

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Thornton Cleveleys

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119632
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358596
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Flitcroft

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Tony Edwards
Headteacher	Mr Paul Eaton
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
School address	Heys Street Thornton, Thornton-Cleveleys Lancashire FY5 4HL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by eight teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, assessment information, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures. They also analysed questionnaires returned by 71 parents and carers, nine staff and 85 pupils.

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

- How well pupils achieve, in particular in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The impact of teaching, assessment and the curriculum on the academic and personal development of pupils.
- Whether or not the rate of improvement since the last inspection has been enough.
- The quality of the provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on their learning.

Information about the school

This is a slightly-smaller-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average as is the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. More pupils than usual join and leave the school other than at the usual times. The school holds National Healthy School status. A before- and after-school club, which is managed by the governing body, opened in April 2011. A private provider runs a pre-school group on the school site which is subject to a separate inspection.

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

Sacred Heart is a good and improving school. The headteacher, strongly supported by the staff team, provides a clear sense of direction, which is linked well to school improvement. The large majority of parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school. The comment of one parent typified the view of the large majority when she said, 'I have been very impressed with all the improvements.'

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, successfully building on levels of development that are typical for their age when they start school. Insufficient outdoor opportunities for learning in the Reception class, however, hold back the children's independent learning skills. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. As a result attainment by Year 6 is above the national average.

Care, guidance and support are a high priority. Parents and carers say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. A strong moral code is implicit in the school's ethos and this is reflected in pupils' good and at times outstanding behaviour. They have a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. Pupils work hard and conscientiously, both independently and cooperatively, without the need for constant adult intervention. Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and the quality of teaching is good as a result. The use of assessment has a high focus. Guidance from marking, however, is too sparse in some year groups and, at times, too many targets are given to pupils, which means they have trouble remembering what they need to do to improve their work.

A good curriculum gives pupils a good variety of exciting activities and experiences. The school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of its work and its aspirations are understood and acted upon consistently at all levels. Pupils are tracked carefully and data analysed rigorously to ensure that any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and their skills boosted by skilled support staff.

Strong leadership and management have improved the school since the previous inspection. Through accurate self-evaluation procedures, leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and have clear plans for dealing with its weaknesses. These factors combine to give the school a good capacity to improve in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop children's independent learning skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage by improving resources and the outdoor learning spaces to enable children to have free access to a good range of activities in all six areas of learning.

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- Ensure that all pupils know how to move their learning to the next step by:
 - giving consistently good advice when marking pupils' work
 - reducing the number of pupils' short-term targets in reading, writing and mathematics so that they know the most important areas to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and good levels of sustained concentration in lessons. All pupils work well together and are clearly involved and engaged in their learning. In a Key Stage 1 class, pupils took pride in writing some descriptive sentences about a dragon, using a variety of interesting words and phrases after a series of well-structured learning activities. All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well and the vast majority say they enjoy learning. Their good academic and personal skills prepare them well for later life and learning.

Staff have worked very hard and successfully to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment is slightly lower in writing compared with mathematics and the school has correctly put measures in place to improve pupils' writing skills further. Staff work very hard with pupils who have specific and sometimes quite complex difficulties and barriers to their learning. These pupils, learn successfully and make equally good progress as their peers.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and older pupils are very clear about internet dangers. They are confident they can always ask for help and support if they need it. They comment that most pupils behave well, although there are occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour that are dealt with quickly and effectively by school staff. Pupils have a good awareness of the need for sleep, exercise, healthy food and drink, and good hygiene. School makes good use of its nature area, allotment beds and greenhouse to promote an awareness of green issues. Some older pupils have a house-captain role in the school and enjoy being on the school council. However, they are not fully involved in making decisions about their learning, school life and the local community. For example, school councillors are not yet setting their own agenda, writing minutes or chairing their meetings. Pupils' relationships with staff and each other are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with very strong spiritual development, good moral and social development and satisfactory cultural development. Although pupils regularly support different charities in the local area and more widely in developing countries, their knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom and overseas is more limited. Much has been done by staff to reduce absence. As a result attendance is average.

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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	2
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	2
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to enthuse and challenge their pupils and this contributes to their good rates of progress. Most lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and adults and there is a very positive atmosphere for learning across the school. Good use is made of resources, including modern technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Support by skilled teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning in most lessons.

As a result of the school's good assessment procedures, teachers plan well to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities of pupils in each class. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers do not ensure all pupils fully understand their allotted tasks and the pace of lessons slows as a result. In most cases, however, teachers and teaching assistants listen to, observe and question groups of pupils well during lessons in order to improve learning. Marking is up to date and, in the best cases, provides pupils with clear guidance about how well they have done and what they could do to improve, but this is not consistent across the school. Pupils have a list of targets in the front of their books but do not know which target to attempt next. They cannot remember all their targets because there are too many.

