

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Poulton Street, Ashton, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2SA

**Inspection dates** 28–29 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, including the most able pupils, those who are disadvantaged, the disabled and those with special educational needs.
- Achievement is good and standards are improving over time. The proportions of pupils reaching at and beyond expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school are increasing.
- Teaching is effective. Teachers are particularly skilled in questioning pupils to develop their thinking skills and promote their confidence as independent learners. Pupils think hard about the best approach to work things out and are keen to learn.
- Pupils swiftly learn phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) because the teaching of this subject is good. As a result, pupils swiftly develop their reading skills and read widely and for pleasure.
- Pupils behave well because teachers make learning interesting and exciting. There is rarely any disruption to learning in any lessons and most pupils behave sensibly in school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that the adults in the school care for them and are there to give help and advice when they need it. Relationships are good.
- Leadership is strong, including that of the governing body. Leaders ensure that teaching is consistently good and ensure staff receive high-quality professional development. There is a school-wide determination to leave no stone unturned if it will improve personal and academic outcomes for pupils. As a result, the school is improving.
- Provision in early years is good. Youngsters thrive in a warm, welcoming environment and have a flying start to their education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not always make the best use of all of the information now available about pupils' progress to compare the school's performance with other schools nationally.
- Teachers do not always have the skills needed in teaching computing to ensure that pupils learn to write simple programs and use these to solve problems.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils about their work and play in school.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body as well as school leaders and with a local authority representative to discuss support for the school.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to take into account. Inspectors spoke informally to parents on the school yard and considered 19 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and checked various documents and procedures, including school improvement planning and systems for checking pupils' progress. They also looked at documents relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, including the school's records of the quality of teaching over time and pupils' current work in books.

## Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gary Bevin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. These pupils come largely from Eastern European countries. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also average.
- All pupils are educated at the school's premises. The school makes no use of alternative provision elsewhere.
- The Reception class provides full-time early years education.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is almost double the national average. The term disadvantaged is used to describe those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority. Both these groups are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly above average. There are no disabled pupils currently in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs operating on the school site. These are not run by the governing body of the school and receive their own inspections. The reports are available on the Ofsted website, [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

- Improve teachers' skills of teaching computing so that they can extend pupils' understanding of computer science and provide more opportunities for pupils to write simple computer programs and use these to solve problems.
- Improve leadership by making sure that leaders pinpoint how to raise attainment even further by using all of the available information about pupils' progress to gain an accurate view of how well the school is doing compared with other schools nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have high expectations and are ambitious for all pupils. They provide a safe and nurturing environment where pupils thrive and make good progress, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively and the gaps in the standards between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are narrowing rapidly.
- The school's procedures to check on the quality of teaching are thorough. Checks on the performance of all staff are rigorous and lead to staff receiving high quality training. This develops their practice and they become even better at helping children to achieve to the very best of their ability. Teachers who are in the earliest stages of their career are particularly well supported and typically comment on how much they appreciate this.
- Systems to check up on pupils' progress and make sure that they receive any extra help if they need to catch up are secure. However, leaders do not use all of the available information to further raise attainment by gaining an accurate view of the school's performance compared with other schools nationally.
- Senior and middle leaders are effective and demonstrate a positive impact on improving pupils' skills in literacy, mathematical calculations and in the provision for children in the early years. Recent improvements to the teaching of phonics, for example, mean that pupils' scores in the Year 1 phonics check are well above average. Similarly, a school-wide focus on helping pupils learn to solve problems in mathematics is already raising standards in this subject.
- This is an inclusive school that gives an equally good standard of education for pupils with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and for pupils across the full range of different abilities. There is no racism because the ethos of the school promotes tolerance and respect for different races, religions and cultures and this is helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are frequent opportunities throughout the day for pupils to pause for spiritual reflection and think about how they should always try to be kind and treat everyone with equal courtesy and respect. From the first days in Reception children learn good manners. They take turns, share toys and equipment, and take responsibility for tidying up after themselves. For example, at snack time, children in Reception have a bowl of warm, soapy water and carefully wash and dry up their plates and cutlery.
- Pupils' cultural awareness is developed through celebrating festivals for a range of faiths and cultures, including studying Christmas around the world and visiting a local Mosque. Their understanding of the wider cultural diversity of modern Britain is promoted well. For example, parents with a broad range of cultural backgrounds are frequently invited in to share their traditions and food with pupils such as, making Polish pancakes for Shrove Tuesday.
- Primary school sport funding is used to successfully increase the range of sports on offer, to help teachers develop their skills in relation to teaching physical education and to promote healthy lifestyles by increasing the number of pupils taking part in physical activities.
- Links with parents and the local community are improving. Leaders, including governors, work very hard to engage parents in the life of the school. The recently appointed learning mentor is already proving highly effective in supporting this and also in improving pupils' punctuality and attendance.
- Partnership working with other local schools supports improvements in the quality of teaching through sharing good practice and developing, for example, the good quality of provision in the early years.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school, particularly in relation to developing the skills of teachers and teaching assistants.
- Governors ensure that the school meets the statutory safeguarding requirements. All staff have been cleared as suitable to work with children and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. As a result, safeguarding and child protection policies and practice are fully effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring a wide range of experience and professional expertise to the school. They receive regular updates on pupils' progress and attendance. They use this information to ask leaders to explain where there are any weaker areas of performance and then make sure that the actions taken to address this are effective. Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent and give effective challenge to school leaders about the impact of this on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They know that any gaps in the performance of these pupils are narrowing and are determined that this trend will continue.

