

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Burlington Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4ND

## Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the school is not consistently strong. Sometimes the work set for pupils in the class does not provide a good level of challenge for all, particularly for the most able.
- Standards in English do not match those in mathematics. Some older pupils are not developing the full breadth and depth of writing skills to thrive in the next stage of their education.
- In some key stage 2 English lessons, teachers do not display the detailed subject knowledge required to set sufficiently precise and demanding expectations for pieces of work.
- The slow progress of pupils currently in Year 3 means that their work is not of the standard it should be.
- Some staff do not fully understand how to play their part in the identification and support of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the improvement in these pupils' progress remains rather uneven.
- Until very recently, activities for children in the early years have not been securely based on an assessment of their previous learning. This has slowed their progress.
- The skills of staff working in the early years setting vary. Inconsistencies, for example in the quality of questioning, mean that not all children make good progress from their starting points.

### The school has the following strengths

- Within the last year, governors have worked quickly with new senior leaders to establish effective procedures, provide extensive training for staff and gain the confidence of the school community. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving rapidly, especially in mathematics.
- A clear focus on reasoning is making a strong contribution to pupils' learning in mathematics.
- Pupils love coming to school, conduct themselves well and take a pride in their work.
- Leaders at all levels have a good understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. Plans for improvement are well judged.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well. Pupils know how to stay safe, and care for each other.
- Information supplied by the school and the local authority indicates that Year 6 pupils have attained highly in this year's key stage 2 tests.

## Full report

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

- improve the quality of teaching in English by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have the detailed subject knowledge to be able to set the highest possible expectations for what pupils can achieve
  - teachers provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, especially the most able
  - pupils have the opportunity to develop all the skills needed to become successful writers in the next stage of their education.
  
- strengthen the impact of recent strategies to improve the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
  - ensuring that all staff understand their roles in identifying and meeting those pupils' needs.
  
- improve the progress of children in the early years by ensuring that:
  - teachers use accurate assessments to inform the planning of activities so that all children make at least good progress from their starting points
  - all staff working in early years are equally effective in promoting children's learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since their appointments, current senior leaders have acted rapidly and judiciously to raise standards in the school. The executive headteacher and the interim headteacher have put in place clear expectations for pupils' behaviour, established procedures for checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and made certain that pupils are safe in school. Information about the progress of pupils, and the progress of groups of pupils, is now analysed rigorously so that pupils at risk of falling behind can be targeted. The result is an ambitious school culture which is improving teaching rapidly and raising pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including those observed in teaching during the inspection, accorded with those of the inspectors. Leaders know well which classes are making comparatively weaker progress. This objective evaluation forms the basis of a school development plan with clear priorities for improvement and a timescale by which they should be achieved.
- The school has not found it easy to recruit and retain high-quality staff, including leaders. Some staff departures left temporary gaps in expertise. Although governors are careful only to appoint applicants in whom they have complete confidence, they have made a number of strong appointments. Staff, including those teachers at an early stage in their careers, say that the training and support they are offered are proving very helpful in developing their skills.
- Leaders have established a new system of assessment in reading, writing and mathematics based on a commercial scheme. All staff understand this system, and leaders make sure that judgements about the standard of pupils' work are checked both within the school and against standards in other schools. Arrangements for assessing progress in foundation subjects are at an earlier stage of development.
- Leaders attached to different year groups are fully committed to the school's plans for improvement and are taking an increasing level of responsibility for pupils' progress. Those leading on the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have already used their considerable expertise to identify the improvements required to the school's policy and practice. There has been insufficient time to ensure that all staff fully understand their roles. Some pupils' records have not been updated.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, enhanced by 'express' events in which pupils' learning in foundation subjects is presented to parents in a celebratory event. A large majority of pupils also take advantage of a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in the expressive arts and information technology.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural education most effectively through taught lessons, assemblies and explicit attention to the school's religious character. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the impact of the weekly ethos statement, which had encouraged them to 'use words which make the world a better place'. Leaders promote British values through the involvement of pupils in the running of the school, through the discussion of rules and responsibilities, and through the effective promotion of tolerance and mutual respect.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet all statutory requirements. Leaders have redesigned the school's procedures since the last inspection. Staff keep meticulous records, work well with parents and react quickly to involve other agencies to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Staff, including those joining the school in-year, are well trained to identify any pupils who may be at risk.
- The school has spent the physical education and sports premium effectively on additional staffing to increase pupils' participation and allow teams to take part in competitive events. The pupil premium has been used largely to enable teachers to work with small groups to close gaps in their knowledge. This has generally been successful, although information supplied by the school suggests that disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading currently lags behind that of their peers.
- Current leaders have also improved their communication with parents, for example by being available at the school gate and responding promptly to their concerns. Although some anxieties remain, these are largely related to uncertainties over staffing, and almost all the parents who spoke to inspectors recognised the significant recent improvements in the school.
- The local authority has proved highly effective in supporting the school, for example by training less-experienced leaders and checking on the school's judgements about pupils' attainment. The diocese has also assisted with training, and has enabled the school to improve its physical environment. Both organisations have worked strategically with the governors to make the important changes necessary to secure the long-term improvement of the school.

