

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School

Bradshaw Row, Church, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 4HG

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress.
- In recent years attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has risen significantly. In 2013 attainment was close to the national average at the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection the progress that pupils make has accelerated. The proportion making good progress has grown and now compares favourably to national figures.
- There is a strong commitment to ensure that all pupils do equally well. All groups, including the high proportion that speak English as an additional language, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- The quality of teaching has improved. It is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers have a sharp focus on enabling most pupils to make rapid progress.
- Pupils are safe in school and most behave well. They are proud of their school and treat each other and the adults working with them with respect. They work and play harmoniously.
- The improvements that have taken place are the result of strong and effective leadership and management with good support from the local authority. Team work is strong across the school in the desire to make the school better.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. It holds the school rigorously to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make good progress for achievement to be outstanding.
- Work is not always challenging enough for pupils, especially for the most able, and the quality of marking is inconsistent.
- Questioning is not used consistently well to deepen pupils' understanding and learning in all classes.
- Expectations of the progress that pupils should make are not always challenging enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons taught by seven teachers. Four of the observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher and acting headteacher. An inspector listened to a group of pupils in Year 2 read. Inspectors also observed the teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) and attended sessions of guided reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's view of its own performance, safeguarding and child-protection arrangements, behaviour and attendance, the quality of teaching, and minutes of the governing body meetings. A sample of pupils' work in books was also examined.
- Inspectors held a series of formal and informal discussions with pupils to discuss their experience of school, and particularly their learning, behaviour and safety. Discussions were also held with the senior and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair. An inspector also spoke to two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector also spoke to six parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors considered 22 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Choi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is well-above average. About a quarter of these pupils are of Pakistani heritage with the remainder from a wide range of different heritage backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well-above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average while the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than normal times is well-above average. In recent years a significant number of pupils have joined the school from other European countries, especially Poland, speaking little or no English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Following the retirement of the headteacher in July 2013, the school was led until Christmas 2013 by a part-time executive headteacher. From January 2014 the school has been led and managed by a part-time executive headteacher and a full-time acting headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out the few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that all is good and more is outstanding to enable more pupils to make even faster progress by ensuring that:
 - work is always appropriately challenging for pupils of different abilities, especially for the most able
 - teachers' use of questioning is of consistently high quality in checking on pupils' understanding and deepening their learning
 - marking is of consistently high quality in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work and insisting that pupils follow up on the advice given.
- Make leadership and management even more effective by setting targets for teachers that focus on pupils making more than expected progress in each class, and holding teachers to account for achieving them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with well-below average skills for their age.
- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because good teaching ensures that there is a good range of stimulating and interesting activities for them to learn from.
- Pupils continue to make good progress overall in Key Stage 1 despite there being some inconsistency in the quality of learning and progress in different classes. By the end of Year 2 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has risen to below average and is improving.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well. Attainment has risen in recent years in English and mathematics at a rate faster than the national trend. In 2013 attainment in writing and mathematics was broadly average but not as high in reading. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, listening to pupils read, discussions with pupils and school data show that reading skills have improved significantly and are set to match attainment in writing and mathematics in the coming years.
- Nearly all pupils make the progress expected of them. The proportion making better progress than this has grown in recent years. In 2013 it was above the national figures in writing and mathematics and just below in reading.
- Although the proportion of most able pupils attaining the higher levels in national tests in 2013 was below the national average, in recent years the proportion has grown and inspection evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work in their books confirms school data that the proportion is continuing to grow securely. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to make sure that the work set for pupils is always challenging enough, especially for the most able.
- In 2013 at the end of Year 6, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was approximately half a National Curriculum level lower than other pupils overall in reading, writing and mathematics combined. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that the school's efforts to target the extra finances with a sharper focus is paying dividends and that the gap is closing securely.
- Pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the effective support that they receive both in classes and in extra support lessons provided in small groups.
- The school's success in providing support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for pupils who join the school at other than normal times is seen in the good progress that they make from their individual starting points.
- The fact that all groups of pupils achieve well testifies to the school's strong and effective provision for providing equality of opportunity.
- The school caters well for the development of pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills. Phonics is taught effectively and lays solid foundations for pupils' reading skills. The sharp focus on improving guided reading sessions and replenishing the range of reading materials for all ages are improving reading skills rapidly. Pupils enjoy writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 the vast majority of pupils use an extensive range of vocabulary and write confidently in a range of styles. Pupils have good basic number skills which they are able to apply with growing confidence to solving problems.

The quality of teaching is good

- Despite a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is usually good with some that is outstanding.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage consistently good teaching enables children to make good progress and achieve well. There is a good range of learning activities both inside and outside that stimulates children's interest and captures their imagination.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers know the pupils in their classes well and forge strong working

relationships with them based on respect and patient understanding.

