

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hindley Green

Swan Lane, Hindley Green, Wigan, Lancashire, WN2 4HD

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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's leadership is effective. She constantly ensures that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development are woven into the curriculum.
- The able deputy headteacher has a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses at the school. He is supported well by senior and middle leaders who have a range of diverse skills.
- Together, leaders ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are both good and continue to improve. They have a consistent approach to the analysis of data the link this with developing the high quality provision.
- Governors are supportive of the school and challenge leaders constantly to provide good and better practice for all.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes are good. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that all pupils are safe and all safeguarding requirements are met.
- All staff are experienced and well trained. This, along with high levels of care, ensures that pupils achieve well from their starting points.
- The teaching assistants are a strength of the school. They are well trained and focus on pupils' well-being, personal development and academic achievements. They are instrumental in delivering high quality support for pupils' learning in English and mathematics.
- Early years education in the Reception Class ensures that all children get off to a really good start with purposeful, well-planned activities.
- Pupils' achievements are good due to the targeted support that they receive to address any misconceptions very quickly. As a result, they make fast progress in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils now make sustained good progress. As they move up through the school, pupils are supported to achieve well in all key stages.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils are not totally clear how to improve their writing and often they are not given enough time to correct their mistakes.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects and so some do not reach their full potential.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in many lessons involving different teachers. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Walks around the school were conducted and learning was observed in different key stages. Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 3 and 6 read. Inspectors observed support for pupils in whole-class sessions, groups and with individual pupils.
- Inspectors looked in detail at the work in pupils’ books, files and online from across the school. Three meetings were held with groups of pupils where they talked about their work and their perceptions of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff and different groups of pupils. They interviewed two members of the governing body. They held two telephone conversations, one with a representative from the local authority and the other with a representative from the local authority consortia for school improvement.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school’s summary of its view of its own performance and the school development plan. They scrutinised policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, information about pupils’ attendance and behaviour and records of the monitoring of teaching and learning. They considered information about pupils’ achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- There were 26 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and inspectors also looked at summaries of school parental questionnaires. They also took account of the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Catholic School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and therefore supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for a small charge with a private provider.
- There are links with pre-school provision in the local area. Early years education is provided in a full time Reception class.
- Since the last inspection there have been some changes in staffing, mainly in Key Stage 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further to raise attainment and accelerate the rate of progress in pupils' writing, including for the most able, by:
 - making certain that teachers' marking consistently and specifically shows pupils how to improve their written work so that they understand exactly how to make it better and that teachers give pupils the time to complete this task
 - ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to practise their extended writing across other subject areas using the skills that they have been taught
 - making sure that pupils know about the impact their writing needs to have on the reader to be successful and they are very clear about which audience they are writing for.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides purposeful leadership. Her drive to provide a high quality of education for all pupils is very effective. The deputy headteacher supports this work really well and has been instrumental in monitoring and evaluating curricular provision. However, leaders have not ensured a consistent approach in the marking of pupils' writing, particularly for the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs. The analysis of data by leaders is good and all staff take ownership of tracking pupils' progress in order to enhance pupils' achievement even further.
- The senior leadership team continually shares ideas and looks for ways to improve the school's work. Leaders demonstrate pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and the school is well placed to improve standards further.
- Leaders' checks of the school's performance ensure that they have a good understanding of what is working well and what requires further attention. Plans to make improvements are discussed regularly at leadership meetings.
- Teaching has improved significantly across the school since the last inspection because leaders make regular checks on its quality. Senior leaders look carefully at the plans for lessons, the lessons taught and the pupils' progress in their work. A typical staff comment, 'Leaders are clear about the direction of the school and listen to us. It's a good place to work as the training we are offered is very focused on the priorities for the pupils' learning.' Any weaker aspects of teaching are tackled effectively through targeted support. The management of teachers' performance through setting targets linked to pupils' performance is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The work of middle leaders is effective. They ensure that there is much that enriches the curriculum and they strive to make it as exciting as possible. Pupils experience a range of activities such as outdoor pursuits, bowling, playing the violin in Year 3, working with a dance teacher, or gardening with volunteers from 'Wigan in Bloom'. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about democracy as they vote to elect school council members. The school website has examples of how pupils learn about life in a multicultural society and our British values.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Pupils are taught to be resilient, reflective and to persevere with their writing and reading tasks. They are taught to stick with it in their mathematical development, especially when they have to solve challenging problems. The school's learning approach in English and mathematics usually helps pupils to target improvement in their work on a regular basis and to sort out misconceptions very quickly.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and leaders and managers are committed to tackling discrimination of any kind. Leaders ensure that positive relationships are established, particularly with parents and outside agencies. The leaders work hard to ensure that the children have exciting opportunities in sport, French, music, computing and outdoor pursuits, such as the residential visit to Shropshire.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is being used effectively. For example, it pays for specialist coaches to deliver lessons and this impacts very well on teachers' own knowledge and practice for delivering future lessons.
- Good leadership ensures that the pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that those pupils eligible make as much progress as others in the school.
- Leaders monitor provision very effectively by looking very carefully at the attendance, behaviour and progress of pupils on a regular basis.
- Good procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and are effective. For example, pupils who are more vulnerable report that they have positive learning experiences and feel very safe in school.
- The local authority has provided effective support with the quality of teaching, through the Wigan Consortia, Locality 3, Supporting Standards and Improving School Achievement Group. The support provided for governance has been effective since the last inspection and has made a significant difference to this aspect of leadership and management. Recent support has included work with the school on some staffing issues, which have recently been resolved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and uses the information and data about pupils' progress effectively to compare the school's performance with that of other similar schools locally and nationally. The school improvement working group has ensured that governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors provide good support and challenge in a quest for ongoing improvement,