## ■ The governance of the school

- Governors are providing highly effective oversight of the school. They have made sure that they are well informed, and visit the school often to check on their judgements as to how effectively pupils are learning. They give explicit consideration to what pupils think, for example about behaviour in the playground. Records of meetings show that governors ask challenging and detailed questions about pupils' achievement and welfare, and compare standards in the school with national figures. Governors have a thorough understanding of how well different groups of pupils are progressing. They evaluate carefully the effectiveness of the expenditure of additional money to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Plans for the expenditure of next year's money are already in place.
- Governors work with the executive headteacher to operate the school's robust performance management scheme. This ensures that teachers' targets are centred on pupils' progress, and that teachers' performance is monitored and then judged using a detailed analysis of how well pupils achieve.
- Governors have played an important role in making sure that pupils are safe, both by checking on the developments that leaders have made to safeguarding policy and practice, and by securing improvements to the school site. These have both enhanced the physical environment and increased the physical security of the grounds.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time, while improving, remains too variable between classes. To a considerable degree, this reflects the recent staffing turbulence in the school. To a lesser extent, in some classes, the quality of teaching also varies between different subjects. Information supplied by the school and supported by inspection evidence indicates that training based on the findings from frequent classroom observations has succeeded in improving rapidly the skills of several current teachers, but not all.
- Weaker teaching is characterised by work that does not provide sufficient challenge for all the pupils in the class, particularly for the most able. Sometimes pupils repeat similar tasks too often, and so do not have the opportunity to tackle harder work. Teachers do not always allow pupils sufficient opportunity to answer questions, which restricts pupils' opportunity to reflect and to think deeply. Sometimes misconceptions persist because teachers do not identify them quickly enough.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is also inconsistent. Interruptions to staffing led standards to slip, but these are now rising. In some instances, staff are not sufficiently skilled in identifying what pupils do and do not understand, and so are less effective in correcting their mistakes.
- Especially at key stage 2, standards in English are not as high as those in mathematics. Some teachers lack the precise subject knowledge to set the highest level of challenge for what pupils can achieve, for example in the breadth and complexity of their writing. In some books, spelling errors have been allowed to persist.
- However, where teaching is stronger, work is carefully structured to build on what pupils can already do. Pupils who understand a point readily are moved on to harder work. In the teaching of mathematics, there is an explicit emphasis on mathematical reasoning, which not only contributes to the depth of pupils' understanding, but also develops their literacy as they construct 'mathematical sentences' to explain their thinking, both orally and on paper.
- Teaching assistants typically work with a very small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, helping them to understand the ideas the teacher is introducing to the rest of the class. They use questioning skilfully to break the learning down into more manageable steps. When appropriate, they also provide well-chosen physical resources to assist pupils in understanding more abstract concepts.
- The learning of all pupils benefits from the warm relationships between teachers and pupils, and the respect which pupils have for each other's ideas. Inspectors often witnessed pupils prepared to challenge each other constructively as a natural part of working together to find the best solution.
- The school provides clear reports to parents which contain a good range of information about pupils' achievements, and how they compare with the expected standards. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have worked hard to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They have given careful thought to the layout of the playground and the management of playtime, providing better facilities and opportunities to play more quietly for those who do not enjoy physical games. Pupils appreciate this.
- Pupils say that they now feel entirely safe in school and their parents agree. Pupils have every confidence in the staff to resolve any disagreements and records show that unpleasant incidents are very rare. Pupils are able to explain the importance of respect for others who are different from themselves.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep safe in many respects, including online safety and how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Year 2 pupils were keen to explain to inspectors the importance of learning to swim. Older pupils very much enjoy the confidence which the school has placed in them to help younger children and to contribute to decisions.
- The school's appointment of a family engagement officer has contributed to the earlier identification of pupils who might be at risk, and timely liaison with parents and other agencies to support their children.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming to visitors. Conduct on the corridors is entirely orderly. At playtimes, pupils respond well to the wide variety of activities now on offer and cooperate happily to play in groups or organise team games.
- All pupils speak highly of the school's recent 'it's good to be green' initiative because this rewards good conduct and sets out clear and stepped consequences for poor behaviour. The consistent application of these guidelines means that the more serious sanctions are very rarely used.
- Pupils' attitude towards their own learning is very positive. They want to learn, and in many lessons they display both enthusiasm and a mature willingness to learn from each other. Pupils move sensibly around the classroom and settle quickly to independent work. They take a pride in their written work and almost always present it carefully.
- Attendance is above average and work with parents has led to an improvement in the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Previously this had lagged behind that of their peers in the school.
- Occasionally, and particularly when teachers do not manage time well enough to retain pupils' interest throughout the lesson, pupils become a little inattentive and the level of unproductive noise in the classroom begins to rise.

## Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Outcomes in the school require improvement because some pupils in the school are not making consistently good progress. Although outcomes are improving, they reflect the uneven quality of teaching in the school over time.
- Progress and attainment in the current Year 3 classes are weak. Despite some recent improvement, books seen by the inspectors provide limited evidence of learning over time, with pupils not addressing errors in spelling and punctuation, and presenting their work untidily.
- Standards elsewhere in key stage 2 are uneven, especially in English. In some classes, the tasks set for pupils do not present a sufficiently refined challenge to ensure that pupils can match their writing to a particular style and intended audience. Pupils do not receive sufficient opportunity to explore and structure their ideas in longer pieces of work. As a result, they are not receiving the best possible preparation for the next stage in their education.
- In the most recent set of published results, pupils left Year 6 in 2015 with a level of attainment which was average overall. However, they had made progress in mathematics which was below the national average. By contrast, information supplied by the school and endorsed by the local authority indicates that in 2016 Year 6 pupils will leave having attained highly in national tests and having made strong progress, especially in mathematics.
- Outcomes in the key stage 1 tests in 2015 showed that, on average, pupils attained a little more highly than pupils nationally. Information supplied by the school and the local authority indicates that Year 2 pupils taking the different style of tests this year have also done better than pupils nationally. However,

the school reports that the proportion of pupils in Year 1 meeting the expected standard in the phonics check has declined this year, to be in line with the national average. This decline reflects the dip in the quality of phonics teaching.

- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils left the school on average in line with other pupils nationally in reading and in writing, and two terms behind in mathematics. Information supplied by the school shows that across the year groups disadvantaged pupils are making weaker progress in reading than they are in writing and in mathematics.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently variable. Information supplied by the school and supported in general terms by inspection evidence indicates that it is stronger at key stage 2 than in the younger years, where it has been affected by less effective phonics teaching. However, the progress of many pupils is beginning to accelerate as staff become more familiar with implementing the recent improvements in provision for these pupils.
- Standards in current Year 4 are high. The school does not formally record progress in foundation subjects, but inspection evidence suggests that pupils achieve well in music and in art.

### Early years provision

### requires improvement

- Children join the school with skills which are at or slightly above those which are typical for their age. The small minority who speak English as an additional language usually have ground to make up in the development of their communication and language, but their skills in other areas are typically in line with those of their peers.
- The local authority has confirmed the school's judgement that the proportion of children currently in the Reception Year who have attained a good level of development is in line with the national average in 2015. Given their starting points, this does not represent good progress overall. In general terms, children are adequately prepared for key stage 1 and leaders are currently working to smooth this transition.
- Teaching in the early years is improving but – as leaders acknowledge – continues to vary in quality. During the inspection, some adults were reluctant to allow children to resolve their own problems or disagreements, and their expertise in questioning was limited. Other staff skilfully challenged pupils to think more deeply and develop their own ideas. A wide range of activities was available both inside the school and in the outdoor area. Teachers have not always provided activities and opportunities for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities which have been sufficiently well matched to their existing skills.
- Until recently, records of progress have focused on what children have done, rather than on what they have learned. This has limited the precision with which teachers have planned future activities to build upon children's existing skills and knowledge. Staff now identify children's next steps and share this information with parents.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is consistently good. Children readily share resources, take turns and help each other with tasks. They listen carefully to other children, and follow their ideas during conversation. Children are keen to learn, and approach activities with enthusiasm. All staff understand how to keep children safe and the early years environment is generally attractive and well maintained.
- Leaders have an accurate appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision and have ensured that teachers' judgments about children's attainment are checked against those of other schools. They are aware of the impact of changes in staffing and inconsistencies in practice. Leaders have encouraged staff to visit other successful early years settings as well as enabling them to work with expert teachers.
- Leaders' recent actions to improve the setting are already beginning to take effect. These have included checking on the progress of groups of children and increasing expectations of what children can achieve. They have begun to involve parents more systematically in their children's learning and assessment.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102668
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011887

This inspection 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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	407
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Graham-Ozanne
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Julia Waters
<b>Interim Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Hastings
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 9420215
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sacredheart.merton.sch.uk">www.sacredheart.merton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@sacredheart.merton.sch.uk">office@sacredheart.merton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–15 May 2014

## Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is a larger than average primary school. Pupils attend full time in the Reception classes and part time in the Nursery classes.
- The Sacred Heart Fun Club and the Sacred Heart Kidz Club before- and after-school clubs both operate from the school site. They are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately.
- Nearly half the pupils in the school are White British. Smaller proportions are drawn from a number of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium, which is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There has been a very considerable turnover of staff since the last inspection. In July 2015, the governors appointed the headteacher of Ursuline High School Wimbledon, a national leader in education, as executive headteacher. The current interim headteacher took up her post in March 2016. The special educational needs coordinator and the leader of early years joined the school in April 2016. The majority of classroom teachers are new to the school this academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 26 lessons. Twelve observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors visited an assembly and watched pupils' conduct at social times.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers and governors. They spoke to representatives of the local authority and of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark.
- Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils, including two groups chosen at random, and spoke with many more informally.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books in lessons and conducted an extended scrutiny of work in conjunction with senior leaders.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; information provided for parents, including reports on pupils' progress; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 136 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and inspectors spoke to parents delivering their children to school on both days of the inspection. The inspectors also considered the 26 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lou Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Keating	Ofsted Inspector



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