- Most teachers expect their pupils to work hard. The vast majority of pupils respond positively and are keen to show what they can do.
- Most lessons are planned well to include a good variety of activities that keep pupils interested. Pupils learn well in small groups and pairs where they enjoy sharing their thoughts and ideas.
- However, sometimes activities are not matched closely enough to the range of abilities in each class, especially for the most able, who sometimes find the work too easy. This slows progress for some pupils in a few classes.
- While the majority of teaching uses questioning skilfully to encourage pupils to think deeply and give extended answers, this is not always the case. In a minority of classes the lack of good questioning acts as a brake on driving understanding and learning at a fast pace.
- Where teachers get the level of challenge right and use questioning expertly, pupils of all abilities make very rapid progress. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson on writing about animals, pupils enjoyed answering questions designed to build on and develop further what they already knew. Teaching matched the difficulty of questions and activities accurately to pupils' differing abilities. As a result they all made outstanding progress in their understanding and in their writing skills.
- A team of high-quality teaching assistants play a pivotal role in supporting pupils' learning. They work expertly with all abilities both in classes and in small group sessions outside the classroom.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly. However, the quality of their comments and their insistence on pupils acting on the advice given is variable. As a result opportunities to use marking as a means to improve learning and progress are not consistently exploited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around school is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also good.
- Pupils are very respectful to each other and the adults working with them. They have good manners and are welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They wear their school uniform correctly and take good care of the school's surroundings and buildings.
- Pupils say that behaviour is generally good in lessons and that, although their learning is occasionally disrupted by silly behaviour, this is dealt with fairly and promptly by their teachers. They say that behaviour has improved recently, a fact borne out by school records relating to behaviour.
- Occasionally, when pupils find work too easy or too hard in lessons, a few become inattentive but this rarely causes any major disruption to learning.
- Pupils say that bullying or name calling of any kind is rare. If it happens, they also say that teachers are quick to deal with it. School records confirm that bullying is the exception rather than the rule.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that teachers, 'are kind and helpful'.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about potentially unsafe situations and how to deal with or avoid them. They are fully aware of the risks presented by using the internet and social networking sites.
- The school knows all of its pupils as individuals. It provides strong support for those not doing as well as they should to make sure that they are happy in school and do as well as they can.
- Pupils from different backgrounds, nationalities and religions work and play together very well. The school prepares them well for life in a diverse society.
- Attendance has risen this current academic year and is now above average because of the effective range of actions that have been put in place by leaders and managers to raise awareness of its importance to progress and achievement.
- The majority of parents are satisfied with the standard of behaviour and safety at the school.

The leadership and management are good

- At the root of the school's rapid improvement lie the strong and exceptionally skilful leadership and management of the executive headteacher and the acting headteacher. They have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have improved rapidly. Leaders and managers have laid strong foundations for continuing improvement.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have an accurate view of what the school does well and where it could do better. Planning for future success is of high quality and identifies exactly what needs to be done and how to achieve it.
- Subject managers are astute and keen to drive the school forward. They know what they have to do and have responded positively to the demands made upon them by senior leaders.
- Checking on the quality of teaching and providing targeted professional training for teachers to improve their skills are now firmly established routines. New systems and procedures for checking on the progress of individual pupils in each class enable the school to identify where some pupils should be doing better and what support they need to make better progress.
- Setting targets for teachers as part of checking on their performance and linking it to salary rises is firmly established. However, targets relate too frequently to the expected progress of pupils rather than progress that is better than this, diverting attention away from driving up achievement even faster.
- Leaders and managers have responded skilfully to the demands of increasing numbers of pupils who join the school speaking little or no English. The appointment of specialist teaching assistants and staff training mean that the needs of these pupils are met effectively.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for writing and for pupils to apply their basic mathematical skills to solving problems. A concentration on improving the teaching of phonics and a sharper focus on developing pupils' reading skills across the school has been successful in raising standards rapidly and securely.
- Senior leaders have extended the range of extra activities outside lessons in sports and the arts. The musical life of the school is especially strong. These activities are pivotal in broadening pupils' horizons and in their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Extra sports funding is used well to extend the range of sporting activities available to pupils both during the school day and out of normal hours, and to improving the skills of staff. Participation rates have risen and this has an obvious, beneficial effect on pupils' health and adoption of healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority has provided strong and effective support for the school, especially in making sure that leadership is strong and in providing effective support for senior leaders' work in tackling weakness in the quality of teaching.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully and actively in place.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive and knowledgeable. They hold the school rigorously to account. They use external and school data about the school's performance effectively to understand how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools both locally and nationally. Detailed reports from the executive headteacher and acting headteacher, in addition to visits to classrooms, ensure that the governing body has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Similarly, the governing body understands how the performance of staff is managed and ensures a strong link between staff performance and salary increases. The governing body has a firm grasp on the school's finances, including the use of extra funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and extra sports funding.

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	119658
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426334

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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Kenyon
Headteacher	Elizabeth Stevens (Executive Headteacher) Pamela Corry (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2012
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