- Governors know that the quality of teaching is continually improving. They ensure that these improvements will be sustained and built on through giving a high priority to staff development in their good financial management of the school's budget. They are aware of the school's arrangements for staff pay and progression, including that of the headteacher, and ensure that these are used effectively to tackle any identified weaknesses in teaching.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

**are good**

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils are keen to learn and work hard in lessons. They generally respond well to teachers' instructions and listen to one another attentively in class discussions. Disruptions to learning through poor behaviour are rare. Very occasionally, when a task or activity in a lesson is a bit too difficult for pupils to complete independently, pupils become a little restless.
- Pupils are proud of their school where staff care for them well. They have great trust in their teachers and know that they will always help them if necessary.
- Pupils say that teachers treat everyone fairly and all staff have high expectations of their behaviour. They appreciate the way that good behaviour is celebrated in assemblies. Pupils understand that poor behaviour will mean that they lose some of their 'golden time' which is an allocation of time to choose a favourite activity that pupils anticipate with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' behaviour at breaks and as they move around the school is sensible. They are polite and well-mannered, treating one another and the adults in the school with respect and courtesy.
- Attendance has improved over time. It is slightly above average when a recent outbreak of illness meaning that over a third of pupils were absent for some time over a two-week period is discounted from the overall attendance figures for this academic year. This is because most pupils really enjoy coming to school and do not want to miss out on learning and opportunities to play with their friends.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm both inside and outside the school. They have a good understanding of how to use the internet safely. They are aware of the potential dangers of inappropriate images and know that they must always tell an adult if they ever come across something that is harmful.
- Pupils comment that there is very little bullying of any kind, including homophobic bullying. Pupils know about racism but say that they have never seen any examples of this in their school. They typically comment that 'racism does not happen at Sacred Heart because it is nasty and against the rules'.
- The school buildings and grounds are secure and there is ample adult supervision at all times during the school day.

## **The quality of teaching**

**is good**

- Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities in lessons that help pupils across a wide range of abilities to make good progress.
- Teachers are particularly good at teaching reading. Phonics is taught effectively and this helps pupils learn to read swiftly and with fluency. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to read for enjoyment. Older pupils are challenged to explain the meaning behind the text and, when reading stories, they can explain what they think might happen next.
- Writing is taught well. Teachers inspire pupils to use the information from their reading to write their own stories and explanations as well as practising their skills in punctuation, grammar and spelling.
- A strong feature of teaching is the way that teachers give pupils so many experiences to apply their skills to a range of real life situations. This is especially effective in the teaching of mathematics. In one lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils solved problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages using sale stickers and discount labels that are frequently found in shops. This approach helped pupils to develop their skills in reasoning about the way in which they apply their knowledge of mathematical calculations.
- Teachers' skilled use of questioning helps pupils to extend their thinking and become independent learners. This is a real strength throughout the school and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Activities are often exciting. For example, in the early years, children made pasta using flour, salt and water and experimented with a pasta-making machine because the teacher wanted them to have real

experiences rather than just using modelling clay. This supported the youngsters in developing their understanding of ingredients and food preparation through playing and exploring together.