The curriculum is adjusted effectively to meet the needs of different ages and ability groups. High-quality art and display work adorn the school. The emphasis is firmly on

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developing pupils' skills, but in such a way as to promote enjoyment and enthusiastic participation. Occasionally, there is an over reliance on worksheets in some areas of the curriculum. Extra-curricular enrichment opportunities are varied and are much enjoyed by pupils. Links with extended services support the development of the wider curriculum very well, for example, samba drumming enhances the pupils' musical experience.

The school has a good quality of care, guidance and support for its pupils. The provision of a breakfast- and after-school club shows a strong commitment to pupils' well-being. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is led and managed effectively and consequently achievement for these pupils is good. Excellent relationships exist between the pupils who benefit from additional tuition and the support staff. One parent commented, 'I have nothing but praise for the pastoral care, atmosphere and quality of educational experience that my children receive.'

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, governing body and staff at all levels provide effective leadership for improvement. Senior leaders work well together to drive improvement and with members of the governing body ensure that all aspects of the school's work are carefully monitored. Pupils' progress is kept under close review and teaching and learning are effective. All staff are clear sighted about the main priorities and strategies in guiding the school forwards. There is close attention paid by leaders and managers at all levels to promoting equality of opportunity. They tackle discrimination, enabling all pupils to achieve well, whatever their circumstances or difficulties, and breaking down any barriers that might hinder their learning. The system for tracking pupils' academic progress is effective, so that any pupil who is not making enough progress is identified quickly and appropriate support is put in place. The school's engagement with parents and carers is good and it has the trust of the large majority. The school has good partnerships with other organisations. This has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and well-being; an especially strong partnership is with the parish church.

The governing body provide strong leadership and good challenge to the school. For instance, governors evaluated a process, and, following consultation, improved procedures are now in place. Good policies, strategies and procedures ensure the welfare of all pupils. Safeguarding policies and risk assessments are of a good quality and reviewed regularly to ensure pupils' safety. The recently opened childcare provision is well managed and, although in its early days, is well organised and welcoming. Community cohesion has been promoted effectively within school and this is reflected in the school's inclusive ethos:

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visitors are made to feel welcome and pupils show good tolerance and understanding of each other's differences. The school is committed to promoting community cohesion both nationally and globally.

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

As children move through the Reception class they make good progress because teaching and learning are good overall; particularly strong are the direct teaching and good interventions from staff during imaginative play. Happy and caring relationships are established and children settle quickly. Children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. They clearly enjoy school and play happily with others or individually.

Staff work hard to achieve a strong partnership with parents and carers. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective and help the children to be safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. However, opportunities for children to explore the areas of learning independently in the secure outdoor areas are currently limited and this hampers the development of their independent learning skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, very well-supported and integrated well into all activities. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements of very young children and use national guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage well to support children's learning.

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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

An around average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the vast majority were supportive of the school and its new leadership. Parents and carers recognise that many changes have been made in the last year and the majority who wrote comments are complimentary about these changes. Inspectors endorse the mostly positive view of the school held by parents and carers but recognise that there are a number of concerns raised by individual parents and carers. These were followed up by inspectors.

The questionnaire showed that some parents and carers have been concerned that they receive little or no information from class teachers. Inspectors found that information about what the children would be learning in the different areas of the curriculum was issued each term in a class newsletter. A few parents and carers also felt that some children exhibited unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw good behaviour overall and pupils told the inspectors that most of their peers are well behaved. Pupils said that when any pupils misbehave, it is quickly dealt with by the staff.

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, Thornton Cleveleys 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	59	28	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	73	19	27	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	55	25	35	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	58	27	38	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	59	25	35	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	48	28	39	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	52	30	42	2	3	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)	31	44	34	48	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	54	27	38	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	45	29	41	4	6	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	38	34	48	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	54	30	42	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	58	24	34	5	7	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Thornton Cleveleys, Thornton-Cleveleys, FY5 4HL

Thank you so much for helping me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed meeting so many of you and observing you at work and at play. You made me feel very welcome and made my short visit very enjoyable. Together with your parents, you think Sacred Heart is a good school and I agree with you.

You clearly enjoy learning and taking part in many activities. You make good progress and reach above average attainment. Your behaviour is good and I was very impressed with your good manners. You have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you feel very safe and cared for in school. It was good to hear from the school councillors about how you are helping to improve Sacred Heart. You told inspectors that you really enjoy school and are proud to attend. Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. All the adults take good care of you. Your school is well led and managed and is continually improving.

To help you to make even better progress, we have asked the school to:

- help children in the Reception class to further develop their independent learning skills by improving opportunities for them to have free access to a good range of outdoor activities
- ensure you make even better progress by improving the way teachers mark your work and the way they give you targets.

You can help by always doing your best, making sure you know your targets and trying to get to school on time every day. Thank you again for making us so welcome. I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Flitcroft

Lead inspector

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