

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119606
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	363907
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Austin HMI

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	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Crowe
Headteacher	Mrs Carole Seagraves
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed five lessons taught by four teachers and made two further short observations of children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, a group of pupils, representatives of the local authority, as well as the Chair of the Governing Body and several governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils; data regarding pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and punctuality; samples of pupils' writing; and the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The responses to questionnaires returned by 49 parents and carers, 31 pupils and 15 staff were analysed.

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

- Pupils' attainment and their rates of progress, including their learning in lessons, were examined.
- Teaching and particularly the use of questioning, practical activities and effective marking, were investigated.
- The quality of the accommodation and of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage was evaluated.

Information about the school

This school is half the size of the average primary school. The majority of pupils are White British. There is a small minority of Polish pupils who have joined the school over the last two years, as well as a number of pupils who come from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. A considerable number of pupils join and leave the school during the year. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is more than twice the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of a mixed age of Reception class children and Year 1 pupils. The school holds the Healthy School award as well as the Activemark.

The school was given a notice to improve when it was inspected in May 2010.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils.

Sacred Heart has a welcoming atmosphere and an inclusive ethos, reflecting its Catholic foundation. Consequently, pupils say they feel very safe and are confident that there is someone to talk to if they have any anxieties. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their progress has accelerated to good this year, so enabling them gradually to overcome shortfalls in their learning. Overall, attainment is low at the end of both key stages. However, low attainment in writing masks broadly average attainment in reading and mathematics for the current Year 6. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, too few pupils reach levels beyond those expected for their age.

Increases in pupils' progress are the consequence of improvements in the quality of teaching, which is now good. In the main, improved accuracy in assessing pupils' learning has resulted in a better match of work to pupils' needs. However, the assessment of pupils' writing lacks sufficient refinement to identify precisely the next small steps pupils need to take. Through better marking, the dialogue with pupils about their learning has grown. In addition, more practical activities with links to real life have helped pupils to learn more effectively. More emphasis on delivering basic skills across the satisfactory curriculum has also contributed to the improvement in pupils' learning. Pupils' enjoyment is promoted well through the good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

There have been substantial improvements to the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A new location with attractive, accessible equipment, appropriate for this age group, provides a suitable indoor and outdoor environment that promotes children's learning. The consistent approach of the new staff team fosters children's welfare and learning effectively.

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils. There are notable strengths in the care provided for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Behaviour is satisfactory and attendance is average. Tenacious application of the school's rigorous procedures has resulted in a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. However, this improvement is hard won and recent, with further work required to secure it fully.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, with good support from the deputy headteacher, has been determined in her drive for improvement. Senior leaders have a largely accurate view of the school's performance because monitoring and evaluation are thorough. Training and coaching to improve teaching have been followed up systematically to embed developments securely. This has paid dividends in improving

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pupils' progress. Governance is good: the governing body provides a consistently strong level of challenge to the school's leaders. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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 in the core subjects by:
 - focusing the teaching of writing more sharply through the accurate identification of pupils' next small steps in learning
 - providing greater levels of challenge for the more-able pupils.
- Secure recent improvements in attendance by relentlessly implementing the school's robust procedures for tackling persistent absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

At the beginning of Year 1 pupils' skills and knowledge are well below those expected for their age. Overall, attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is low. The rise in attainment, to broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2010, has not been maintained fully. While the provisional results of this year's Key Stage 2 national tests show pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is broadly average, their attainment in writing is low. Few pupils at either key stage reach levels above those expected for their age. However, across the school pupils' rates of progress have increased this year and are now good. Consequently, older pupils with gaps in their learning are catching up. Younger pupils have a much firmer foundation on which to build as they move through the school. There is no variation in the progress of groups of pupils so that those who speak English as an additional language, as well as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the same good progress as their classmates. Pupils' learning has improved as a consequence of teaching that is more engaging and meets their needs more precisely. Pupils know what they need to master because their targets are presented in child-friendly language. They enjoy learning through practical activities and situations linked to real life. For example, a Year 6 mathematics lesson was enlivened when pupils had to solve a series of word problems about their own leavers' celebration meal.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall with strengths in their spiritual development. Assemblies, daily prayer times and links with the parish foster this effectively. Behaviour is satisfactory: pupils know right from wrong but often need adult support to make the right choices. Attendance has improved recently to broadly average following a rigorous approach, supported by the local authority, to reducing the level of persistent absence. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a safe, healthy lifestyle. They are enthusiastic about the activities, ranging from street dancing to biking, experienced during a recent sports week. Participation in extra-curricular activities, including sports, is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and local community. They enjoy their roles as play leaders, monitors, buddies and librarians. The school council influences decisions, such as the choice of playground equipment, and organises charitable fundraising events. Along with the recent

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rapid gains pupils have made in acquiring basic skills, such responsibilities help prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 has improved and is good overall. The positive impact of the training and monitoring conducted this year is evident in lessons. The best of these move at a brisk pace because activities match the next steps in pupils' learning well. Pupils understand what they are learning since they identify the success criteria for their tasks as lessons progress. Well-directed questioning probes pupils' understanding: teachers' insistence on reasoned replies promotes speaking and listening skills effectively. Well-deployed teaching assistants know pupils' needs and provide effective support, which promotes pupils' independence well. Marking has improved and is good: it provides helpful pointers for pupils, some of whom respond to their teacher's comments. Where lessons are less successful, class management routines are not fully effective so the pace of learning slows. The assessment of pupils' learning in writing lacks the fine-tuning needed to inform teachers' planning fully.

