

# Sacred Heart RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108393
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	356353
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Neil

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	79
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Tracy Crowder
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Naughton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Byermoor Burnopfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE16 6NU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed four lessons and three part-lessons led by four teachers. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, two members of the governing body and several members of staff. Inspectors observed various activities throughout the school day. They looked at a range of documents including the school development plan and policies for safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors analysed 25 parental questionnaires as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress pupils make in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of the current temporary arrangements for managing the school.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion known to be entitled to free school meals is well below average and the percentage with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties is well above average.

The school has the healthy school award, the eco-school silver award, and the international school award.

For the past two years it has been under threat of closure as part of the local authority's plans for reorganisation, but has recently learned it will remain open. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was absent on long-term sick leave. While this continues, the leadership team consists of a part-time acting headteacher, who is the substantive headteacher at another local school, and a temporary acting deputy headteacher.

An on-site pre-school, not managed by the governing body, will be inspected separately.

**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?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

Sacred Heart is a satisfactory school which, following a difficult time, is implementing suitable actions that are securing improvement. Parents are happy to send their children there because of the good level of care it provides. In the words of one parent, 'Teachers go beyond the call of duty to ensure the best care is provided.' thereby confirming the school's good reputation locally. Attendance is well above average and behaviour is consistently outstanding. Personal development and well-being continue to be good; pupils are confident, courteous and considerate. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy a rich experience and make good progress.

The school has recently gone through a troubled period. Under threat of closure for two years, it suffered falling rolls, budget constraints, and staffing instability. During this period, attainment fell in both key stages, with progress in mathematics inadequate. However, arrangements for managing and leading the school during the headteacher's absence have been effective in improving teaching and learning so that pupils are now making securely satisfactory or better progress in mathematics and English in all classes.

There remains much to do. The legacy of underachievement from this difficult period means that attainment is still too low in Key Stage 1, and in both key stages too few pupils reach the higher levels because the more able are not sufficiently challenged in lessons. The school's arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are only partly effective in improving their progress in English and do not concentrate enough on their mathematics. Although teachers have developed their ability to assess pupils' work, their assessments are not always accurate and they do not all use assessment effectively to improve pupils' progress.

The acting headteacher and the partnership with another local school have produced considerable changes in the way the school is led and managed. Previously, self-evaluation was over-generous; now, staff and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses. They know the school's main priorities, though these are not clearly reflected in the school's three-year development plan. They have a clearer understanding of their roles and are developing the skills to fulfil them. The governing body fully appreciates the importance of evaluating the work of the school without being over-reliant on the headteacher or a local authority inspector. Staff have honed their skills through being coached by expert teachers at the partner school. Everyone connected with the school appreciates the importance of maintaining this momentum when the interim management arrangements come to an end. Despite limited progress with the issues from the last inspection, the school's success in reversing the decline in pupils' progress demonstrates its satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress, especially in mathematics, by:
  - providing more challenge for the more-able pupils
  - identifying accurately pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and organising effective support for them
  - making sure teachers check on the progress pupils are making in lessons and intervening when needed
  - continuing to improve teachers' skills in accurately assessing the standards pupils reach and in using assessment to help pupils make faster progress.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - maintaining the current degree of rigour in self-evaluation
  - preparing an improvement plan that is focused on immediate priorities
  - equipping the governing body with the skills to evaluate the performance of the school
  - ensuring that the current arrangements for staff development are maintained after the interim management arrangements have ceased.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

The attainment on entry of the pupils varies each year but is broadly average. Attainment in Key Stage 2 has improved to broadly average following a period of decline in mathematics. The school's recent efforts to improve teaching and learning have accelerated pupils' progress and standards are rising in both English and mathematics, although the most able are not yet making the progress of which they are capable. The positive attitudes to learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities help them make satisfactory progress, despite some shortcomings in the provision for them.

