

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Poulton Street, Ashton, Preston, PR2 2SA

Inspection dates 10–11 July 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough pupils make more than the progress expected of them in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Attainment is below average at the end of both key stages.
- Progress slows in some lessons when work is set that is either too easy or too hard because teachers are not checking often enough pupils' level of understanding in order to provide work that will move them on to the next level of understanding.
- Some teaching requires improvement and not enough is consistently outstanding.
- Teachers' skills in questioning and providing clear explanations need refinement and in some cases improvement.
- When teaching lacks variety, interest and pace, pupils' attention lessens and progress slows.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment has risen securely in recent years. More pupils are now attaining expected levels in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 because the leadership has been securely focused on improving pupils' achievement.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well. They feel very safe. Attendance is now average.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have been purposeful in bringing about many improvements since the last inspection, and have been especially successful in improving the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, including two joint observations with the headteacher. He also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to pupils in Key Stage 1. The inspector listened to a group of Year 2 pupils read and discussed with them the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- The inspector held meetings with three members of the governing body, with the headteacher and senior staff, with a group of pupils and with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also took into account surveys of parents' views conducted by the school.
- The inspector took account of a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation summary; the development plan; policies and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. These pupils come largely from Eastern European countries. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than normal times is above average.
- 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?

- Make all teaching at least good with more that is outstanding to raise achievement to good by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use information about what pupils already know and are capable of to set activities that are neither too easy nor too hard
 - all pupils understand fully the most important words in each lesson before they settle to work on their own
 - all teaching has the necessary pace and variety to keep pupils interested and engaged in their learning
 - teachers use questioning more effectively to make pupils think deeply and give reasoned answers
 - pupils do not spend too much time listening to teachers' explanations when they are already ready and eager to get on with their work on their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Reception class with skills that are generally well below those typically expected for their age.
- They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good and there is a good range of indoor and outdoor activities that capture their interest and stimulate their learning.
- A decline in attainment in recent years in Key Stage 1 to well below average levels has been reversed because the quality of teaching has improved significantly. In 2012, attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment in English and mathematics has also improved in Key Stage 2 over the last three years because teaching has improved and expectations of what pupils can and should achieve have risen. Attainment is below average overall and improving. School data, supported by observations of teaching and learning and analysis of work in pupils' books, show that the improvement is set to continue unabated.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils make the progress expected of them given their starting points. The proportion making better progress than this is growing but is not yet high enough to compare favourably to national figures.
- Most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. The good teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) gets pupils off to a good start in acquiring the necessary grounding in reading skills. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and read regularly both in school and at home.
- The achievement of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs has also improved because the leadership and management of their provision have been improved and their needs are identified more accurately. The quality of support provided for these pupils has also been improved with the appointment of a talented team of teaching support assistants.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding imaginatively and effectively. Because this is a small school, the number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is too small to make any analysis statistically valid or for concrete conclusions to be drawn. Evidence shows that, although their attainment is below that of similar pupils nationally, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school is small and has closed in recent years.
- Pupils who join the school at other than normal times, frequently speaking little or no English, make rapid progress because of the skilful support that they receive. Most achieve well given their generally low starting points.
- The fact that all groups of pupils make similar progress shows the school's success in providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it is still judged as requiring improvement because in recent years its impact on pupils' achievement has not been sufficient to make sure that more pupils make more than the progress expected of them.
- While leaders and managers have eradicated inadequate teaching, some teaching requires improvement and not enough is outstanding.
- In less successful lessons work is sometimes set that is either too hard or too easy for some and teachers spend too long explaining what they are to do when others are ready and eager to get on with things on their own. This acts as a brake on accelerating progress at a faster pace.
- On some occasions, pupils are a little unclear about what they are meant to be doing because teachers do not explain clearly enough the keywords that they need to know to tackle tasks successfully and teachers do not routinely use questioning that probes pupils' understanding of

key ideas and vocabulary. Again, this slows progress in some lessons.

- Sometimes teaching lacks the necessary pace and variety to keep pupils fully interested and on-task. As a result, pupils occasionally chatter among themselves and do not work as hard as they could.
- Where teaching is most effective, lessons move along at a good pace and activities are pitched at exactly the right level to cater for every need and ability. Pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress as a result.
- For example, in an upper Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were set tasks of differing levels of difficulty. They worked very enthusiastically in groups where they shared their ideas maturely. The teacher let the pupils get on with finding out the answers for themselves only intervening when pupils needed steering back on track. The teaching assistant worked very effectively with lower-ability pupils who were engrossed in their work and made very rapid gains in their understanding.
- The team of teaching assistants is very skilful at supporting pupils who learn more slowly than others and with pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, many make good progress given their starting points.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly. The quality of their comments have improved and are now helpful in showing pupils the next steps that they need to take in order to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well. They treat each other and the adults working with them with respect. They are well-mannered and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and most are keen to do as well as they can. Sometimes, however, especially when teaching lacks some pace or when tasks are too easy or too hard, pupils' attention wanders and they chatter idly.
- Pupils say, and school records confirm, that behaviour has improved significantly over the last three years. The number of exclusions has dropped rapidly. Adults are adept at dealing sensitively with pupils who find it difficult to behave sensibly.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is rare and that, when it happens, it is dealt with effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They can describe what potentially dangerous situations are and how to avoid or deal with them. They are fully aware of the potential dangers of using the internet to access social networking and inappropriate sites.
- Pupils' growing enjoyment of school is shown by the improvement in attendance that is now in line with the national average. It is also testament to the increased rigour which leaders and managers have brought to checking on attendance and to emphasising the importance of regular attendance with parents.
- Most parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour in the school.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers fully understand what the school does well and where it could do better. They provide the school with a sharp focus on improvement. Staff morale in pursuit of improvement is high.
- Chief among the priorities in recent years has been improving the quality of teaching. To this end, leaders and managers have tackled inadequate teaching successfully and have tightened procedures for monitoring its quality and impact on learning. Expectations have been raised and this is evident in the management of teachers' performance where targets have been made more demanding with a close link to pupils' progress and achievement. The connection between the management of performance and salary progression has also been strengthened. These actions have resulted in the current situation where much teaching is now good and pupils'

achievement is rising securely.

- Leaders and managers have also tightened procedures for gathering regular information on how well pupils are doing and using this to track their progress so that any underachievement can be identified quickly and appropriate support provided.
- The curriculum has been improved and now meets most pupils' needs well. It provides a good range of enrichment activities that provide strong support for pupils' good personal development and for their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The taught curriculum is planned well to provide a range of activities across different subjects that give pupils many opportunities to read widely and write about things that interest them.
- Leaders and managers have nurtured good relationships with the vast majority of parents including those who are new to living in Britain and who speak little English. All parents would recommend the school to other, prospective parents.
- Policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe in school are fully in place and give no cause for concern.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the headteacher in improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement. It now provides light touch support for this securely improving school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body holds the school rigorously to account. It has improved its knowledge of how well the school is doing and now has an accurate view on how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools both nationally and locally. The governing body knows the quality of teaching and has fully supported senior leaders in the drive to improve its quality and tackle weaknesses. The governing body understands fully the operation of performance management and monitors closely its link with salary progression. The governing body has a firm grip on the school's finances including how effectively pupil premium funding is allocated and used to raise achievement. Governors take part in regular training to keep themselves abreast of developments and to hold the school to account for its effectiveness.

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	119606
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405871

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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Crowe
Headteacher	Carole Seagraves
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2011
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