particularly in reading and mathematics. Governors know how good the quality of teaching is and will not stand for anything less than consistently good or better. Governors know the importance of focused management of teachers' performance and its link to pay progression. They always ensure that the pupil premium is used appropriately to make a significant difference to individual pupils, resulting in good or better progress. The governing body checks on the impact that funding has on pupils' progress in all subjects and has made a positive impact on the improvements made in many areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a calm, orderly approach to the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils' attitude to their work is good and this makes a positive contribution to their good progress. Activities in lessons mostly capture pupils' interest and so they enjoy their lessons. However, sometimes when work is too easy, pupils are not always as engaged as they could be and this slows the pace of their learning, especially in their writing.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements. A typical comment from a pupil is, 'I am proud of my achievements and this makes me think I can do really well when I leave school. This school has taught me so many things about behaviour, safety and how to get on with other people.' Pupils agree that the school is helping them to improve their academic achievement, behaviour and social well-being.
- There is a behaviour policy that pupils know about and follow. Pupils are clear about what is and what is not acceptable behaviour on the playground. Adults are good role models for pupils, particularly in relation to attitudes and manners. Playtime supervision is good. Pupils feel very safe and they know that they have an adult to go to if they need any assistance.
- When asked what is special about the school, pupils say, 'Everyone is so friendly and we enjoy coming to school. The teachers help us to do our work and to learn lots of interesting and new things.'
- Pupils are very polite and well-mannered to each other, to staff and to visitors. They help and support each other well in the dining room, in class and outside on the playground. They reflect during lessons and are taught to listen to each other and to discuss their ideas sensibly to improve their own learning.
- Pupils are well behaved in and out of the classroom. The older pupils look after the younger pupils in the dining hall or on the playground and this develops their sense of responsibility. School monitors for the library, recycling, registers, music and information and communication technology (ICT) all help to make sure the school runs smoothly on a daily basis.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There are many aspects of this work which are good, for example the meetings which ensure that all staff have an accurate overview of individual pupils, to ensure that they are kept safe and well. Additional help by well-trained staff allows pupils to catch up with their classmates and this makes them feel happier, safe and secure.
- Learning about different types of bullying features well in assemblies and lessons. Consequently pupils are able to recognise the difference between bullying and falling out. They informed inspectors that bullying very rarely occurs and when it does, staff are vigilant in monitoring the situation and they sort issues out quickly. Pupils are confident about approaching adults in school if they need help to resolve any issue.
- Attendance has risen continually over the past three years. It is above the national average. Staff have regular contact with parents and this communicates the school's expectation to ensure good attendance at school. The school has impressed effectively upon parents the need for their children to attend school regularly and this has paid dividends. Pupils enjoy coming to school as they want to learn more. They realise the need for good attendance and enjoy the rewards they receive when they come to school regularly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of the teaching is good. Tasks in lessons build very clearly on what pupils already know and can do and meet pupils' varying needs and abilities well on a daily basis. The tasks that pupils are given are matched well to their individual needs and are linked to their individual targets. Consequently, learning is at times rapid, especially in mathematics.
- Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are often high. For example, pupils are moved on expertly as soon as they need more challenge, especially higher up the school.

