

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Georges Road, Holloway, London, N7 8JN

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, achieve high standards in English and mathematics.
- Governors, leaders and staff show great commitment to a common vision. There is a relentless drive for improvement in all areas of the school's work.
- The leadership team, further strengthened by recent appointments, has brought about rapid improvements in reading, mathematics and teaching.
- The governing body has a wide range of experience and is extremely well informed about the school. Governors provide excellent support and robust challenge to the school's senior leadership.
- The school has a rich and exciting learning environment that supports pupils' learning well.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils fully and mark pupils' work regularly. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They think they are fun and interesting.
- Pupils become fluent readers because they are well taught throughout the school and have frequent opportunities to read to adults.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils work hard in lessons and get on very well together and with adults in the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. A very positive atmosphere and a strong emphasis on the Catholic faith pervade the school. Pupils are happy and feel secure and valued. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average and improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and teachers do not always provide work that is demanding enough for the more-able pupils.
- The way teachers mark pupils' work is not consistently good and pupils do not always have enough opportunity to respond to teachers' written comments.
- Pupils are not clear about their progress targets so they are not able to monitor how well they are doing closely enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, including three joint observations with senior leaders, and looked at pupils’ written work on display and in their books.
- Meetings were held with two representatives of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the school’s improvement partner, the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and listened to other pupils reading.
- A number of the school’s documents were examined. These included the school’s most recent data about pupils’ progress, the school’s monitoring records on how well the school is doing and its development plan, evidence about monitoring and judging the quality of teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 50 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Jim McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marion Hunter

Additional Inspector

Gill Walley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart RC Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in Years 2 and 3 and in Years 4 and 5.
- A very large proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The two largest groups are of White British and Black African heritage.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is well above average.
- A very high proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported by school action and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that teachers plan activities that stretch the more-able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is consistently good and sharing the outstanding teaching practice that exists across the school
 - always giving pupils an opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback on their performance
 - providing pupils with clear targets for improvement that enable them to monitor their own performance more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. Children have a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They work and play in a very stimulating environment and are exposed to a wide range of experiences. They are well taught and make good progress so that, by Year 1, standards are in line with national averages.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics because they are taught well in surroundings that catch their interest and stimulate their imagination.
- Pupils continue to make consistently good progress, although it is stronger in English than in mathematics, as they move through Years 3 to 6. In 2012, although the standards pupils reached were above national averages, they were not as high as in previous years because almost half of the cohort had significant special educational needs. Current school information and work seen in pupils' books show that results are on track to improve further still in the next few years.
- Despite the high proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language, pupils become fluent readers because adults encourage them to read daily and regularly listen to them reading. Parents are effectively encouraged to support their children's reading at home. Pupils make good progress in phonics (the sounds that letters make) at an early age because teachers model the sounds well and effectively help pupils to make the sounds themselves. Year 1 pupils performed well above the national average in the national phonics screening check. Pupils have good approaches to tackling unfamiliar words, read confidently and with a good appreciation of punctuation.
- Pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills further in a wide range of subjects. Their writing becomes particularly strong because of the numerous opportunities they have to practise writing for different purposes. Wall displays are very helpful in supporting pupils to become independent learners, such as when a few Year 1 pupils were able to write a letter of apology to the 'Three Bears' by themselves.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium do better than their peers nationally and the gap between their performance and their peers, as measured by their average point scores in national tests at the end of Year 6, is rapidly closing. In 2012, in English, they were about six months behind other pupils, and in mathematics they had caught up.
- The progress made by disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is good and improving. They do better than their peers nationally. Their work is monitored closely and the school works very effectively with outside specialist agencies, such as speech and language therapists.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Consequently, all groups of pupils and all years make good progress. Relationships between teachers, pupils and support staff are excellent. Pupils like their teachers and say lessons are fun and interesting and that teachers help them when they get stuck.
- Teachers have improved the way they plan lessons following a school-wide approach to planning. They share learning objectives and expected outcomes with pupils so they know what they are expected to be able to do by the end. Lessons are pacy and start briskly to engage pupils promptly. However, sometimes the activities for the more-able pupils are not demanding enough.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work ethic. As a result, pupils are very productive, show pride in their work, present it well and persevere with tasks.
- In most lessons teaching assistants are used to maximum effect to ensure pupils can understand what they need to do and make good progress. Occasionally, when teachers' introductions are

overlong, teaching assistants have little to do.

