

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Springfield Road, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 7RH

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups and particularly for the most able pupils, those with special educational needs and for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, from their at least average starting points in Year 1, pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 is inadequate.
- Pupils' basic skills in using number, in spelling, punctuation, grammar and comprehension are weak. They are not developed and practised across subjects. This holds back pupils' preparation for the future as well as the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The quality of teaching over time is inadequate, leading to pupils making insufficient progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is weak and their assessment of pupils' work is inaccurate and unreliable. As a result, pupils are not receiving the level of challenge or support they should and expectations for their achievement are too low.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable in quality and does not help the pupils to know how well they are doing or how to improve.
- The continuity of teaching, marking and planning has been affected by significant absence among staff; consequently, pupils' progress has been adversely affected.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement because they lose concentration when they are not clear about what is expected of them or when work provided is too easy.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not been effective in tackling weaknesses in teaching and therefore pupils' achievement has declined.
- Governors do not hold leaders and managers to account for the decline in performance and overall effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years make good progress because of effective teaching.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They look smart in their uniforms and attend regularly.
- The new executive headteacher has quickly identified to staff and governors what is required to improve the school's effectiveness. The school is now working towards these essential improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes; they observed 16 lessons and part lessons, some visited jointly with the assistant headteacher and the deputy headteacher during two 'learning walks' around the school. Inspectors observed pupils' work in lessons and in their books, including work from the last academic year. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and in the playgrounds.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, leaders and teachers, four members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of school documents including: the school's plans for improvement; its use of the primary school sports funding and pupil premium funding; records of governing body meetings; arrangements for keeping pupils safe; and information about the standards and progress of pupils across the school.
- The views of parents were taken into account by looking at the 39 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire as well as in conversations between inspectors and parents.
- Staff views were considered by analysing the 32 inspection questionnaires completed by staff and during discussions throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Docking	Additional Inspector
Kathleen McArthur	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. This varies from year to year. In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The executive headteacher took up post in April 2014. An assistant headteacher took up post in September 2014 and is in charge of the early years and also provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There has been a long period of significant staff absence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it leads to pupils making at least good progress and raises standards for all pupils, especially the most able pupils, those with special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, as well as improving their attitudes to their work by:
 - making sure that basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in number use, spelling, punctuation and grammar, are built on from the beginning of Key Stage 1 and are practised in subjects across the school
 - ensuring that teachers know and teach a range of subjects well, using their subject knowledge and knowledge of pupils' learning to plan work for pupils that matches their abilities and their interests
 - deploying teaching assistants effectively by making sure they are clear about what they are expected to do to meet pupils' specific learning needs
 - using accurate and reliable assessment information to help support and target all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, to make up for any gaps in their knowledge and skills
 - ensuring that day-to-day marking clearly guides pupils in their next steps of learning and checks on improvements in their work
 - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that challenges and engages all groups of pupils in their learning in order to eradicate low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - making sure that weaknesses in teaching are eradicated and that leaders' evaluations of teaching over time through observations of lessons, reviews of pupils' work in their books and checks on pupils' progress, are accurate and include all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that all staff work to realise the school's challenging targets, basing these on accurate assessment information, so that all pupils make at least good progress and reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics

- ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils
- ensuring that pupils' work is checked systematically and accurately by staff and leaders so that any under-achievement can be acted upon and more challenging targets then set for those who achieve their targets
- raising the levels of staff attendance
- ensuring that the governing body is knowledgeable about the school's performance and challenges its effectiveness.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Weak leadership since the last inspection has failed to improve the quality of teaching and has not eradicated pupils' underachievement. The senior leadership team is newly-established. After a term in post, the executive headteacher is very aware of the school's weaknesses but has not yet been able to have the desired impact on improving the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement. However, it is clear that the very newly appointed assistant headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the re-organised governing body are determined to improve the school's effectiveness and staff are energised by the executive headteacher's improvement plans.
- Staff performance targets in the past have been too vague and not focused precisely on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. A significant number of staff have given up their additional responsibilities and there has been a lack of accountability for raising pupils' standards. Although this is no longer the case because lines of accountability are now clear, senior and middle leaders acknowledge that their good intentions have not yet resulted in transforming pupils' outcomes.
- Assessments of pupils' work are typically over-generous and this issue has not previously been addressed by leaders. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching have not been tackled because they were not identified or linked to the poor progress of too many pupils. Now that leaders are better informed, these weaknesses are being tackled through training, support and in sharing effective teaching. It is, however, too early to see the impact of these actions.
- The curriculum is not organised well enough to ensure that pupils gain the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them well for their future. The promotion of equality of opportunity is not successful because the most able pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make inadequate progress, as do other pupils in the school. The curriculum fails to meet pupils' needs and is an inadequate vehicle for staff as they work with pupils to try to make up for any lost ground or to build firmly on pupils' knowledge.
- The use of the primary school sport funding is effective in improving pupils' physical skills as well as their awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles. Working in partnerships with local schools has supported the appointment of a part-time physical education coach who trains staff in the most effective ways to teach physical education. Pupils learn how to exercise to develop their sports proficiency and appreciate the importance of looking after their bodies and health.
- Reflective assemblies, positive relationships and an emphasis on citizenship promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their awareness of British values. Pupils have a keen sense of fair play and are taught to treat others as they would expect to be treated themselves.
- Leaders have worked effectively with parents to ensure regular attendance for most pupils and prompt arrival at school. Parents' views about the school have improved since February, especially regarding pupils' behaviour and the quality of leadership although a number of parents still have concerns.
- Apart from a welcoming, attractive entrance, the fabric of the building and the quality of displays are shabby and tired and do not highlight to pupils what good work should look like. This does not promote an environment of high expectations for learning nor celebrate good examples of pupils' work. This is in stark contrast to the attractive outdoor areas in the early years, which encourage children to explore and learn.
- The local authority was instrumental in appointing the executive headteacher, having recognised the weaknesses in the school. There is no evidence so far of the impact from local authority support on the school's work and, in particular, on pupils' outcomes.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A new Chair of the Governing Body and a sharply focused monitoring committee have now identified key weaknesses in the school's effectiveness. This, however, has not translated into effective improvement because actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are at an early stage.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure.
 - Performance management arrangements have not been sufficiently linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, although performance management has been loosely related to pay progression, it has not led to an improvement in pupils' outcomes.
 - The school's allocation of public money to support disadvantaged pupils has been ineffective in improving the achievement of this group of pupils.
 - Although governors' actions have not led to effective improvements, members of the new governing body are resolute and determined to improve the performance of the school and show strong

commitment to raising standards and improving pupils' progress. However, their efforts so far have yet to show any measurable impact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because the attitudes to learning of some pupils are not good enough. In some lessons, where work is too easy or is difficult to understand, pupils lose interest and do not concentrate as well as they should.
- Most pupils, however, behave well in lessons and around school. They are rewarded with 'golden hearts', which the pupils are keen to gain. Behaviour is mostly well managed and the number of exclusions and referrals for poor behaviour has decreased in the past six months. Pupils behave well in the dining hall and eat together sociably. They routinely clear up after themselves.
- Pupils are unfailingly polite and take pride in looking after each other and visitors. They are quick to open doors and engage in conversation with adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe. They are aware of different sorts of bullying and talk about, for example, why you must not call someone 'sissy'. The pupils feel confident that any concerns will be listened to and acted upon.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities to benefit the school community. For instance, pupils who are prefects value making the contributions they do and, equally, they are respected by other pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted appropriately. Pupils say that people from different backgrounds should all be treated in the same way and talk about people from different races or religions as a positive aspect of modern Britain. Pupils are enthusiastic fundraisers for charitable causes, both in the local area and internationally. They know the difference between right and wrong both in relation to life in school and also out in the wider community.
- Pupils' attendance is average and has improved in the last seven months. This is due to the school's rigorous systems in contacting parents on the first day of a pupil's absence from school and the work by staff with families to improve their child's attendance.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Inadequate teaching over time has led to pupils making inadequate progress since the last inspection and this is still the case for pupils currently in Years 1 to 6. Low expectations of what pupils can achieve, inaccurate information and records about their progress and a lack of action to tackle weaknesses in teaching over a number of years have led to pupils' inadequate achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not have an accurate picture of exactly what knowledge and skills the pupils have and therefore lesson planning and longer-term planning do not match pupils' abilities. Consequently, lost ground by pupils is not made up, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils are not supported well enough to reach their potential. These significant weaknesses are compounded by teachers' weak subject knowledge and haphazard attention to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy across subjects.
- Although more challenging targets for pupils' attainment have now been set, teachers are still faced with over-generous assessments of how well their pupils have performed previously. Consequently, they do not plan appropriate work to either build on pupils' previous learning or, more importantly, to make up for any gaps that remain in pupils' learning.
- There has been some instability in staffing including considerable staff absence over a lengthy period. This has led to teachers failing to identify and then act on pupils' under-achievement in a concerted or timely manner.
- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics, reading and writing are not consistently developed across subjects and so, for example, pupils' ability to use number to work out problems in mathematics is a particular weakness. Similarly, pupils' punctuation, grammar and spelling contain many inaccuracies and misunderstandings because they have not been checked thoroughly or built on successfully from the early years.
- The needs of specific groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are not met because these needs are not precisely identified by staff. Teaching assistants are unclear exactly what they are expected to do and so the support they provide does not get to the root of what is required to improve pupils' performance and the standards they reach. The most able pupils are not challenged enough because of low expectations and work that is not matched to their ability or

