

Sacred Heart Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103477
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355388
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Tams
Headteacher	Lisa Fahy
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eleven lessons were observed; eight teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. Documentation was scrutinised, including policies relating to safeguarding and risk assessments. An analysis was made of school data on pupils' attainment and progress, and the inspector looked at pupils' work in books. Questionnaires from staff and pupils were scrutinised as well as 62 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- What are current standards and progress in English and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2?
- How effectively do teachers use information from assessment to differentiate lessons to meet the needs of all groups of pupils?
- How effectively do leaders and managers monitor lessons and samples of work so that they have a precise view of the progress made by different groups of learners?
- What is outdoor provision like for Early Years Foundation Stage and how does it impact on the progress children make?

Information about the school

This is a broadly average sized primary school. There is a wide ethnic mix amongst the pupils. The largest groups are of Black or Black British Caribbean, African and other Black backgrounds. High numbers of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A higher than average proportion of the pupils speaks English as an additional language. The most common languages spoken by those who are at early stages of learning English are Polish, Slovakian and Tingra. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of their educational needs, is lower than national. There is a higher than average percentage of pupils who start or leave school at other than at the start of Reception or end of Year 6. A breakfast- and after-school club on site is run by the governing body.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has some good features, including pupils' personal development, the care the school provides, the way it promotes community cohesion and the partnership it has with parents and carers. School leaders have also forged effective and productive links with other schools and agencies. These strong links ensure that those who face challenging circumstances, such as those pupils newly arrived in the country or new to the school, are supported well. As a result, they quickly settle and become a part of the school community.

Standards are broadly in line with the average at the end of both key stages. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory, but variable between subjects. It is better in reading than in writing or mathematics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They think deeply about things, have an excellent awareness of the arts, especially music, and have a very good insight into different cultures. As a result, pupils develop well as members of their community. They are well behaved and helpful to others. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have regard to pupils' abilities and the standards they have already attained when planning lessons. However, this lacks sharpness and sometimes the pitch of the lesson is too high or too easy for some pupils. As a result, the pace of learning can slow. Teachers all know what levels the pupils in their class have attained and what they need to work on next. In some cases this is shared with pupils and, for example, targets pasted in the front of their workbooks. However, opportunities to remind pupils of these next steps in introductions to lessons or in marking of work are missed in too many cases. The curriculum is satisfactory and tailored to pupils' interests. There is a good range of extra curricular activities and clubs and this impacts positively on pupils' enjoyment and their development as rounded individuals.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Governors understand the challenges the school faces and hold it to account for tackling weaknesses. Self evaluation is broadly accurate, whole school planning targets the right areas and the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher takes much of the responsibility, overseeing the assessment and tracking of the progress of pupils throughout the school. Many other members of the management team and the governors rely upon her for the detailed monitoring of data and interpretation of patterns arising. This limits other managers' capacity for rigorous development planning in their area of responsibility. It also limits governors' understanding and involvement in planning. The school is trialling a new, commercial system for tracking pupils' progress, because senior managers are aware that pupils' targets are not currently reviewed regularly enough to keep them finely tuned.

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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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in mathematics and writing, especially at Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned to match the needs of all pupils more accurately
 - sharing the next steps each needs to take in their work with pupils and reinforcing this more rigorously in the introductions to lessons and in marking of work.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by:
 - improving middle leaders' monitoring of standards in their subjects across the whole school and increasing their involvement in planning to take their subject forward
 - improving governors' skills in interpreting data, their confidence to challenge and their involvement in evaluation of the school and development planning
 - reviewing pupils' targets for attainment by the end of the year and key stage more regularly, using the outcomes of information from assessment to increase expectations of all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is excellent. Children start school in the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress and by the time they start in Year 1, standards are average in all six areas of learning for young children. The pace of learning is satisfactory throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, although it is variable on occasion. Lesson observations and work in pupils' books confirm that achievement is satisfactory. However, while progress in reading is relatively consistent, progress in writing and mathematics is less so. In one lesson seen during the inspection, higher attaining pupils were challenged and excited by working on how to construct complex sentences. However, some other pupils made little contribution to the lesson as it was too hard for them to follow easily. In a good lesson, for younger pupils in numeracy, the lesson was well planned using information from assessment about what pupils could already do. The tasks set, to do with weighing with balance scales, were practical and enjoyable. As a result, pupils were well motivated and engaged with their learning, remaining fully on task. In another class, the task limited the progress of more-able pupils as it was focused mainly on a level more appropriate for the middle range of attainment in the class. Work in books indicates that too often pupils of all levels of ability in a class complete the same tasks. More generally, pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those who come into school at early stages of acquiring English, make broadly similar progress to other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of their need, make progress in line with their peers.

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Pupils feel safe in school. They say, 'The teachers care for us'. Pupils know how to look after themselves and have good understanding of how to attain healthy lifestyles. They are keen participants in sport and behaviour is good. Pupils have a good sense of communal responsibility. They are willing to help others and they take part wholeheartedly in charitable events. For example, the enjoyment at the weekly lunchtime sessions for local residents, who are waited on by pupils, is mutual. Attendance, which is above average, indicates pupils' enthusiasm for school. Pupils have a strong understanding of and commitment to their local community, both outside and within school. They have a good knowledge and awareness of how people live in other parts of the country through links with other schools.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory, but is variable across classes and subjects. Lessons are planned with care to interest pupils. Satisfactory use is made of information from assessment to target lessons at the right level for the different levels of attainment of pupils. However, too often work is set which is similar for all in the class and not fine-tuned for different abilities. As a result, some pupils sit through explanations and are set tasks that are either too advanced or too easy for them to make better than satisfactory progress.