- Adults are used very effectively to support the development of pupils' reading skills. Pupils have the chance to read to an adult in school daily and get useful feedback on their reading progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and in detail. They correct pupils' mistakes and usually provide pupils with guidance on how to improve or a question to challenge them further. However, pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments. Also, pupils are not clear about their progress targets so they cannot check well enough how they are doing overall and so take more responsibility for their own learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is typically exemplary and parents say behaviour is always excellent. Pupils understand and follow closely the 'shared expectations' in the school's '3-5-7 vision'. They cooperate very well, listening to one another and sharing resources fairly, start activities without fuss and are keen to do their best in lessons. Teachers have little need to correct behaviour and the climate for learning is outstanding. When moving around the school, pupils are courteous and very helpful to one another and adults. Behaviour during breakfast and after-school club is of the same high standard, as good as in lessons and around the school
- The school is a welcoming place. It gives a very strong emphasis to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that there is a very positive atmosphere for working and playing well together based on the principles of the Catholic faith. Pupils say they are very happy, feel safe and secure and know their teachers care about them. They enjoy coming to school and their lessons. Attendance is above average and continues to improve.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of the causes of poor behaviour and the school supports pupils with identified behaviour problems and their families very well. School records show few incidents of misbehaviour and no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils are regularly consulted about their views, for example about behaviour and improvements to the school playground. The school council makes good suggestions for school improvement, for example inviting more visitors such as authors into school, and decides on ways to raise money for projects.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They can explain how to eat healthily and be safe on the road and when on the internet. They know about bullying and its different forms. They think bullying at school is very rare and any that does occur is dealt with quickly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Governors, leaders and staff show great commitment to the clearly expressed '3-5-7 vision' for the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort. Senior leaders work very well together and with great determination, in an uncompromising drive for excellence. They are very well supported by the wider leadership team which, through recent appointments to posts of responsibility, has been further strengthened. The teaching of reading and mathematics has improved significantly.
- The school has responded extremely well to recommendations from the last inspection. Governors' visits are highly focused and efficiently organised to gather relevant information and senior leaders share their outstanding expertise with subject leaders.
- Senior leaders know the school very well and have produced a very well organised improvement plan. They have developed a very robust and rigorous system to check the quality of teaching and provide excellent support to help teachers to improve their practice so that teaching overall is improving rapidly. Pupils' progress is checked closely and regularly and pupils' achievement continues to improve.
- School leaders have very high expectations of teachers' planning and marking, classroom

organisation and the way pupils present their work. They ensure that the environment for learning is exciting and provides pupils with highly positive experiences. The display of mathematics and English in classrooms is very effective in promoting independent work extremely well. The well planned topics that pupils study capture their interest and they have good opportunities to further develop their skills in literacy and numeracy.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. The calm, harmonious atmosphere ensures pupils from different backgrounds work and play extremely well together, there is no discrimination. Pupils have equal access to all subjects and activities, including the well managed breakfast and after-school clubs. The school fosters excellent relationships with parents.
- The local authority recognises the high quality of leadership and management. It provides light touch support but maintains regular contact and offers training opportunities for teachers and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although school leaders regularly update them on school developments, governors inform themselves about how well the school is doing through regular focused visits and regularly undergo training. They have a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. Governors have a thorough understanding of the information about pupils' progress, such as the improvement in performance of pupils receiving the pupil premium, and ask challenging questions of the leadership team about the impact of suggested changes on pupils' achievement. Governors set robust targets for the performance of the headteacher and help to ensure good decisions are made in allocating finances, including the pupil premium, and rewarding teachers appropriately for their work. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development. All statutory arrangements with regard to safeguarding are securely in place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100437
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	412449

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	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victor Cletus
Headteacher	John Lane
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2009
Telephone number	020 760 73407
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