

# Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mere Close, Off Mere Road, Leicester, LE5 3HH

## Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

| Overall effectiveness          | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> <b>2</b>                   |
| Leadership and management      | Good                 | 2                                      |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good                 | 2                                      |
| Quality of teaching            | Good                 | 2                                      |
| Achievement of pupils          | Good                 | 2                                      |
| Early years provision          | Good                 | 2                                      |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads the school well. He has made sure that standards in teaching have improved and that subject leaders are more accountable.
- Governors visit the school regularly to see the school at work. They provide a good balance of support and challenge.
- Teaching is good and, as a result, most pupils make good progress.
- Children in the early years enjoy learning and most are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress from their low starting points. This good progress continues in Key Stage 2.
- The attainment of pupils who attend throughout Key Stage 2 is above average in reading.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school is closing.
- Children learning English is an additional language benefit from well-targeted support which allows them to make good progress.
- Teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and use it effectively to support pupils with their learning.
- Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. They want to do well.
- Pupils behave very well around the school. They show kindness and tolerance towards each other and adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The school provides a broad curriculum with plenty of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar at the end of Key Stage 2 is well below average.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of some pupils, especially the more able. As a result, they are not reaching the higher levels of attainment.
- In some cases, the quality of teachers' feedback does not allow some pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers not always check that pupils make the necessary improvements and amendments to their work.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at work in their books.
- Meetings were held with a number of pupils from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and inspectors talked to pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, subject coordinators, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, four members of the governing body and a representative from the Corpus Christi Trust.
- There were 10 responses for inspectors to take account of through the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents in the school playground.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a number of documents including: the school’s own self-evaluation; its improvement plan; data on pupils’ recent attainment and progress; behaviour and attendance records; policies and procedures related to safeguarding, health and safety, and anti-bullying; and records of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the 42 responses from the staff questionnaire.

### Inspection team

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Caroline Parry, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jacqueline Pentlow             | Additional Inspector |
| John Croghan                   | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Sacred Heart Voluntary Academy is part of the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust, which comprises St. Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy; St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Leicester; St. John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy; and St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Market Harborough. It converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- Most pupils come from minority ethnic background and speak English as an additional language. The largest ethnic group is Indian. Around half the pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a well above-average proportion.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is around 40%, which is above the national average.
- At almost 10%, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is just above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is at 9%, which is also just above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Mobility is high, as a much larger proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at normal times. Many of the pupils who enter the school midway through the year do not speak English.
- Provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage is full-time.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by ensuring that the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar are reinforced at all times and across all subjects.
- Further improve teaching by making sure that:
  - the tasks given to the more-able pupils are appropriately challenging
  - pupils are given precise feedback that allows them to make the necessary improvements and amendments to their work
  - teachers check that pupils act on the feedback advice they are given.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management of the academy are good because the headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has successfully improved the achievement of pupils by improving teaching and by providing effective support for pupils who fall behind in their learning.
- Leaders at all levels rigorously track the progress of different groups, including those pupils learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress and achieve well so that they no longer require extra help with their learning. Leaders have not monitored the more-able pupils with the same rigor.
- Leaders monitor teaching regularly and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching within the school. There is a well-planned training programme that helps teachers to improve their practice and keep up to date with current developments in education; for example, the new National Curriculum.
- School self-evaluation of its performance is accurate and leaders have correctly identified priorities to further improve the school.
- Performance management arrangements for teachers are managed well and teachers' pay awards are linked to pupils' achievement.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils, and the gap between their attainment and other pupils in the school and nationally is closing throughout the school.
- The primary sports funding is used to employ a full-time sport coach as well as specialist physical education teacher. This allows the school to offer a wide range of sporting activities in sports lessons; for example, dance, basketball, hockey, gymnastics and swimming. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in competitive sporting events and sporting clubs. Year 6 have the opportunity to experience outdoor activities such as rock climbing and archery. Pupils told inspectors that they greatly enjoyed their sports lessons.
- Subject coordinators are involved in monitoring teaching and pupils' achievement within their subject areas. They regularly monitor work in pupils' books and can explain the strengths and weaknesses of teaching within their subject. They have drawn up plans to improve areas of weakness. For example, the mathematics coordinator has introduced more mental mathematics into lessons and this is having an impact on raising attainment.
- The governors, headteacher and all staff promote equality of opportunity for all. The caring character of the school ensures that all faiths are valued, and all pupils to take part in activities.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good foundation in reading, writing and mathematics. Subjects such as science, computing, art, music and religious education give pupils the opportunity to develop their knowledge. Pupils follow the international primary curriculum and this widens their understanding of life in Europe as each class is linked to a school in Europe and the children communicate with their counterparts abroad.
- Pupils have special curriculum days every half term; for example, art and music days. Trips and visits are used to make learning more interesting. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils visited a synagogue to find out more about the Jewish religion. The curriculum prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school benefits from being a member of the Corpus Christi Catholic Trust of schools. The trust supports the school with training for teachers and governors. It offers support in improving teaching and shares resources; for example, a business manager. Headteachers of the other trust schools visit the

