

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Ayresome Street, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, TS1 4NP

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in literacy and mathematics. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils write well and their handwriting is very neat. Pupils clearly take pride in their work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. Their complex needs are extremely well catered for.
- Teaching is good with outstanding practice in the Reception class, Year 2 and upper Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned and enthuse pupils.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and at break times. Pupils themselves actively promote excellent behaviour.
- Pupils feel extremely safe. They respect each other's different cultures because the school teaches them to be kind and considerate.
- The leadership team has the skills, ambition and determination to succeed. This is why the school continues to improve.
- Good, well organised leadership of teaching means that teaching is consistently good or better in every class. As a result pupils' achievement continues to improve.
- The curriculum is well planned to develop pupils' language and communication skills. This is why those pupils new to learning English make good progress.
- Governors give good support to the school and help it to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers get the best out of the most able pupils and so sometimes these pupils' learning slows.
- Leaders and managers have even more to do to get more parents closely involved in their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 27 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 14 teachers. Five of the lessons or parts of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher,
- The inspectors held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority governor and four groups of pupils from Years 2 to 6.
- The inspection took into account the 17 responses in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents when they talked to inspectors informally.

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
James Hannah	Additional Inspector
Barbara Hudson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Two-thirds of pupils are White British. One third of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Polish. Twenty different languages are represented in the school. Almost a third of pupils learn English as an additional language. This is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- An above average proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school at times other than the usual.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- One-third of the teaching and support staff have changed within the last four years. The deputy headteacher started at the school in September 2011 when an assistant headteacher was also appointed.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to accelerate the learning of the most able pupils in every class, teachers should:
 - expect the most from them so that they reach their full potential
 - make sure that they give them harder, rather than more, work
 - give them more opportunities to learn independently, ask questions and challenge themselves
 - give them more time to solve problems, make decisions and lead their own learning.
- Leaders and managers should do even more to help parents to be involved more fully with their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age, especially in communication, language, literacy skills and in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Nursery and Reception class children make rapid gains in these areas of learning because every activity prioritises speaking, listening and social skills. As a result, children turn into confident learners who absorb language at a fast rate. The strong emphasis on physical and mathematical development helps children to learn good pencil control, use and write numbers with good understanding and to become physically confident.
- All pupils, including newcomers and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress in literacy and mathematics in Years 1 to 6 to reach broadly average standards of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils exceeds expected levels in national tests because some of the most able pupils do not always reach their potential. Pupils make the best progress in Year 2 and in upper Key Stage 2.
- The majority of pupils read well. Extra focus on teaching pupils how letters and sounds link together to form words (phonics) has paid off this year, resulting in younger pupils gaining a secure understanding of how to read unfamiliar words.
- Similarly, new approaches to reading, which involve pupils in purposeful talk and activities based on a weekly text, help newcomers and new learners of English to read with greater understanding. Older pupils read fluently and talk animatedly about favourite books and authors, giving clear reasons for their preferences.
- From the Reception class to Year 6, pupils' handwriting is well formed, neat and legible. Strategies in Years 3 and 4, such as writing capital letters in green and full stops in red, remind pupils, and alert newcomers, to the importance of punctuation. By Year 6, pupils use paragraphs well and write expressively, using personification to enliven descriptions, as in this example, 'Dictionary, learn your spellings!'
- In mathematics, pupils, including newcomers and new learners of English, achieve well because they have extra help if they have any gaps in their mathematical knowledge.
- Disabled pupils and those supported by school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs make outstanding progress. They make appreciable progress from their different starting points because they have consistently high-quality learning experiences.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. Their attainment is similar to that of other groups in the school. The school clearly promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination successfully.

The quality of teaching is good

- Typically, lessons provide pupils with frequent opportunities to talk, write and work with a partner and to use their literacy and mathematical skills in different subjects. This enables newcomers and new learners of English to catch up and to learn new skills rapidly.
- Teachers plan imaginative lessons that grip pupils' attention and fire their enthusiasm to use new words. For example, Year 5 pupils received a box from a 'space station' containing ingredients such as vinegar, lemon juice, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder to test for the most dramatic and long-lasting reactions.
- Similarly absorbing lessons result in pupils with special educational needs practising basic skills without realising it. They make excellent progress. For example, a group of Years 5/6 pupils with

complex individual needs carefully measured to the nearest millilitre specific doses of 'dragon's blood' and 'troll's juice'. They noted down quantities to see if they could 'make a potion to help us fly'.