potential. The work pupils are given is too general to match the range of abilities in a class and so there is not enough challenge to spur on the most able pupils to achieve well enough.

- Marking of pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 is inconsistent. Guidance for improvement is too general and corrected work is not routinely checked to see whether pupils are improving. The outcomes from marking are not used to plan future work that would clear up any misunderstandings or challenge pupils to achieve more.
- When teaching and support are more effective and solidly based on what pupils have already achieved, pupils quickly make at least expected progress. This is still not enough, however, to make up for previous gaps in their progress and weak teaching in many classes.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate in Key Stages 1 and 2 because their variously average and above-average starting points in Year 1 are not built on well enough. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 6 are at best average or below average and fluctuate from year to year. In 2013, the average points scores attained in reading, writing and mathematics were below those achieved nationally and the picture was similar in 2014. Very few pupils reached the higher level 5 in the Year 6 assessments.
- Progress over time, as seen in pupils' work and in lessons, is inadequate. Previous under-achievement in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has not been addressed successfully. Assessments at Key Stage 1 over the past few years demonstrate that pupils have made largely inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs make inadequate progress. Their specific learning needs are not identified clearly enough to target work that either fills gaps in their knowledge or challenges them to move forward effectively in their learning.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress because work is often too easy for them and they are not stretched to achieve their potential. Expectations for these pupils are too low and targets for their future performance have been set at too low a level for a number of years. The most able pupils do not attain the higher standards they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils make insufficient progress because their abilities and interests are not identified accurately enough and their needs are not met. In 2014, standards reached by disadvantaged pupils in English and also in mathematics were approximately one term behind other pupils in the school. Disadvantaged pupils in the school also reached lower standards in English and in mathematics than other groups of pupils nationally in 2013. They were also approximately one term behind in both subjects.
- Rates of progress for all pupils are faster in classes when teachers' knowledge is strong and expectations are high. For example, pupils are keen to learn when they are enthused and challenged by teachers in Key Stage 1 who communicate great zest for their subjects. This is not enough, however, to make up for previous under-achievement because gaps in knowledge have not been addressed, work is not clearly matched to pupils' skills and abilities and marking is not used to plan for specific improvements to raise pupils' standards.

The early years provision

is good

- Children who left Reception in summer 2014 started Nursery with personal and social skills typical for their age but with basic skills in reading, writing and number which were well below those typical for their age. Good teaching and high-quality care make children feel secure and ready to learn. Consequently, the children make better-than-expected progress and reach at least a good level of development by the end of their time in the Reception classes. Most children are working above the levels expected for their age, as demonstrated when they wrote at length to re-tell a favourite tale.
- Children with special educational needs make good progress because they are carefully supported and encouraged to be confident and curious.
- The most able children challenge themselves on a day-by-day basis. They work to develop their writing in sentences and make good progress to move to more sophisticated number work.
- Children particularly enjoy learning outdoors because of a wide range of interesting and tempting activities. The improved outdoor areas are attractive and tempt children to explore and learn.
- Children for whom the school receives additional funding make the same good progress as other children because they are taught well. Their physical and emotional development is good and children are well-

prepared for learning in Year 1.

- Good leadership and management in the early years require staff to track children’s progress carefully and regularly. This information is then used either to clear up any misunderstandings or to challenge children further.
- Children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted effectively; they behave well, are well-mannered and learn with zest about the world around them, including modern Britain. Books and topics about different religions and ethnic backgrounds help children to appreciate the rich and diverse society in which they live.

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	106461
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	442388

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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Gaskell
Headteacher	Jane Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2012
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