

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106643
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	377436
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Clark

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G E Goddard
Headteacher	Miss M Curran
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Clark
Angela Charlton

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed seven teachers teaching 13 lessons. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, school staff, including senior and middle leaders, and local authority advisory staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. Parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed from 44 responses, together with those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Sacred Heart is smaller than an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school is part of a federation with St Michaels and St Helens Catholic Primary schools. They share one governing body. Among the awards the school has achieved are Silver Healthy School status, the Activemark and a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because the use of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and relative weaknesses in the overall quality of teaching limit pupils from making the very best progress. Parents and carers appreciate the warm, caring ethos and the good progress pupils make.
- Most groups of pupils achieve well and reach at least average attainment by the time they leave in Year 6, although progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory. Their attainment in reading is above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' independent learning skills have improved well since the previous inspection. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well prepared for their future learning because of the good support they receive.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Strong relationships and imaginative teaching methods promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to enable pupils to learn and practise their basic skills. However, very occasionally, marking and questioning do not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is sometimes exemplary in classrooms. The playground buddies and school councillors make a good contribution to an orderly and caring community. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe in different situations and bullying is rare.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and is supported well by an enthusiastic leadership team and good governing body. There are good procedures to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. Accurate self-evaluation procedures have contributed well to good improvements in pupils' performance since the previous inspection. A good partnership with other schools, particularly those in the federation, supports the leadership well and contributes to the carefully planned and enriching curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make full use of accurate assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage to set those precise next steps for individual children's learning that will enable them to make at least good progress.
- Hasten pupils' progress further throughout school by:
 - sharing the best practice in marking and feedback to guide pupils effectively in their learning
 - ensuring teachers' questions in lessons consistently challenge a wide range of pupils.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make better than normally expected progress during their time in school. They start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally below those typically expected for their age. They leave Year 6 with at least average attainment in English and mathematics. Although there is an improving trend in the levels reached by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's progress is less consistent than it is through the rest of the school and is currently satisfactory. This is because the assessments of their progress are not always precise enough to build regularly on their previous learning. The children are happy and busy, however, and their personal development is good in response to a range of fun and challenging activities, especially outdoors.

Over time, pupils' develop their reading skills well. Their attainment is average by the end of Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Pupils make particularly good use of their secure skills to recognise letters and their sounds, and effectively use them to identify new words. Older pupils' comprehension skills and their ability to make inferences from the text they are reading are good. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading from a range of appropriately challenging books and the regular use of high quality fiction linked to central themes. These skills make a good contribution to their ability to work independently. For example, younger pupils in Year 2 read the instructions to mathematical problem solving with minimal support. Older pupils make good use of a thesaurus and the internet to improve their written work. Independent learning skills have improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils work well in groups and make use of opportunities to share ideas with a partner. They respond well to teachers' questions in lessons. Very occasionally, chances to develop these skills further are missed. They take pride in their work and aim to improve it. They often write meaningfully at length and make good use of their time in lessons. Spelling and punctuation are usually accurate. The pupils largely collaborate well in group activities and enjoy opportunities for discussion in pairs.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress. They develop a wide range of learning skills which are securely and systematically built on and regularly applied. Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly acquire the English skills they need to access and take full advantage of the school's rich curriculum. More-able pupils make good progress. They deploy a good knowledge of number facts and

calculation skills to solve problems in mathematics. They make good use of homework and different subjects to develop their writing and other skills. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology skills. For example, in Years 4 and 5 they create speeches for animated characters from history, such as the Vikings.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have high expectations, reflected in the pupils' purposeful and positive attitudes in every lesson. Teachers' good questioning skills ensure pupils understand and can articulate their learning. This was very evident in a Years 1 and 2 lesson where pupils explained accurately and in mathematical language their understanding of the properties of multiplication. However, very occasionally, teachers take answers largely from those pupils who offer a response rather than ensuring all groups of learners are challenged to offer an answer. Teachers make good use of time in lessons and work is well presented because pupils are clear about what to do. They involve pupils well in creating the criteria for success in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants gently, but persistently, probe pupils' understanding to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have a clear understanding of their work. Good deployment of teaching assistants contributes to the good progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language.

