

Sacred Heart Catholic School

Earlsbury Gardens, Birchfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B20 3AE

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not taken sufficiently strong action to bring about the necessary improvements since the school was judged to require improvement at its previous two inspections.
- Leaders' use of assessment is weak. The school's system for checking on pupils' learning is inconsistent. Consequently, leaders and teachers do not have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' progress well enough to ensure that lessons are well matched to individual pupils' needs.
- Pupil premium funding is not used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress they should.
- As a result of inadequate teaching, too many pupils fail to make enough progress from their starting points, particularly the most able pupils in key stage 2.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are not consistently good which negatively affects their progress.
- Leaders and governors have not effectively addressed the instability in staffing. This has limited pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not checked the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly enough. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not checked systematically across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years get off to a good start and make good progress. They are well prepared to begin Year 1.
- Pupils are polite and courteous.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed effectively.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - improving governors' ability to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the improvements that are needed
 - ensuring that leaders effectively evaluate the progress of all groups of pupils, especially the most able, so that staff are held to account for pupils' outcomes
 - improving the checks made on the quality of teaching to ensure that it is strong enough to help pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - ensuring that assessment information gathered is clear and purposeful and informs leaders' planning.
- Improve outcomes so that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to allow disadvantaged pupils to make rapid progress
 - the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are sufficiently stretched and reach the highest standards.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information accurately to plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs, particularly the most able pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and explain their reasoning linked to how they solve mathematical problems
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in mathematics and for the most able in all subjects.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the last inspection, there has been a significant decline in the progress and attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2. Governors and leaders have not acted swiftly or decisively enough to address significant weaknesses in the school's underperformance.
- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of the performance of different groups of pupils within the school, such as those who join the school midway through their primary education or the most able.
- There is no clear evaluation of the use of pupil premium funding to support the significant group of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate view of which interventions have a positive impact and which do not.
- The school's self-evaluation is overgenerous because leaders and managers have an inaccurate view of the school's performance. The information that leaders use to form their self-evaluation does not identify specific weaknesses well enough for improvements to be made.
- Leaders have not checked the consistency or accuracy of teacher assessment. Consequently, teachers' use of assessment information is inaccurate or incomplete. As a result, the work planned for pupils is not closely matched to their needs. For example, pupils' work and skill sheets inside books show that some pupils have mastered the skills required but are not moved on to more demanding work. For others, assessment information is missing.
- The headteacher and governors are reflective and acknowledge that significant improvement is needed. The climate within school is much improved and leaders have begun to address issues in teaching. Challenging performance targets are now set for all staff.
- The school continues to be affected by changes to staffing. This turbulence has affected the progress that the school has been able to make and its capacity to secure further improvements.
- A recently devised action plan to improve teaching and leadership has a clear focus and measurable milestones to improve accountability. However, it is too early to see the impact of this.
- The physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively. Pupils engage well in sporting activity and many take part in competitive sport, particularly in athletics and football.
- Leaders know pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities very well and monitor their progress in detail. They ensure that additional funding to help these pupils is deployed effectively. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are promoted effectively. This is an inclusive school where pupils accept diversity and the many different cultures within the school.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Across the school, a range of activities, including visits out of school and extra-curricular opportunities are provided. These opportunities help to enhance and broaden pupils' learning experiences.
- The large majority of parents who expressed their views were positive about the school. Most feel their children are happy and safe at school.
- The local authority and representatives from the Archdiocese of Birmingham education team have carried out a recent school review and set leaders areas for improvement. However, the support given so far has had little impact upon improving the effectiveness of the school.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have offered challenge to the headteacher to strengthen the school and its leadership. However, the challenge that they have offered has been limited because leaders have not provided governors with sufficient information for them to accurately understand the school's performance. Actions taken have been insufficiently robust to secure improved outcomes for pupils.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of the spending of pupil premium funding and its impact.
- Governors undertake monitoring activities in school to inform their strategic planning. However, these have failed to bring about the necessary improvements because they have not been focused clearly enough on what the school needs to do to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school meets statutory requirements. All staff are fully up to date with safeguarding procedures, including those who have recently joined the school. Staff and governors have been trained to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism in accordance with the government's 'Prevent' duty. The school works well with parents and other agencies in order to assist and support pupils' well-being and safety. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and that policies and procedures are clear, up to date and followed consistently. The additional support to safeguard vulnerable pupils, including those with complex and additional learning needs, is well coordinated and effective. The school's records show that leaders make a strong contribution to protecting vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Leaders have not improved the quality of teaching and learning. The school's assessment arrangements are not providing accurate information about pupils' attainment and do not enable teachers to measure how much progress pupils make.