school and support the headteacher in the evaluation of its performance.

- The school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- All parents who expressed a view, and staff who responded to the staff questionnaire, agree that the school is well led and managed.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors know the school well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They have recently undertaken training on how to judge learning and, as a result, they have carried out a number of visits to classrooms in order to review the experience of pupils within the school.
- The governing body reviews all pay awards and uses a range of evidence based on pupils' performance and the quality of teaching before deciding whether to award pay increases.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school data and what it tells them about pupils' achievement. They know how the pupil premium is spent and the impact it is having on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They are proactive in supporting school improvement; for example, they recently decided to employ more staff in order to improve reading standards in Key Stage 1.
- The governors are diligent in carrying out their safeguarding duties, ensuring that the school is safe for both pupils and staff. They regularly review policies, risk assessments and accident logs.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils support each other in all areas of school life. They are welcoming, especially to pupils who arrive midway through the year. As a result, pupils who are new arrivals quickly settle into school life.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are positive and they want to do well. They are enthusiastic in lessons and are eager to take part in activities and answer questions. They respond well to the school's system for managing behaviour and accept the consequences of their actions.
- This is a multicultural school and there is a general intolerance of racism by all pupils. This means that there are very few incidents within the school.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is exemplary. They play well together and show respect for one another. They care for their school surroundings; for example, putting litter in the bins provided. Relationships between pupils are harmonious and positive. Pupils have high moral expectations of themselves and others.
- Attendance has improved consistently over the last three years and is now above average.
- All the parents who responded to Parent View and spoke to inspectors agree that behaviour is good in the school and that bullying is dealt with effectively. Teachers also feel that behaviour in the school is good.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because some pupils become distracted and distract others if they find the work too easy.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All parents expressing a view agreed that their child is safe in the school.
- The school chaplain works with groups of pupils on issues around personal safety and teaches aspects of the personal, social and health programme.