- Teachers frequently use opportunities within the wider curriculum to help pupils develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. Science lessons, for example, involve a great deal of first-hand observation and practical experiments. Pupils then have opportunities to write about their findings and apply their skills in data handling drawing graphs and charts of results.
- Teachers and pupils make good use of technology such as computers and interactive whiteboards to support learning. However, teachers are only just beginning to develop their skills in teaching children about computer programming and how to use this to solve problems. This means that pupils' progress in this subject is less rapid than in other areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage pupils' behaviour really well so that lessons run smoothly. Classrooms and displays are arranged attractively to stimulate and promote purposeful learning. The majority of pupils respond to this by producing work that is organised carefully and presented neatly in their best handwriting.
- Teachers' marking is thorough and gives pupils good guidance on the next steps in learning. Pupils are routinely given 'fix it' time to respond to teachers' comments and correct or improve their work and this helps them to develop independence and good learning skills before they are ready to move on to secondary education.
- Teachers set homework that is appropriate to the age range in each class that extends and supports pupils' learning in school.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and the results of national tests were average in 2014. Inspection evidence for pupils currently in Year 6 shows that this trend of improvement is continuing. The proportion of pupils reaching at and beyond expected levels for their age is already higher than that in the 2014 results.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics show steady improvement over time although they remain slightly below average. This, nevertheless, represents good progress from children's low starting points when they enter the school.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 is consistently good in all year groups and for all groups of pupils.
- Reading skills are developed from an early age. Strong teaching of phonics means that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 1 is above average. Those who do not reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1 are supported well to catch up by the end of Year 2. Reading skills then develop rapidly in Key Stage 2 where frequent opportunities for independent or supported reading allow pupils to accelerate at their own best rate.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics are improving. In all classes pupils focus very well on understanding the links between different elements in their calculations. As a result, they work accurately and use the most efficient methods to solve problems. Pupils who sometimes find it difficult to grasp mathematical concepts receive good support through a range of practical activities that help them to understand and to become more confident in applying their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In the 2014 statutory assessments for Year 6 the disadvantaged pupils were about a year and a half behind other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are more aware of any gaps in their learning and act swiftly to make sure that they catch up. As a result, the gaps in the standards compared with other pupils are closing rapidly. Disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 6 are doing just as well as other pupils in the school.
- Equally, pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds receive expert support from teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants. Their needs are met in full so that they make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The most able pupils are encouraged to complete more difficult work in lessons to make sure they make good progress and reach their full potential. Pupils appreciate this and typically comment that they feel challenged but 'not too challenged that it makes me want to give up'. The proportion of these pupils reaching the higher standards expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics is increasing at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' achievement in computing is not as good as in other subjects because they do not have enough opportunities to develop and apply their programming skills.

## The early years provision

is good

- Children generally enter the Reception class with levels of skills and development below those typically expected. By the end of the Reception Year, around two-thirds of children reach a good level of development in their learning. This is broadly average and means the majority of children are well equipped to access the Year 1 curriculum and their achievement is good.
- Provision for youngsters in the early years is a real strength of the school owing to the strong direction and leadership that is shared between the class teacher and the deputy headteacher. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement as they learn and play together in a safe and nurturing environment. This ensures a good start in school and contributes well to their physical and emotional health, safety and well-being.
- Good teaching based on careful planning and assessment helps children, including the disabled and those with special educational needs and the most able children, to make rapid progress. Teaching is enthusiastic and infectious and children respond by being keen learners after only a very short time in school. Staff have a highly developed understanding of how young children learn and make sure that all the activities and experiences on offer both indoors and outdoors promote active learning, independence and creative thinking. Very occasionally, opportunities to extend learning from adult-led sessions into children's independent play are missed. For example, the teacher skilfully developed children's vocabulary through encouraging them to describe the position of a range of objects as 'underneath', 'on top of' or 'behind'. However, there were not many related activities and examples of text in the rest of the classroom.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are rich in 'hands on' opportunities for children to explore and this is why they make such good progress. In one session, children were given freedom to play with hard-boiled eggs. They had earlier received a visit from some recently hatched chicks, and once carefully reassured that there were no live chicks in the eggs, proceeded to investigate them with huge enthusiasm. Shells were removed, whites and yolks exclaimed over and the resulting products were mixed into a range of imaginary dishes that children were encouraged to write down as recipes. At tidy up time children enthusiastically joined in with cleaning up the mess. Throughout the whole activity, children chattered away about what they were doing. Adults intervened very little, only stepping in occasionally to ask questions that extended children's thinking and developed their vocabulary.
- Children behave very well with one another and treat the adults with respect. They listen well to instructions and hygiene routines, such as washing hands, are well established. This contributes well to their personal and social development. Children say they enjoy coming to school and the sound of their laughter is a real feature of the classroom.
- Teachers work hard to continually develop links with parents who are made to feel very welcome in school and receive good information on what their children are doing through a weekly newsletter.

## 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>	119606
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	462321

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Crowe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carole Seagraves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2013
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