- The most able pupils are not provided with sufficient stretch and challenge. Teachers' expectations of what this group of pupils could and should achieve are not high enough. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of who the most able disadvantaged pupils are and do not plan well enough to ensure that these pupils make rapid progress. In mathematics, for example, pupils are not challenged to try out different ways of solving problems and are not offered opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. As a result, pupils' rates of progress vary. The quality and accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics are too variable across the whole school. The quality of teachers' questioning is inconsistent. Some teachers ask many questions that require pupils to recall facts, but not enough deeper questions to develop their understanding.
- Some teaching is stronger, particularly in key stage 1. Where teaching is improving, teachers' expectations are high in terms of what they want pupils to achieve and how they expect them to behave. Pupils are encouraged to show pride in their work and are starting to do so as a result.
- The teaching of reading is helping pupils to read with confidence and expression. Pupils are becoming more skilful at using clues in the text to work out the meaning of new words and phrases. Staff are aware that not all pupils read at home and therefore make sure that they listen to these pupils read in school. Pupils who need to catch up are getting better at using their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils are keen to respond to questions and they listen carefully to their teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Not all teachers nurture purposeful learning and provide pupils with engaging activities that develop an eagerness to learn. As a result, sometimes pupils' attitudes to learning are not as good as they could be. This means that these pupils do not make good progress.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered. They are welcoming to visitors and keen to talk about their school and their learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Younger pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they never felt that older pupils' behaviour was too boisterous.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are given frequent opportunities to reflect on moral, social and educational values. For example, resilience and self-confidence is developed by all pupils learning to play the steel drums.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare and if they have any concerns they are dealt with quickly. They learn how to eat well and stay healthy, both physically and mentally. Pupils develop a good appreciation of the importance of hygiene, diet and exercise.

- Pupils are safe and well cared for in the before and after school clubs. Staff make sure that pupils are engaged in interesting activities which they enjoy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are willing to work hard. In classrooms, pupils follow staff instructions quickly and settle to their work without fuss. They take pride in their books, and present their work neatly.
- Pupils' conduct in the corridors and in the dining hall is orderly and responsible. They play happily in the playground and enjoy using the good range of play equipment that is available.
- In the dinner hall, pupils take turns and wait patiently in an orderly queue before sitting with their friends to eat their lunch in a calm and well-supervised environment.
- Staff provide good support for the small number of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to adhere to school rules. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and consider alternative ways of managing any potential conflicts. Pupils told inspectors that the number of incidents of poor behaviour is small and that staff deal with them fairly. School records confirm this to be the case.
- Pupils' attendance overall is above the national average. Persistent absence is broadly in line with the national average. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and do not like to miss their time in lessons or with their friends.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- By the time they leave the school, too few pupils reach the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also the case in a range of different subjects.
- National test results in 2016 show that very few pupils reached the higher outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- The results also show that too many pupils, especially the most able pupils, did not make the progress expected from their different starting points. As a result, pupils' outcomes were well below the national average by the end of Year 6 in 2016.
- The work in pupils' books shows that the rates of progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects vary widely across Years 3 to 6. Many of the most able pupils make slow progress and, as a result, do not perform as well as they should.
- The progress made by the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils is not improving consistently or quickly enough.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved and is now in line with the national average. This reflects the effective teaching of phonics in key stage 1 and early years.
- Leaders are increasingly effective at identifying the right provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They evaluate impact and amend

provision if appropriate. Teaching assistants have been well trained to provide specialist support, both in pupils' normal lessons and when they teach small groups. As a result, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is often strong.

- In a few classes, effective teaching helps pupils to achieve well. However, because teaching is too variable in the school, any gains that pupils make in these classes are not built on effectively when they move to another class.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision has improved significantly since the school was last inspected. Good leadership and effective teaching ensure that the children receive a strong start to their education.
- Children start their time in the early years with knowledge and skills that are below those typically seen for their age and stage of development. Most children make good progress from their starting points. Last year's assessments show that, by the end of Reception Year, three quarters of the children achieved a good level of development and were ready for learning in Year 1. This was above the national average.
- Children are presented with activities that grab and hold their attention, encourage cooperation and conversation. This fuels their imaginations and inquisitiveness about the world around them. For example, inspectors observed children on a word hunt in the outside environment where they had to find words from 'the ginger bread story'. During discussions they were able to distinguish the words and record a range of complex phrases and vocabulary. As a result, they made good progress in reading unfamiliar words and could record the words with fluent and legible handwriting. The least able children, and those who speak English as an additional language, are supported by adults who are sensitive to their needs.
- Staff reinforce important skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics frequently throughout each day. Children make good gains in working with number and solving basic problems. They are able to add two groups of objects up to 10 and record these calculations formally. The teaching of reading is especially strong.
- There are warm and caring relationships in the early years. The children are safe, well supervised and treated with kindness. Adults have high expectations of the children, including that of behaviour. Consequently, children cooperate well and learn how to share and take turns because the adults consistently follow these routines.

School details

Unique reference number	103477
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032601

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Tams
Headteacher	Lisa Fahy
Telephone number	0121 356 4721
Website	www.sacredheart.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@sacredheart.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Sacred Heart Catholic School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club on site.

- The local authority commissioned support for the school through the Bishop Challoner Teaching School Alliance. This began in March 2017.
- The school has experienced a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, and three teachers have joined the school this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes.
- Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, school staff and four members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. The lead inspector also spoke with two representatives from the Birmingham Education Partnership.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work pupils produced during lessons and in a wide range of their books over time. They also listened to a small number of pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- Inspectors closely observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the progress pupils are currently making.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of the meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed 16 responses to an inspection questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Ed Masterson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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