The establishment of a planned approach to ensuring that basic skills are taught across the curriculum has contributed to the improvement in pupils' progress this year. Whole-school topics, with a focus on pupils' personal development, provide a helpful basis for planning an integrated approach to learning, making it more relevant for pupils. There is a

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well-considered emphasis on helping pupils understand how to stay safe through visits, for instance by water, fire and rail safety officers. The broad range of enrichment experiences, such as visiting theatre groups and participation in the local music festival, expand pupils' horizons. Pupils appreciate the good choice of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support have a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning and personal development. New arrangements have improved the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works very effectively with a wide range of agencies to support those pupils with significant social and educational needs and this is a strength of its inclusive approach. Through rewards, displays, assemblies and regular reports to parents and carers, the school has successfully stressed the importance of good attendance. The school's use of translators in communicating the importance of good attendance to Polish parents has brought some benefits. Rigorous, staged procedures are in place to follow up absences, including the use of attendance panels. There has been some recent, hard-won success in reducing the number of persistent absentees, but gains remain fragile.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is resolute in leading the improvements required and robust in tackling inadequate performance. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, although leadership at other levels is less well developed. The headteacher has put in place the key systems needed to drive improvement. The regular assessment of pupils' learning is largely accurate and their progress is tracked regularly. Staff are held to account for pupils' progress and interventions are put in place to support those who are falling behind. Regular, rigorous monitoring of provision has been instrumental in driving improvement. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved markedly. Priorities for improvements in teaching were accurately identified and, with support from the local authority, targeted training, support and monitoring have borne fruit, as is evident in pupils' improved progress. Clarification of the responsibilities of teaching assistants, as well as training to meet these, has improved the impact of their work on pupils' learning and personal development.

Governance is good. The governing body has high aspirations for the school and has played a key role in leading it through a period of considerable change. Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide high levels of challenge, as well as support, to the school's leaders. Safeguarding policies and

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procedures meet requirements and are checked regularly by the governing body. The school's inclusive ethos and firm stance against discrimination ensure the promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Considerable energies are invested in liaison with a wide range of agencies in order to meet the pastoral needs of pupils. While the impact of such partnerships on pupils' well-being is often good, partnerships make fewer contributions to improving pupils' learning. The school employs a range of ways of communicating with parents and carers, such as text messaging, and uses translators when appropriate. A number of activities contribute to the school's satisfactory promotion of community cohesion. For example, the school provides a broad range of opportunities for children to experience aspects of British culture. In addition, on occasion, Polish families are invited to enrich pupils' learning, for instance through story telling. Links with Cafod, the Catholic aid agency, provide pupils with a wider, international perspective. However, the school does not evaluate the wider impact of such activities.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy, secure and settled in the Reception class. Relationships are good and children behave well. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation for the Reception class this year. The classroom has been relocated to afford ready access to the playground, where a safe and attractive outdoor learning area has been developed. Children can move easily between the indoor and outdoor spaces where all the areas of learning are supported effectively through suitable activities and equipment. There is an appropriate balance between opportunities for children to choose activities and adult-led sessions. The new team of adults supports children's learning effectively and provides good role models for interactions. Assessment has improved and is satisfactory. Adults focus on an allocated group of children to track their learning as well as promote their welfare. The current cohort of children entered Reception with levels of skills and

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understanding well below those expected for their age and have made satisfactory progress.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The leader, new to post and supported by the local authority, is improving links with parents and carers through the introduction of a 'Home Busy Book'. This provides a helpful record of children's activities and events at home, while the 'Record of Achievement' records their learning in school. Suitable transition arrangements are in place to support children joining the Reception class in September.

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	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was well above average. In almost all respects, responses were more positive than is usual. Inspectors investigated areas where responses were less positive and found that the school takes appropriate steps to keep parents and carers informed about their child's progress and abreast of the topics being studied. The views of parents and carers are taken into account by the school's leaders.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 109 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	43	26	53	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	19	39	29	59	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	24	29	59	7	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	31	28	57	5	10	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	14	29	30	61	4	8	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	33	25	51	8	16	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	20	33	67	4	8	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)	12	24	28	57	4	8	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	29	29	59	3	6	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	22	32	65	1	2	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	22	25	51	10	20	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	15	31	28	57	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	41	25	51	2	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

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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Preston, PR2 2SA

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I inspected your school recently. Special thanks go to Year 5 pupils who kindly gave up some of their lunch break to tell me about the school. This helped me decide that your school has improved rapidly this year and is now satisfactory.

Your school is bright and welcoming and you feel safe there. You make good progress in lessons because your teachers provide you with interesting, practical activities that are at the right level to help you learn. When teachers mark your work, their comments help you understand how to improve. Those of you who find learning difficult get the support you need to make good progress. The new, well-organised Reception classroom and outdoor area are helping the youngest children to play and learn well together.

You contribute well to school life, for instance as play leaders and librarians. The school council influences decisions such as the choice of the new playground equipment. You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and have opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting activities including yoga and basketball. You enjoy the various after-school activities provided and told me that the cookery club is very popular. Your headteacher makes sure you have a range of interesting experiences to enrich your learning. The recent circus skills day sounded very exciting!

There are some things about your school that need to improve further so I have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to make sure that:

- you reach higher standards, especially in writing
- those of you who find learning easy are challenged to achieve more
- the attendance of the few of you who do not come to school regularly improves.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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