

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Lumley Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 2BA

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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

- Since the last inspection, efforts to establish consistently good teaching and pupils' progress have been constrained because of a period of significant disruption to and changes in staffing.
- Teaching is not yet of sufficiently high quality to bring about good achievement.
- On occasion, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. When this happens, activities do not always provide enough challenge, especially for the most able.
- There are too few pupils who reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not get enough practice to write at length in subjects other than English.
- There are gaps in pupils' mathematical skills.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of contexts.

The school has the following strengths

- Children have a good start in the Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the higher level in reading is close to average.
- The dynamic leadership from the headteacher, with support from senior leaders and governors, has been successful in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning through a difficult period of change. The rate of improvement is increasing.
- Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are courteous, polite and respectful. They enjoy their school and say they feel safe.
- The governing body has an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve further and holds leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Parents are very positive about and supportive of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority, an external consultant who works with the school and three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and the outcomes of conversations with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes in staffing including a new headteacher who took her post in November 2012 and a deputy headteacher who was appointed in February 2013.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all learning is consistently good or better and rates of pupils' progress and achievement increase, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - planning work that is closely matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring all teachers identify any gaps in pupils' basic mathematical skills and then checking to make sure that teaching has eradicated these gaps
 - providing pupils with more opportunities for them to apply their mathematical skills to solve and investigate mathematical problems.
- Raise attainment in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their skills in writing through work in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Good achievement identified at the time of the last inspection has not been maintained. Progress has declined and standards have fallen, with progress only improving over the last 18 months, because of the effective action of the new leadership team.
- The overwhelming majority of children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those that are typical for their age, particularly in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics development. They make good progress throughout the Reception class because of the well-organised and exciting Early Years Foundation Stage learning areas and the motivated team of teachers and assistants. As a result of this good start, by the time children enter Year 1, standards are closer to, but still below, those typical for their age.
- Pupils' progress from their different starting points across Key Stage 1 has not been fast enough, so that standards by the end of Year 2 have been well below the national average for several years. Recent changes in staffing to improve the quality of teaching are beginning to result in improved rates of progress. This is reflected in the most recent assessment data which confirm that while few pupils reach the higher Level 3, standards are broadly in line with the national average.
- Since the time of the last inspection, standards at Key Stage 2 have fallen year-on-year so that in 2013, standards were well below average.
- Due to improvements in teaching, pupils in the current Year 6 have made accelerated progress and the projections for 2014 indicate that standards in reading will be in line with the 2013 national average, with standards in writing and mathematics below, but much closer to, that average. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and an analysis of internal school performance data and most recent results of the 2014 national curriculum test data, confirm this view.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 remains well below average in writing and mathematics. This is because they have not had sufficient time to benefit from the improving quality of teaching to make up for lost ground in these subjects.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The effective teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 gives pupils the skills they need to tackle unfamiliar words confidently. Pupils of all ages speak enthusiastically about their well-stocked and exciting library, and the books and authors they enjoy reading. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'Reading a good book is like dreaming. It takes you into new and fantastic worlds.'
- The school promotes and checks that pupils have equal opportunities. As a result, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly good rates of progress to other pupils. However, although the progress of the most able pupils is similar to that of their peers, not enough reach the higher Level 5 in writing or mathematics. This is because they are not always set work that eradicates the gaps in their learning or allows them to deepen their knowledge and extend their skills.
- The pupil premium funding is spent wisely, for example, on extra help from additional teaching assistants to support the learning of the high proportion of pupils who benefit from this funding, particularly those known to be eligible for free school meals. It also contributes to additional staffing who work with vulnerable pupils and their parents. This has led to a dramatic improvement in the attendance of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. As a result, the progress they make and standards attained in reading, writing and mathematics are similar to those of their classmates. Inspection evidence indicates that this is set to continue.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Since the time of the previous inspection, there has been a period of considerable difficulties and changes in staffing. This has resulted in much variability in the quality of teaching across the school. Together with the support of the local authority, an external consultant and governors, the headteacher has implemented many actions to bring about improvements in the overall quality of teaching which, while not yet good, is improving rapidly. Crucially, these improvements are helping pupils' learning to get better and eradicating a legacy of underachievement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers have created stimulating and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning areas in which children have frequent opportunities to engage in purposeful role play to develop their speaking, listening and social skills. The learning activities are engaging; for example, children use their number skills and sand and water to investigate the best mixture to create the perfect sandcastle. The emphasis placed on developing social, reading, writing and number skills promotes good early attitudes to learning and behaviour. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are often excited by learning and by tackling tasks that challenge them. In mathematics in Year 5, for example, effective questioning and clear instructions helped pupils to apply their basic number skills and knowledge of area and perimeter to design a theme park within a given budget. A suitably calm working atmosphere is evident in virtually all lessons.
- On occasions, expectations are not always high enough for what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able. Consequently, there are times when the activities set are not sufficiently challenging. This limits the rate at which they make progress and the opportunities they have of reaching the levels of attainment of which they are capable.
- In the past, teachers have not always identified gaps in pupils' basic skills, especially in mathematics, nor have they provided the activities necessary to eliminate them. Although the improvements in the overall quality of teaching have enhanced pupils' skills, there is still more to do.
- Pupils' writing is helped by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts the range of words they understand and use, and to speaking and explaining ideas in lessons. As a result, pupils learn how to improve their own sentences and how authors use rich and exciting language in their books. This is increasingly reflected throughout pupils' writing in their English books and stories.
- Teachers' marking is good. Teachers mark work regularly and often make suggestions about how pupils could improve their work. Pupils are invariably given time to respond to guidance, correct errors and undertake assessment challenges set by the teacher. This is improving progress, especially in writing, because errors and misconceptions are being eradicated.
- The school has invested in extra teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. They work in excellent partnership with teachers. They provide effective support to disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who, because of previous underachievement, are not reaching the standards of which they are capable. Teaching assistants are often responsible for organising these pupils' learning and are successful in boosting their achievement. This gives these pupils the confidence to have a go, improves their self-esteem and accelerates their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. They behave well at all times around the school and on the playground. Playtimes and lunchtimes are fun and happy occasions.
- School councillors, 'bookworms', prefects and library ambassadors and executives enjoy their responsibilities. They are pleased to support the work of the school and to help each other because, as one pupil said, 'We appreciate all that our teachers and teaching assistants do for