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Marking of work is regular and encouraging. Reminders about pupils' next targets in their learning, however, and involvement of pupils in self or peer evaluation happen too infrequently. As a result, pupils develop limited skills for taking responsibility for their learning and redrafting their work. This particularly impacts on the work of older pupils in their writing.

The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Extra curricular opportunities and clubs are plentiful and of good quality. Innovative thinking, including the development of a residential experience on the school site, contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Music plays a large and important part in school life. There are a number of steel pan bands in school in Years 4 to 6 and also a band that includes former pupils. This has a positive impact on the links the school has with the wider community.

The quality of care provided by the school is good. The breakfast- and after-school clubs provide a healthy and harmonious start and end to the school day. Guidance, particularly in personal and social areas is good. Pupils are swiftly inducted into school. This is particularly noticeable for those who start in the school after the Reception class. Those pupils who filled in questionnaire responses were positive in their views of the school, although a minority felt adults did not listen to them enough.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is extremely committed to the school. She coordinates monitoring and assessment throughout the school. Lessons are monitored and appropriate feedback given to help improve teaching. Tracking of progress is satisfactory and whole school planning sound. Subjects and areas of learning each have a coordinator whose responsibility is to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. However, while some areas of the curriculum are managed effectively, such as music, where standards are high, some other subjects have weaknesses. Staff and managers have the ambition and the commitment to improve the school. However, some coordinators have too little knowledge of the standards pupils attain in their subject across the school or of the progress they are making. They do not monitor trends robustly or plan proactively for improvement. Their interpretation of data lacks rigour and they rely overly on the monitoring by the headteacher for information. Levels that the school sets for each pupil as an aim for the end of the year or the key stage are not reviewed with sufficient rigour, so expectations are not always high enough to ensure maximum progress.

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Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and many help in class and around the school on a regular basis. They understand the challenges the school faces and, using the information they are given by the headteacher, hold it to account for tackling weaknesses and contribute to planning. They have clear systems for seeking the views of parents and carers and act upon these. The links with parents and carers are good and they are supportive of the work the school does.

Sound systems are in place to prevent discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity. Safeguarding systems are good and are given high priority. They are monitored effectively. Training to ensure that all staff know what to do should an incident occur is updated regularly and efficiently. Community cohesion is good. The school knows the local community of parents and carers and pupils very well, but its audit of its context, for the purposes of promotion of community cohesion, is relatively informal. The school makes a good contribution to promoting links through its good understanding of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. It makes a measurable impact with its work at a local, national and an international level. The result of the work in this area is demonstrated in school in the way that pupils from different backgrounds all get on with each other extremely well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age. In the current Reception class, standards in communication language and literacy were well below those expected. Children's knowledge of numbers as labels for counting, however, was above that expected. Their personal and social skills were in line with those expected for their age. The impact of the provision in the Reception class upon children's learning is good. The teaching of both adults is good and enables children to learn well. Information

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is presented in an interesting manner and, as a consequence, children are keen to learn. There is a common sense of purpose between the two adults, who work together well as a team. The directed teaching of writing and of the links between letters and sounds is particularly good. Children develop early writing skills quickly and confidently as a result.

The organisation of the indoor area is good and covers opportunities for all six areas of learning for young children. The outdoor area is less stimulating. It lacks a covered area to extend its use or any green area for children to plant in. There is currently no formal action plan for the development of this area, although the leader is aware that this is a priority for improvement. Children's progress is recorded effectively and this information is used to influence the curriculum and the teaching. However, the Reception leader has limited knowledge of the recently introduced developmental curriculum and the key worker system, for the Early Years Foundation Stage, due to lack of in-service training opportunities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and appreciative of the work it does. Although some individual parents and carers have concerns, there were no particular concerns raised by a significant proportion of responses. All parents and carers who replied felt that the school kept their children safe and taught them to adopt healthy lifestyles. This reflected the findings of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sacred Heart Catholic 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	73	15	24	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	74	16	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	76	15	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	61	21	34	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	65	22	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	55	26	42	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	52	29	47	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)	28	45	31	50	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	53	26	42	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	53	26	42	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	42	33	53	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	61	22	35	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	66	19	31	1	2	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).

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"> ■ 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.



23 March 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic School, Birmingham, B20 3AE

I would like to thank you all for helping the other inspectors and me to find out about your school. We enjoyed watching lessons and assemblies and talking to some of you. We think you are getting a satisfactory education. Your school enables you to make sound progress and attain standards which are average for your ages. These are some of the best things about your school:

- your attendance is excellent and you learn how to keep healthy
- the care and support the school provides for you is good
- you are kept safe and learn how to take care of yourselves
- the way you develop skills and qualities to enable you to work together, your understanding of belief and your willingness to reflect on life, is excellent
- your behaviour is good and you are helpful to others
- there are plenty of clubs that you can join and activities you can take part in
- children in the Reception class make good progress.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things that need to be done are to make sure that:

- your attainment and progress is even better in mathematics and writing
- the teachers plan lessons to match your needs more exactly and remind you more often of your targets, both in lessons and when they mark your work
- teachers with responsibility for subjects and the people who are governors develop their skills in checking the progress you make, so that they can plan for improvement even more effectively
- the teachers revise your targets more regularly, so that when you have achieved them, you can aim even higher.

You can help with this by continuing to come to school as well as you do and always trying your hardest in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector

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