

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Swan Lane, Hindley Green, Wigan, Lancashire, WN2 4HD

Inspection dates 30 April – 1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress varies between years and is not fast enough overall, especially for the more-able pupils. This is particularly evident in writing and attainment is average.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Work is not always set at the correct level for pupils. The pace of lessons does not consistently sustain pupils' interest. Pupils do not use information and communication technology (ICT) enough in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively in lessons.
- Leaders, staff and governors do not make enough use of information about pupils' progress to ensure pupils are making as much progress as possible.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is not fully accurate. Plans to make the school better do not make it clear how actions will improve pupils' progress and attainment.
- The good and better teaching seen is not shared between staff.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy a rich variety of experiences and make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in some years, especially Years 2 and 6 where teaching is consistently good. Attainment in mathematics is consistently above average in Year 2 and reading is good throughout the school.
- Behaviour is good. The school looks after pupils very effectively and they feel safe. Attendance is above average.
- The curriculum is imaginative with many special events adding variety and enjoyment to pupils' learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully.
- Leaders and governors have improved the morale of staff. They are more aware of what needs to be done to raise attainment and improve the school. Actions are in place to tackle weaker aspects of teaching and move the school forward.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, although not all teachers were observed as some who work part time were not in school during the inspection. Inspectors visited 16 lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils read to the inspectors.
- Pupils' work was analysed with a focus on writing in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its performance, tracking information and documents about safeguarding.
- The views of 13 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as a review of the school's recent parents' questionnaires. Other parents shared their opinions about the school with inspectors at the start of the school day.
- Fifteen responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Wellens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher and four members of staff are new since the previous inspection.
- The school has achieved the National Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - making sure all lessons go at a brisk pace with interesting activities that sustain pupils' interest
 - checking that work is set at the correct level and is always hard enough for the more-able pupils, especially in writing imaginatively
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their ICT skills in lessons
 - checking that teaching assistants are clear about their role in lessons.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - involving more leaders and managers, including governors, in checking on the school's effectiveness so that there is a more accurate understanding of how well it is performing
 - including very precise actions in the school's improvement plan that are linked closely to improving outcomes for pupils and make it clear, especially to governors, how success will be measured
 - checking more thoroughly on pupils' progress and ensuring that pupils are not allowed to mark time for too long without an explanation being identified and support provided
 - improving the mentoring of teaching and the sharing of expertise between staff.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The most recent results of national tests (2012) for Year 6 pupils, data provided by the school and work in pupils' books indicate inconsistencies in the rates of progress from year to year and also across the school. Although there are pockets of good progress, overall achievement requires improvement.
- Most pupils make the progress expected of them from their individual starting points but not enough make more than this. The picture is uneven between classes, linked to the quality of teaching. Teaching and progress are best in Years 2 and 6 but in other years too many pupils are allowed to stay at the same level of attainment for too long before moving to a higher level. This means that the promotion of equal opportunities is not yet fully effective.
- The more-able pupils do not always make enough progress, especially in writing. The school is extending effectively opportunities for writing and this is improving pupils' confidence, although some work lacks imagination. Books reveal spelling is a weaker aspect for some pupils but most make a good attempt at new words using their improving knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Pupils start school with attainment that is broadly typical for their age and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach above-average attainment, especially in the crucial skills of numeracy and literacy. Letters and sounds are taught thoroughly and children use their skills to write simple messages.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is well above average in mathematics, above average in reading and average in writing. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is more variable, dipping from well above average to average last year. Currently, inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach above-average attainment in mathematics and reading and average attainment in writing.
- Reading is good throughout the school. More time is given to reading and pupils apply their skills in other subjects. New books have accelerated progress and detective stories are the current favourites in Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the progress expected of them. Occasionally, teaching assistants give pupils too much help or work is too easy and this restricts their progress.
- There is no difference between the progress of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils. This includes the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. They make the same progress as others, although their attainment is slightly lower than that of other pupils in school, being broadly average in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although good and outstanding teaching was observed, this is not consistent between years and overall teaching requires improvement. This leads to a rise and fall in progress as pupils move from year to year because skills acquired in one class are not extended in the next one.
- Where teaching requires improvement, lessons lack the excitement that sustains pupils' interest. Assessment is not always used successfully; work is sometimes too easy and at other times too hard. The pace is not fast enough and pupils have too much time to complete an easy task. This was the case in Year 1 when some pupils quickly doubled numbers and were ready to apply their knowledge of doubling to other calculations.
- The ICT suite is used regularly but not always effectively. Staff spend time checking that the computers are working correctly but work is not always extending pupils' ICT skills. Pupils identify limited use of ICT to support learning in classrooms.
- Teaching assistants often lead small groups of pupils needing extra help. This support varies and occasionally staff give too many prompts or keep pupils waiting for their turn, which slows down their learning. Other examples showed very good support with patience and good subject

knowledge that greatly improves pupils' learning.