Pupils enjoy lessons. They concentrate in class, are eager to volunteer answers to the teacher's questions, and apply themselves diligently to their work. In mathematics, for example, they enjoy carrying out calculations and sharing with their classmates how they arrived at the answer. Their behaviour is impeccable: in lessons they always give of their best and are keen to help others; around the school their conduct is highly responsible. They know how to stay healthy and many of them eat a healthy school lunch. They feel safe at school. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that teachers deal with it promptly and effectively when it occurs. Pupils contribute well to the school community by taking on responsibilities such as 'buddy' to the younger pupils, and to the wider community, for example, by organising fund-raising and by performing at carol concerts.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Lessons are well planned. Teachers are clear about what they intend the pupils to learn, and devise a well-sequenced variety of interesting activities that gradually, step by step, build up pupils' skills and understanding. They manage pupils' behaviour very effectively and make sure that everyone is concentrating on their work. Although there is a wide spread of abilities and ages in the classes, teachers seek to prepare work at the right level for all. However, the more-able pupils find parts of the lesson too easy and are not progressing in their learning. The teacher ensures pupils are actively participating for as much of the lesson as possible. In some classes the teacher does not monitor pupils' work closely and does not intervene if anyone has not understood or is not working fast enough. Teachers have developed their understanding of how to assess pupils' progress and are beginning to understand how their assessments can be used to plan work at the right level. Their marking of pupils' work is very thorough. They are quick to praise and encourage each pupil, and take care to set a new challenge and to correct mistakes. The pupils, however, do not always show they have learnt from this advice. Teaching assistants provide valuable help to the teacher and to groups of pupils but do not extend the learning of their allocated groups by providing explanations or asking challenging questions.

The curriculum is increasingly well designed to provide a framework for teachers to plan for their pupils to make progress in English and mathematics. The arrangements for

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identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have shortcomings because of limitations in the expertise available in school. The curriculum offers limited opportunities for enrichment: the range of extra-curricular activities, of provision for gifted and talented pupils, and of visits and visitors is narrow. Pupils are well cared for. They are closely supervised throughout the day and staff ensure they are safe and happy. They are prepared well to make the transition from pre-school into school, and to move into different classes as they grow up. The school's work to promote high attendance is highly effective.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Until recently, the school's self-evaluation was over-generous and everyone concerned with the school had a distorted view of its strengths and weaknesses. Under the interim management arrangements monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are more rigorous. Staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of how the school needs to improve and a determination to make sure it does. A member of staff neatly summed up the drive to raise standards that the acting headteacher has instilled in the team: 'We know where we are and where we are headed – there's no going back.' Staff have benefited from the partnership with another local school: they have learnt from the expertise of other teachers who have been successfully coaching them in teaching, assessment and leadership. The governing body has been reconstituted and displays a firm commitment to learning how to challenge the school as well as support it.

Safeguarding arrangements ensure the pupils are safe. The school's policy reflects accepted good practice in all respects. The school promotes community cohesion well locally but its curriculum links with schools in other countries have lapsed during the recent turmoil. Staff make sure that its few pupils from minority-ethnic groups settle well, but its promotion of equal opportunities is limited by the weaknesses in its arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Reception class. They settle quickly each day, follow well-established routines, and work and play well together. They enjoy the activities and materials that are prepared for them, behave very well and develop good levels of self-confidence. They feel safe in the welcoming, friendly and secure learning area. Staff provide a well-struck balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, suitably tailored to individuals' needs. Teaching is lively and imaginative. Staff are very adept at turning everything into a learning opportunity. For example, a change of activity is used as an opportunity to practise telling the time or spelling names. Leadership and management are very effective. The leader, for example, has made significant improvements to the outdoor area since concerns were expressed at the time of the last inspection. The two staff form a cohesive team, and have clear roles and responsibilities.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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



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## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were positive about all aspects of the school. Those who provided comments wanted, in the main, to praise the work done by staff to support their children. Some were concerned at the high number of temporary teachers recently, and some felt the school did not do enough to challenge the most-able pupils. These concerns were shared by inspectors and are covered in the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sacred Heart RC Voluntary Aided 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	64	8	32	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	64	7	28	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
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)	18	72	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	64	7	28	2	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	76	5	20	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	76	4	16	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	64	8	32	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	84	3	12	1	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sacred Heart RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 6NU**

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and me so warmly into your school. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and at play, talking about your school with you and your teachers and looking at your work. I want to share with you what we thought.

Sacred Heart is a satisfactory school. It has had a difficult time recently but nonetheless it has maintained a lot of its strong features. You are very well cared for and feel safe there. You get help with your work when you need it. Your behaviour is excellent in class and at play time. You know how to keep healthy and you make a valuable contribution to the life of the school and to the local community. You work hard in lessons. Your attendance is well above average. Well done.

There are a few things that would make the school better. I have asked the staff to help you make faster progress with your work, particularly in mathematics. You could help here by doing your best to learn from the comments the teacher makes when they mark your work. I have also asked for the staff and governing body to make sure that they continue with the improvements that have been introduced recently.

Thank you again for helping me so much. It was a pleasure to meet you. I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil

Lead inspector

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