- The teaching of English is good, especially reading. Work meets the needs of the pupils and they are motivated and engaged by their specific tasks. The pupils' individual targets are linked well to the different tasks provided for them in class and this impacts positively on their learning. Sometimes, pupils' progress in writing is not as good. This is because teachers' marking of writing across the different subjects and classes is not consistent. Sometimes, teachers do not give pupils clear instructions about how to improve their writing and often they are not given the time to address their misconceptions. Pupils are sometimes not sure who the audience is that they are writing for, so the vocabulary they use, or the sentence structure does not make the necessary impact.
- The teaching of mathematics is stronger throughout the school because tasks are matched well to pupils' ability, including for the most able. Pupils are provided with activities and challenges that stretch their mathematical thinking skills effectively.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and the sounds that they make.) These improvements have had a positive impact on standards in reading across the school. However, there was a dip in 2014 due to some pupils having lower than expected starting points and some staffing issues. These pupils have now made rapid progress due to an intensive programme which has helped them to catch up. Pupils, including the most able pupils, are always given challenging reading tasks and they enjoy the range of material on offer in the classrooms. Pupils are good at learning their high-frequency words and this supports them with their reading tasks very well indeed.
- Teaching assistants are particularly well trained and have the necessary skills to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics. They are important and crucial in building relationships with the pupils. They are also kept well informed of what pupils are expected to learn and so they are able to support pupils' good progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's skills when they enter school are typical for their age. They make good progress and pupils reach standards which are higher than the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, achievement in English is not as good as achievement in mathematics. For instance, the most able pupils do not always reach their full potential in their writing.
- As a result of effective teaching, learning gets off to a good start in the Reception Year. Pupils' good progress continues through into Key Stage 1. In 2014, standards dipped at the end of Year 2, reflecting lower than expected starting points and staffing issues. In previous years, by the end of Year 2, pupils reached standards above the national average. The most recent school data show improvement across the school, with a rise in standards overall.
- Standards reached in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved rapidly since those reported in the last inspection report. In Year 6 in 2014, the proportion of pupils who reached the nationally expected Level 4 overall in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. This represents good progress from their individual starting points. The proportion of pupils who made more progress than expected in all subjects except writing compared favourably with the proportion that did so nationally. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that standards in writing are improving further.
- Currently in Key Stage 2, the most able pupils achieve well, but there is still more to do to ensure that they reach the higher standards of which they are capable in writing. They are often challenged in their mathematics and reading and are motivated well to do their very best. This is particularly the case in Year 6, because teachers' expectations are so very high. Last year, five pupils achieved the highest Level 6 in mathematics. However, in the same year too few pupils reached the higher levels of attainment in writing, because expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in this school. The small numbers make statistical comparisons about their attainment alongside their peers in school and nationally unreliable from one year to the next. However, as a result of rigorous tracking and good teaching over time, they make the same good progress as their classmates in school.
- Pupils who have a special educational need make good progress because of the highly effective support that they receive from teaching assistants and specialist support teachers. However, they do not always understand how to improve their work and so they do not do well enough in writing.

The early years provision**is good**

- Most children start in the Reception Year with skills typical for children of this age, however some children's skills in writing are weaker. Children make good progress during their time in the early years because they are supported well, especially in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. When they leave the Reception Year, the majority have reached a good level of development and are well prepared for their next stage of learning in Year 1.
- Teaching is well organised and provides a calm atmosphere so children feel safe and secure. Relationships are positive and conducive to good progress for all the children. Teaching ensures that learning is enjoyable and that the activities provided generally meet children's varying needs and abilities. For example, they enjoy learning about the letters and the sounds that they make, dressing up in the ship as a pirate and walking the plank in the role-play, or searching for insects in the 'mini-beasts hotel'. Some children were investigating early writing skills through mark making in their 'mud kitchen' and one boy shouted excitedly, 'We have cakes for sale.'
- There is a strong emphasis placed on developing children's social skills and their readiness for learning before they enter Year 1. Children clear up after themselves both inside and outside and confidently make their own decisions about what they want to play with next. They follow instructions from adults carefully and behave well.
- Good leadership and management ensure that provision in the early years is good. The staff ensure that safety procedures are robust and that the partnerships with parents are strong. The use of their home/school scrapbooks are a particularly useful way of sharing information. Parents agree that the early years provision is good.
- The school works actively to involve the pre-school settings in transition programmes. There are strong relationships with these different providers and this helps children to settle into their new school without trauma.

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	130955
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	462297

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Miller
Headteacher	Christine Ryding
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2013
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