- Reading is taught well throughout school. Pupils are taught letters and sounds in small groups of similar-ability pupils. Attainment in the Year 1 national reading assessment was above average. The teaching of writing is not always exciting and the expectations of more-able pupils are not high enough.
- Data indicate mathematics has not consistently been taught successfully but is improving following the introduction of a whole-school calculation policy. This was very evident in Year 2 when pupils learnt the essential steps to follow when solving problems.
- Where teaching is good and better, teachers share their enthusiasm and chivvy pupils along with much banter. This is especially the case in Year 6 where pupils close the gaps in many areas of learning. Teachers show good subject knowledge in these lessons, the pace is brisk and demands on pupils are high.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with examples of excellence when children choose from an imaginative array of activities. These link well to a theme and allow independence and free play. Role play is imaginative; for example, children enjoy burying treasure and using pirate puppets to find it.
- Throughout the school teachers manage lessons well, resources are prepared carefully and lessons run smoothly. Pupils have confidence in their teachers; as one pupil said, 'Teachers help us to learn from our mistakes.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and one another. They play together happily and have many friends. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and the effect of name-calling. They do not see bullying or racism as a problem in their school.
- Pupils enjoy school and those who spoke to inspectors identified nothing they would improve. This is reflected in above-average attendance.
- In lessons, pupils work hard and there is always a good show of hands to answer questions. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to share their ideas with a classmate and this is especially useful in mathematics, where they exchange different methods to solve problems. Only when lessons fail to keep them interested or when they are unclear of what is expected of them do pupils become restless and inattentive.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of keeping themselves safe. They understand that they might have to face difficult situations, for example when using the internet, and know how to deal with them.
- Fundraising is a regular feature in the school, showing pupils' growing understanding of how they can help others in the world. Year 6 enjoy acting as buddies for the younger children.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership is beginning to secure improvements, especially in reading and mathematics, but overall it requires improvement as changes have not yet fully eradicated weaker aspects. Nevertheless, the management team has been strengthened and led by a determined headteacher and deputy. As a result, the school is in a stronger position to move forward.
- More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is making it clearer how well pupils are doing. As yet, these data are not used effectively to ensure that progress is good in all years. Meetings to discuss progress are held with staff who are expected to explain any potential underachievement but these meetings are not frequent enough. In some years, too long a period of time elapses before action is taken to narrow the gap in pupils' attainment.
- Teaching is monitored; the leadership team knows what needs improving and is achieving some success in raising the quality of teaching, although more needs to be done. The best teaching

seen is not shared fully between staff.

- A detailed evaluation of what is happening in school is carried out but this does not result in a precise and accurate view of how well it is performing. As a result, the priorities in the school's improvement plan lack precision and the focus on raising attainment is not sharp enough. Governors are not fully involved in setting priorities and it is not easy for them to measure how successful the school is in addressing them.
- The curriculum includes exciting theme days. The learning challenge sessions link subjects so that learning is more purposeful. Special weeks, such as design and technology week, raise aspirations with visitors from architects and new experiences. Good attention is given to personal development and this promotes effectively spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority recognises the school's needs and provides training and advice as required.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are starting to ask more searching questions than they did in the past. Although action has not always been swift enough to challenge lack of progress, this is improving as governors review data and gain insight into pupils' progress. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and actions being taken to improve it. They check that salary increases are linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Money is spent prudently, including the pupil premium. The evaluation of the Rainbow Group initiative shows that pastoral guidance is provided where it is most needed. Although governors are not always involved in early decision making, they are well informed about the school. They fulfil their statutory duties, including ensuring that safeguarding meets requirements.

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	130955
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	402435

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	Margaret Miller
Headteacher	Christine Ryding
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2009
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