- Pupils are taught about the potential dangers of using the internet.
- Staff and governors keep themselves up to date through regular training and take every action to keep pupils safe and secure in school. Risk assessments for trips and visits are rigorous and governors check them thoroughly.
- The school employs a range of staff, including a social worker who supports children, staff and their families. As a result, these pupils and their families receive support from the relevant agencies. The behaviour and attendance of these pupils has improved as a result of the support.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and pupils say that it is always dealt with appropriately. Parents and staff also agree that any bullying is swiftly dealt with.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to plan interesting activities. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Teaching assistants have good subject knowledge as they are well trained to support pupils. They support pupils effectively with their learning so that the pupils make good progress.
- Additional adults provide well-targeted additional support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress with their learning.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and staff successfully manage any rare off-task behaviour.
- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to judge how well pupils are learning and when to move them on to the next stage in their learning.
- Reading is taught well and attainment in reading across the school has improved as a result. Pupils enjoy reading and have plenty of opportunities to read in all subjects.
- Pupils' punctuation, spelling and grammar are weak. In previous years, the school has not put enough emphasis on correcting pupils' spelling and grammar errors in written work in subjects other than literacy.
- A new approach to teaching writing has been introduced and, by looking through pupils' books, inspectors noted that pupils are now being taught how to spell and they are being regularly tested. Grammar is taught well and pupils are now more accurate in their use of grammar when writing. Most teachers are making sure that pupils are correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation errors but this is not consistent across all subjects in all classes.
- Work in pupils' books is always marked and pupils are given guidance on how to improve their work. However, sometimes this is not specific enough or is too detailed for pupils to understand, especially those in Key Stage 1. Where clear advice is given through marking and verbal feedback, teachers do not all check that pupils follow and act on the advice they have been given so that their work improves.
- Almost all teachers plan activities that are initially well matched to the specific learning needs of most groups of pupils but they do not always set work that is demanding enough for the more-able pupils.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of development that is below that typical for their age, especially in mathematics and speech and language. Children who start the school at three years old make good progress, and the proportion meeting the expected level of development has increased over the last three years. In 2014, it was in line with the national average.
- A large proportion of children join the school midway through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although these children make good progress from their low starting points, they do not all meet the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the threshold in the national screening check in phonics (linking letters and sounds) was below average in 2014. However, of those pupils who joined the school before the start of Year 1, an above-average percentage met the threshold.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 but attainment remains below the national average. The school's attainment data is affected by the number of pupils who join the school midway through the key stage, as many arrive speaking little or no English. The attainment of pupils who completed the whole of Key Stage 1 is broadly average.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils making expected and more than expected progress exceeds that nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Of the pupils who have completed all or most of their Key Stage 2 in the school, the proportion attaining the expected Level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in reading is above average. In mathematics, the proportion is just below average and in writing it is well below average. As in Key Stage 1, the school's overall attainment figures are depressed by the number of pupils who join the school quite late in the key stage. Though these pupils make good progress over their time at the school, their attainment remains markedly lower than that of the pupils who have been at the school from the start of Key Stage 2 or earlier.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive effective support with their learning and, as a result, the proportion making expected progress in reading was equal to other pupils within the school and above other pupils nationally. In writing and mathematics, their progress was below other pupils within the school but equal to other pupils nationally.
- In 2014, in Year 6, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in the class was under a term in writing but was around two terms in mathematics. In reading, disadvantaged pupils were two terms ahead of their classmates. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was in line with pupils nationally in reading but was about two and a half terms behind in writing and mathematics.
- The school's tracking data shows that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The very large number of pupils learning English as an additional language receive targeted support from well-qualified adults. This has resulted in them making good progress throughout the school. There is a well-organised induction programme for new arrivals who speak little or no English.
- School data and end of key stage test results show that the more-able and most-able pupils are making expected rather than good progress and, as a result, they are not reaching the higher levels of attainment.
- Attainment in English, spelling, punctuation and grammar is well below average. The school has recognised this and has taken positive action to improve attainment. The success of this is evidenced by the work seen in pupils' books.

**The early years provision is good**

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Children are accurately assessed on entry to Nursery and their progress is tracked carefully so that teachers plan learning activities aimed at helping children to develop the skills needed for Key Stage 1. As a result, progress is at least good for all groups of children.
- Parents are involved in all stages of their child's education throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are asked to give the school their views on teaching, learning, care and the general attitude of their children. These comments form part of the child's 'learning journal' and contribute to the strong working partnership between teachers and parents.
- All staff are well aware of the specific learning needs of the children and plan activities to support each child to move forward with their learning. Teaching is therefore good as it prepares the children well for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching assistant are appropriately trained so that they have the knowledge and expertise to support all children; for example, there are staff who speak five of the main home languages of the children.
- Mathematics is taught well and reading opportunities are plentiful as books are easily accessible. Inspectors observed children reading by themselves, being read to by adults, and reading to one another and to adults.
- Children show an enjoyment of learning. They cooperate well in a welcoming and caring environment. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and that all children have different needs. Adults acts as good role models and inspectors observed children helping one another with their language and their learning.



## 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

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 138081    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Leicester |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 449249    |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                 |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter                       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 410                                     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | John Lally                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Gerard Hirst                            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not previously inspected as an academy. |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0116 2624418                            |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | Office@sacredheart.leicester.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

