

# Sacred Heart RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132728
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381468
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Susan Waugh

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>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Annette Sidebotham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helena McGouran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Broomfield Avenue Northallerton DL7 8UL
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Waugh

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by three teachers. She observed a part of a one-to-one special support session plus sessions promoting pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds, alongside the headteacher. The inspector listened to individual pupils read and talked to different pupils about their learning. She scrutinised work in pupils' books. In addition, there were discussions with pupils, a member of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and the headteacher of the neighbouring school. The inspector observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' achievement, leaders' monitoring and evaluation evidence, behaviour records and safeguarding. She also took into account the questionnaires returned by 48 parents and carers, 68 pupils and 11 staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

## Information about the school

Sacred Heart is a smaller than average primary school serving Northallerton and the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing and is as high as 30% in one of the classes. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to the national average, although few are at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is less than the national average. There are three mixed-age classes, one of which was taught by a temporary teacher at the time of the inspection. The school site is shared with another primary school. The school meets the current floor standard.

The school holds a number of awards including eco-schools silver, Inclusion quality mark, and Activemark.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the happy, family atmosphere based on caring, moral principles allows their children to thrive and become confident, well-rounded individuals who work and play together and achieve well. The school is not yet outstanding because, whilst pupils make good progress, it is uneven as a result of some inconsistencies in teaching.
- Children start school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. Progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory so that children reach average levels of skills and development by the end of Reception year. Over time, progress has accelerated across the school so that pupils make good progress and reach above-average attainment overall, but in reading attainment is broadly average.
- Teaching is good overall although there is still some satisfactory teaching. Concerted action and professional development by leaders and managers have ensured that teachers are increasingly skilled at making assessments of pupils' learning and identifying what will be learned in each lesson. However, teachers do not always use the information effectively to allow all pupils to reach their full potential. This is particularly the case with reading where some members of staff have insufficient subject knowledge to target learning accurately.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They are proud of their school and have great respect and affection for their teachers because of the care and enjoyment they provide. Consequently, attendance is high and pupils eagerly arrive at school on time.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a common vision for improving the school. They manage staff performance and teaching well. Staff are held to account rigorously for the progress pupils make. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of teaching ensures that correct priorities are identified. Middle leaders are increasingly having an impact on improving achievement.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - setting out clearly what is being learned in each lesson and the steps needed to meet that objective
  - matching lesson activities more accurately to the needs of all pupils to support and challenge their learning
  - checking pupils' understanding regularly throughout lessons and correcting any misconceptions
  - ensuring that pupils have time to address any improvements needed in work which has been marked.
  
- Accelerate progress and raise standards in reading by:
  - ensuring that all staff have good knowledge about how to teach reading effectively
  - precisely matching letters and sounds work to the needs of individual children.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers agree that their children make good progress whilst they are at school and the findings from the inspection confirm this. Nearly all children begin school with skills and abilities which are similar to those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and settle quickly. They develop confidence, independence and enjoyment of learning so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have reached standards which are broadly average. Progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has accelerated since the previous inspection and is now good. As a result, attainment overall is now above average. However, whilst attainment in mathematics and writing has continued to improve as a result of better teaching, attainment in reading has stalled and is broadly average both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Confident teaching, increasingly challenging and interesting tasks and a well organised curriculum have resulted in pupils being able to use numbers and mathematical skills convincingly in a range of contexts. In a challenging lesson, for example, pupils used probability, data-handling and patterns to solve a problem. Similarly, pupils write extensively for a range of purposes across different subjects. However, the systematic teaching of letters and the sounds they make to younger pupils is not precise or carefully enough targeted to meet individual needs and this results in satisfactory rather than good progress. A recently introduced approach to support older pupils reading in groups is not yet fully embedded and occasionally results in assessments not being focused enough. This slows the rate of progress, although when pupils read on a one-to-one basis progress is good.

In a very few lessons the rate of progress is slower. This is where the teaching is not as effective and where the marking in books has not been followed up by pupils. School leaders are aware of this and they have already taken successful action to improve the quality of teaching overall. They recognise that more needs to be done to eliminate the very few occasions when progress is less than good.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress across all aspects of their work so that their attainment is above that of their peers nationally. Equally, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This is due to the detailed analysis of their specific needs, the careful tracking of their achievements and judicious use of external expertise when it is required.

## **Quality of teaching**

The excellent relationships between staff and pupils provide the foundation for good teaching. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning because teachers work effectively to make lessons interesting, engaging and relevant. The curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to practise and apply skills and knowledge, to solve problems and be independent, reflective and motivated learners. Parents and carers fully endorse this view of the school.

