistently encouraged to become independent learners and whilst the good progress continues in the Reception class they still enter Year 1 below average, particularly in their speaking and listening skills. The school has plans to improve this aspect of their learning. The good induction procedures enable children to

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settle quickly into the Nursery. They understand the routines and what is expected. Teaching is good because effective planning provides assessment opportunities and activities are lively, interesting and related to children's needs and interests. Children develop confidence in a safe and secure environment. They are stimulated in their learning by indoor and outdoor activities that are suitably challenging. There are good relationships between adults and amongst the children and their welfare is promoted well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

While the vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school, several left some responses blank, saying that it was too early in their child's school life to be able to comment. They particularly praise the way that staff keep their children safe, how much their children enjoy school and how happy they are with their child/ren's experience in school. The inspection team found no evidence to support the views of some parents and carers who felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour; does not make sure that their children are well prepared for the future or that the school does not take account of their suggestions or concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 353 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	130	72	43	24	6	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	107	59	66	37	5	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	87	48	81	45	10	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	49	83	46	5	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	98	54	75	42	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	43	86	48	10	6	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	48	86	48	4	2	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	67	37	83	46	12	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	75	42	87	48	8	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	40	83	46	14	8	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	32	98	54	9	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	84	47	82	46	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	108	60	65	36	5	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



27 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Leicester, LE5 3HH

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. We were impressed by the pride you have in your school and how much you enjoy your learning. You were all so polite and helpful and made us feel very welcome. You are friendly and show respect to each other. You behave well, work hard and try your best in lessons. We agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are very caring and help you a great deal if you have a problem or personal issue. All of the jobs that you do in school and the way that many of you help others, for example at lunchtimes, is certainly helping you to become good citizens of the future. It is good to see that so many of you know what is needed to be safe, healthy and fit.

The younger children in Nursery and Reception settle very well into school life and are improving their education and enjoyment of school life because of the good support they get.

We would like to thank your parents for filling in the questionnaire forms to let us know about their views of the school.

We have asked your school to try and make improvements to your teaching and learning to help you to make even better progress.

We want teachers to improve the way that they question you in whole class sessions to help you to learn faster, particularly for higher ability pupils.

We also want them to help you with your speaking and listening skills so that it improves your vocabulary and the quality of your writing, particularly in Key Stage 1.

You can help in all of this by continuing to work hard and by particularly reminding your teachers if you think the questions that they ask you are not difficult enough or helping you to improve your work sufficiently well. We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Lead inspector

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