- Teachers use assessments of what pupils know and can do to decide what to teach, often adjusting their plans to cater for new arrivals or pupils with specific language needs. The use of support staff to assist different groups of learners is a strength.
- The best teaching is distinguished by the extra challenge given to the most able pupils. Although setting work to suit different ability groups in lessons is clearly a key feature of the good teaching across the school, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to set the most able pupils harder work.
- Sometimes, the most able pupils have restricted opportunities to learn independently, ask questions and challenge themselves. This is because teachers tend to guide all pupils carefully through tasks rather than encouraging the most able pupils to learn through solving problems, making decisions and leading their own learning. Reception class children, for example, show greater degrees of independence than pupils in Year 1 or lower Key Stage 2.
- Marking is good. Pupils say, 'Our teachers comment on what is right and what to improve and this helps.' Pupils also mark each other's work and make sensible suggestions for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- In lessons, pupils are invariably attentive. They concentrate extremely well and strive to do their best. Pupils say, 'We can sit down and do our work without anyone distracting us or stealing our learning time.' Disabled pupils and those who have complex special educational needs have excellent support to help them to concentrate fully. It helps that their lessons are just as engrossing as everyone else's.
- Pupils take an active role in promoting excellent behaviour. They feel that they have a collective responsibility to make sure that everyone is safe and happy. Newcomers settle in really well. They confirm, 'We can come to school without anyone worrying or hurting us.' Parents agree that their children are extremely safe in this school.
- Pupils in the SEG (social and emotional needs support) group and school councillors take their roles seriously. They help to sort out minor problems and pupils say they find them very helpful.
- Pupils and their parents agree that there is no bullying. Pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They explained that they have a way of guarding against cyber-bullying, and using a particular word 'smart' to remind them what to look out for. 'We give racism the red card.' they say. The school's records confirm their views.
- A key factor in pupils' outstanding behaviour is the strong emphasis that the school puts on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Different faiths are celebrated and the day's work is framed by prayer and reflection. Nobody calls each other names because they respect each other's different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils say that their school is '10 out of 10 for all aspects of school life- teaching, behaviour, cleanliness and equipment.' This reflects their pride in their school.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership team demonstrates its commitment to school improvement. It deals very effectively with almost weekly challenges to cater for pupils entering school at times other than the usual and the needs of those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The school has an unwavering focus on securing good achievement for everyone, whatever their starting point. It constantly makes adjustments to meet pupils' varied learning needs. As a result, attainment is going up.
- Key appointments, such as the pastoral learning mentor, have freed the headteacher's time to

focus on assessment and improving teaching effectiveness. This has highlighted that in year groups where parents are more closely involved in their children's learning pupils tend to do better. The school recognises it has even more to do to involve more parents in this way.

- Senior leaders and key subject leaders are fully involved in checking how well literacy and mathematics are taught. They look at pupils' books regularly and work alongside less-experienced colleagues. This carefully structured leadership of teaching is why teaching is of consistently good quality.
- The school uses performance management well to motivate and reward good teaching. Teachers who want to apply for promotion have extra training and support to enable them to be successful. Equally, the school takes firm measures if teaching is not good enough.
- The innovative curriculum underpins pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and language development. Music and art are used successfully to help pupils to learn. For example, pupils sing or make up dances to help them to remember number facts or punctuation. All pupils learn French so everyone knows what it is like to learn a new language.
- Pupils and staff feel safe because safeguarding is efficient and effective.
- The local authority gives light touch support to this school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know how well pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium funding, are progressing and the reasons why. They are involved in the management of staff and make good decisions. Governors check teaching effectiveness regularly and know that it is well led. They have a good understanding of data and use this to help them to pinpoint where the school needs to improve further. They have close links with individual classes and so they know the challenges that the school faces.

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	111714
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	412921

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	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Hood
Headteacher	Carol Walker
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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