Teachers' good subject knowledge means they can effectively use pupils' ideas to prompt them to think deeply about what they are learning. For example, in a history lesson the teacher used pupils' ideas about Viking weapons to prompt collaborative research in which all pupils participated and wanted to offer a viewpoint. Opportunities such as these, which foster pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are common and are woven carefully into the planned curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage adults readily play alongside children, building on their interests and carefully extending their learning by asking relevant questions and developing their language.

Teaching assistants generally support well pupils' learning, both in lessons and when working with small groups or individuals on specific programmes. In the best lessons they work seamlessly alongside the teacher, supporting specific individuals but also enhancing the learning of a group of children.

The teaching of reading is less secure amongst some members of staff. Whilst the school effectively encourages pupils to value and enjoy reading and is particularly successful in improving the confidence of less secure readers, the standards pupils reach are not as high as in other subjects. This is because the skills needed to become a successful reader are not always well enough taught when the teaching takes place in a group. When children read individually in order to boost their progress the teaching of reading skills is more effective.

Teachers' marking is regular and always informs pupils about what they have achieved. Pupils are also encouraged to improve upon what they have learned. However, they are not always given the opportunity to do this in a systematic way.

In the few lessons where progress is satisfactory rather than good teachers are too focused on what pupils are doing rather than what they are learning or the steps needed to achieve the learning. During these lessons teachers do not check pupils' understanding frequently enough and this in turn results in tasks which are not matched well enough to pupils' individual needs.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. They arrive punctually and enthusiastically, ready to start the day. The positive climate in school where each child is a confident learner and encouraged to develop their talents is a result of a calm and consistent approach taken by

adults. Pupils from many different backgrounds collaborate very well together, eagerly sharing their own heritage for the benefit of all. In a class of younger pupils, for example, many spontaneously chose to answer the register in Polish, which was enthusiastically encouraged by the teacher.

At lunchtime games of football with pupils from the adjoining school are a common feature, characterised by infrequent disputes and incidents. Other pupils play happily alongside each other. Over time there have been few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are acutely aware of what bullying is and what to do if it occurs. Both they and their parents and carers agree rare incidents of bullying are promptly addressed.

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire report that their child feels safe in school. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe and conduct themselves appropriately. The few minor disruptions which occur in lessons are dealt with promptly so that learning time is not lost.

### **Leadership and management**

The quietly determined leadership of the headteacher has resulted in the school improving well since the previous inspection. Accurate and thorough self-evaluation has highlighted the correct priorities to move the school forward towards a clearly articulated vision for excellence. Carefully planned professional development for all staff has had a positive impact. Middle leaders have been very well supported to be effective in their roles and the quality of teaching has improved. Additionally, careful tracking of pupils' progress so that those who are in danger of falling behind can be quickly identified and helped, as well as an effective partnership with parents and carers are all resulting in attainment which is rising and rates of progress which are improving. These successes demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

The newly revised curriculum has been an important factor in promoting pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for learning and in ensuring they make good progress. Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are reinforced in a meaningful way. A project on Charles Dickens, for example, resulted in opportunities to write for different purposes, to dress up as a Dickensian character and to read some of his well known novels. Pupils recall these events with pride and excitement. Thoughtfully developed projects such as these, alongside a range of after school opportunities, successfully enhance pupils sporting, cultural and artistic development. Pupils frequently have time to reflect on and consider the spiritual dimension of life.

The governing body is playing an effective role in moving the school forward. It provides invaluable support, fulfils its statutory duties and acts as an appropriate 'critical friend'. It works well with the governing body of the adjoining school to make best use of pooled resources and expertise. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and are kept well informed about aspects of school life and their children's progress. They praise the approachability of staff and the belief that they are being listened to.

The school successfully ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and it is proactive in ensuring that there is no discrimination. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

## 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](http://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.**



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Northallerton DL7 8UL**

Thank you for making me welcome when I inspected your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet you and to hear that you are proud of your school. I enjoyed hearing your views. They were very helpful.

Sacred Heart is a good school. This means that there are a number of things your school does well. You told me that you feel very safe and enjoy coming to school. You come to school nearly every day. You work and play together very well. Your teachers work hard to make lessons exciting and fun so that you want to learn. This is helping you to make good progress.

In order to make your school even better I have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to:

- make sure you are clear about what you are learning in every lesson
- make sure that your work is at exactly the right level to help you make the best progress, especially when you are learning to read
- help you to follow up teachers comments in your books
- know as much as they can about teaching reading to help you make as much progress as possible.

You can help your school to improve further by continuing to work hard for your teachers so that you all achieve the very best that you can.

Yours sincerely

Susan Waugh  
Lead inspector

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