The pupils' learning activities are usually accurately matched to their ability and are always interesting. However, activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not always matched closely enough to their existing attainment. The school has put support in place to develop this and it is beginning to have an impact. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of the planned curriculum to allow pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils' studies of the local area and the history of the coal mining industry provide many opportunities for pupils to apply their report writing and data handling skills, as well as giving them a strong feel for the history and geography of the local community. The strong relationships teachers establish and the good levels of self-awareness and responsibility they expect have a positive impact on pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many examples of sensitive and empathetic writing about the lives of others in history as well as in the composition of prayers and reflections.

Parents and carers are positive about the quality of teaching and pupils confirm that they enjoy their learning, reflecting the findings of the inspection. Reading, writing and numeracy skills are systematically taught, so leading to pupils' good progress. Pupils are often grouped by ability rather than age which increases their progress. Teachers make good use of technology both as a teaching and a learning tool. Marking and feedback in English and mathematics generally guide pupils to higher achievement. For example, in Year 6, pupils routinely assess their own written work before the teacher comments upon it. This helps them improve their work and builds their critical awareness. However, on a few occasions, teachers do not provide enough guidance to enable pupils to help themselves to improve their own work and improve their thinking skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils typically behave well throughout the school. They are largely punctual and ready to learn. The strong, caring family ethos permeates the school and is reinforced well by acts of collective worship and daily routines such as prayers at the end of sessions. Pupils take

responsibility for their own conduct and are kind and considerate towards others. The small number of pupils with emotional and social difficulties are effectively helped to recognise and improve their own behaviour, for example by involving them in interesting, practical projects, such as the development of a woodland nature trail. The school council is involved in monitoring and supporting good behaviour and creating school rules. The school maintains detailed records of the rare behavioural incidents and takes strong and appropriate action to address them. Pupils are well informed about different types of bullying and how to manage and avoid it. There is little indication of bullying of any kind and pupils are confident that if it should arise it would be appropriately managed. Visits from the police and fire services, cycling and road safety activities, alongside residential and other visits, all contribute to pupils' readiness for greater independence. Parents and carers have positive views about pupils' behaviour and feel their children are well looked after. Pupils agree that behaviour is good and that they feel safe. The inspection findings identify good behaviour and safety.

Leadership and management

The experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a clear lead and good example to staff. Senior and middle leaders are effectively involved in measuring and improving pupils' progress through effective teamwork. Teachers take advantage of well-planned opportunities for professional development through in-house and wider training, such as higher qualifications in provision for special educational needs. Teachers' performance is managed well through regular observations and discussions about their pupils' progress. All staff are clear about their role in ensuring pupils are well prepared for future learning. This is an open and inclusive school with strong principles which are accessible to all. The governing body is ambitious and well informed, and makes a good contribution to school improvement, policies and procedures. The governing body and school leaders ensure the good promotion of equality of opportunity and strongly tackle potential issues of discrimination. This harmonious school is effectively narrowing the gap between the achievements of different groups of children, such as those receiving free school meals. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are suitably robust, well managed and fully meet requirements.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The good learning experiences, such as a wide range of visits and visitors, enrich the lives of all pupils through memorable learning experiences, despite the school's small size. The partnerships with many professional support services and the links with other schools contribute well to pupils' experiences. The impact of the curriculum on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, pupils' understanding of the lives of others in different circumstances and cultures is strong, contributing well to their preparedness for secondary school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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).

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Rotherham, S63 9JY

Thank you for making us feel very welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons and joining you at playtimes. You go to a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- You make good progress overall and are well prepared for your next school.
- Your behaviour is good and you feel safe because everyone takes very good care of you.
- You enjoy your lessons and make good use of information and communication technology.
- You are curious and interested in many different things. You were very proud of the butterflies you were nurturing. You have a good knowledge of your own and different communities.
- You read well in many different subjects.
- You take your responsibilities on the school council and eco-council seriously. You make a good contribution to different charities and have helped design the playground and nature trails through your beautiful grounds.

To help your school to improve even more, I have asked your headteacher and the governing body to make the teaching even better by:

- making sure children always build well on their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- making the best use of marking and feedback
- ensuring teachers' questions make all of you think during lessons.

You can help by always trying your best, thinking hard and continuing to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Clark
Lead inspector

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