us.'

- Behaviour in lessons is good. This is because pupils have an enthusiasm for learning and display high levels of cooperation. They respond well to the guidance and direction given by staff and, as a result, time for learning is rarely lost. However, when the activities set are too easy, or for some too difficult, pupils sometimes become a little restless.
- The school works increasingly well to manage behaviour, including for those pupils who have particular behavioural needs. This has led to excellent improvements in behaviour over time for individual pupils. One pupil described eloquently how adults in the school had helped him to control his behaviour and how, as a result, he was now much happier.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils all say they feel safe at school and can cite many ways in which the school ensures they know how to keep themselves safe. They are very clear about using the internet safely and know about road safety, fire safety and that they need to use electrical appliances carefully. Parents agree that the school keeps pupils safe.
- Pupils understand what constitutes the different types of bullying. They assert that bullying is extremely rare in school because any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with decisively by teachers. Parents are equally positive about the way in which the school deals with any incidents.
- The importance of attending school regularly is given a high priority and robust systems are in place to support pupils' attendance. The headteacher and a range of skilled support staff have worked hard to liaise with parents and support them to get their children to school more regularly. As a result, attendance has improved from well below average in the last academic year to average at the time of this inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- Following the decline in achievement from the previous inspection, the new headteacher and the leadership team, including the governors, have taken swift and decisive action to improve teaching and learning. It is evident that the headteacher has the support of the staff and her determination is reflected in an excellent team spirit, with all staff sharing a commitment to school improvement.
- On the appointment of the new headteacher, the local authority was asked to provide a more focused monitoring and support programme. As a result, the local authority now knows the school well and has confidence in its ability to improve. It is committed to providing high-quality support for the school as necessary.
- Leaders at all levels, including the middle leaders and governors, have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Middle leaders play a crucial role in checking the quality of teaching in those subjects for which they are responsible and in helping colleagues to improve their practice through coaching, mentoring and sharing expertise. They are making a positive contribution to the increasingly more rapid improvements made in teaching and learning.
- Leaders have correctly identified strengths and what remains to be done. Plans for improvement are appropriately prioritised, well informed and clear.
- The school's leaders have tackled weak teaching. There is now no inadequate teaching and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Improvements in the quality of teaching are due to frequent checks on performance, the identification of areas for staff development and an extensive professional training programme for both teachers and teaching assistants.
- Performance management arrangements are rigorous. Targets for teachers are closely aligned to the school's priorities for improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. They are sharp and focused. Pupil progress meetings are at the heart of the process, ensuring that teachers are held accountable for pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum captures pupils' interests and promotes the development of basic skills.

However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English. This limits the opportunities of some pupils to practise their skills and reach higher standards. Similarly, pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to enjoy the fun of investigational mathematics or solving practical problems. This leaves the most able pupils with too few opportunities to reach the higher levels.

- The school is very well prepared for the implementation of the new National Curriculum in September 2014. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have been working within the new curriculum, in English, mathematics and science since Autumn 2013.
- The curriculum is enriched by special events, such as 'Book Week', charity events, talent shows, 'Library Lunches' and many musical, art and sporting activities. A rich programme of visits both locally and further afield provides experiences that pupils might otherwise not have. Pupils speak enthusiastically about them. These experiences promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- The primary school sport funding to improve pupils' physical activity is used well. A specialist teacher of physical education provides training for teachers. Pupils' participation in sport has increased with the addition of an even wider range of after-school activities than the school had previously.
- Links with parents are good and very effective. Parents say they are very pleased with the education their children receive. All parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire or held in discussion at the start of the school day were extremely positive about the school and what it provides. All said they would recommend the school to other parents.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are well organised, proud of the school and ambitious for its future. They visit the school regularly, ensuring the focus of their visits is always linked to the school's improvement plan. As a result, they have a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to keep improving. They have undertaken training to help them carry out their roles and responsibilities more effectively. This has given them a good understanding of how to monitor pupils' progress and attainment using all the available evidence, and they regularly ask challenging questions about all aspects of school life. This understanding enables governors to be both challenging and supportive of the senior leadership team. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how the school's performance management systems help to improve the quality of teaching. Pay increases are only agreed where teachers' performance is good. Governors have a clear understanding of how the school's budget is allocated, including the impact of the pupil premium and the primary school sport funding. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding and child protection procedures meet 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 | 112363 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 443826 |

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 | 203 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Buckley |
| Headteacher | Bernie Barnes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 October 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01229 840940 |
| Fax number | 01229 840949 |
| Email address | head@sacredheart.cumbria.sch.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

