

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Selby Street, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 1NS

Inspection dates

15–16 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher shows inspirational leadership and has a deep passion for achieving the best possible outcomes for the pupils in this friendly and caring school, which parents and staff alike say is 'like a family'.
- Leaders ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is good and improving by making regular checks on staff and their work.
- Governors have a good view of the strengths and areas for development in the school.
- Teachers organise lessons that keep pupils interested and stimulate excitement for learning.
- Pupils are confident and show outstanding personal development. Their attitudes to learning are excellent and their conduct around school is impeccable.
- The progress of pupils is good across most subjects. In some year groups, it is outstanding in English and mathematics.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. They make good progress by the end of Reception.
- Although progress across the school is good, there is still some work to be done to ensure that it is consistently above average.
- Leaders of subjects other than mathematics and English are enthusiastic about their subjects and have a secure view of many aspects of them. However, they do not yet have a precise view of how to ensure consistently good levels of achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that examples of the most effective practice in the school are shared with members of staff, so that pupils make sustained and substantial progress across each year group and in each subject.
- Develop accurate and rigorous assessment and tracking processes in subjects other than English and mathematics, so that subject leaders have a secure view of standards in those subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher of this friendly and caring school demonstrates some outstanding leadership qualities. She has drive and ambition and is passionate about providing the best all-round education possible for her pupils. This is clear from the very positive attitudes and behaviour of pupils and the strong support she receives from her staff.
- Senior leaders have a good view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have devised action plans for school improvement that are key priorities for the school's areas for development. They include useful timescales and costings where appropriate. Leaders recognise, however, that they need to be more precise in deciding on criteria that will clearly show how much impact their actions have had on pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders check the performance of teachers rigorously. Leaders give teachers targets based on pupils' achievement and on the school's development plan. They evaluate teachers' work throughout the year, providing feedback and training to support them in achieving their targets. This process contributes well to the good quality of teaching in the school.
- Subject leaders are as ambitious as the headteacher for pupils to make the greatest possible progress. They have a good understanding of many aspects of the provision in their various subjects. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, they do not currently have a secure view of how well pupils are acquiring the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills, as their assessment and tracking processes need development.
- Staff are very supportive of the headteacher and her senior leadership team. They appreciate the training that leaders provide, which is related to their own performance targets and to the needs of the school's development plan. As a result of this training, teaching is good and improving, with some features of outstanding practice in places.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and is designed to engage and interest pupils. Leaders bring excitement to learning through themed days to introduce topics, such as 'Viking Day' in Year 5 or 'Titanic Day' in Year 2. Leaders enhance the curriculum well with a range of after-school clubs. The school participates in the Children's University, for example, to enhance pupils' learning experiences. All of these factors contribute to pupils' good progress and development.
- Senior leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain and strongly promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Fundamental British values thread through pupils' lessons and displays show how important they are to the school. Staff promote democracy, for example through various opportunities to vote in school for different representatives, such as school councillors. Leaders organise visits by magistrates so that pupils can have a better understanding of aspects of the legal system and the rule of law. Lessons in religious education, for instance, give pupils a clear understanding about other faiths. There are regular activities to raise funds for charities at home and in other countries, such as Bolivia.
- Senior leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. For example, they provide extra support for eligible pupils so that they can improve their understanding of

aspects of English and mathematics. Leaders also provide support for those who have social and emotional needs. As a result, most of these pupils make good progress from their starting points.

- School leaders make good use of the physical education and sport premium for primary schools. Pupils take part in an increasing number of competitions in, for example, rugby and gymnastics. Staff feel more confident about their teaching skills because expert coaches come into school to work with them.
- Leaders make effective use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They check the progress of this group of pupils closely and put support in place. They evaluate the effectiveness of this support every term and change the interventions accordingly. As a result, pupils in this group make good progress from their starting points.
- The local authority and the archdiocese are supportive partners in the work of the school, although their involvement is 'light touch' in nature because they have confidence in the leadership of the headteacher and other school leaders. These external partners have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- On the evidence of Parent View and face-to-face conversations, the large majority of parents have a very positive view of the school and its staff. They say that their children enjoy school and feel safe there. They feel that their children make good progress and that they receive the right degree of information about them. They typically commented that the school feels 'like a family'.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective.
- Governors have a clear view of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They are of the opinion that they provide strong challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders and hold them to account effectively. While their work is a significant factor in the good quality of education that the school provides, the stringency of their challenge is not reflected in documentation, such as minutes of meetings.
- Governors receive training in a number of areas, including safeguarding. They are knowledgeable about procedures for reporting concerns and they understand the signs of abuse.
- Governors are ambitious that pupils should achieve the best possible outcomes. They can explain the impact of changes that the headteacher has introduced, such as more-thorough checking on the quality of teaching and learning, which has resulted in good progress across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's system for recording and reporting concerns is thorough and leaders act promptly, making referrals to external agencies when necessary.
- Members of staff have a firm understanding of the procedures for reporting concerns.

They know the signs of abuse in its various forms, such as child sexual exploitation. They receive appropriate updates and attend safeguarding training regularly.

- There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders ensure that the premises are secure and visitors are checked thoroughly before entering. Pupils feel safe in school because of the security of the grounds and because they feel that staff care for them well. Warm and trusting relationships between all members of the school lie at the heart of its nurturing atmosphere, as well as strong cooperation and channels of communication with parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils well and sustain their interest in their learning. In some year groups teachers do this exceptionally well. For example, in Year 2, pupils were engrossed by an activity in which the class 'dragon's egg' was missing. The teacher used this stimulus skilfully, along with music and singing, as an introduction to writing in persuasive language to get the egg back from the one who took it. Pupils showed great enjoyment and wrote using a wide range of vocabulary.
- Teachers make good use of assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills to plan activities that ensure the most efficient use of learning time. For example, in Year 3, pupils who had not understood work on fractions from the previous day, worked with the teacher to make sure that they understood the topic fully. Pupils who had understood, including the most able, carried on with challenging work involving reasoning about fractions.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of their work and their behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very positive and their good behaviour means that very little learning time is lost. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are warm and cooperative.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English. For example, in history, pupils wrote descriptions about life in the Stone Age. Pupils sometimes have opportunities to use mathematical skills, such as using coordinates in geography. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to do this in other subjects.
- Teachers adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy consistently. They allow pupils time to respond to comments and to find out what the next steps in their learning are.
- Teachers provide a good level of challenge for the most able pupils in English and mathematics, although this is less consistent in other subjects. In some year groups, there are particularly effective examples of good challenge. For example, in Year 6, pupils learning mathematics were given opportunities to grapple with tricky reasoning puzzles. Their teacher expected them to work independently and it was clear that they had learned how to tackle questions that presented them with difficulties without resorting to immediately asking the teacher for help.
- Although teachers cater well for most-able pupils in English and mathematics, on some occasions, pupils from other ability groups found the work they were doing too easy. This was because the teachers had not matched the task to the pupils' skills closely.

enough when planning the activity.

- Although staff typically ask well-judged questions of their pupils, sometimes they miss opportunities to deepen their learning. For example, in key stage 2, pupils did not get enough time to think about their responses before the adult answered for them. Sometimes they missed the chance to develop their reading skills because the teacher read a shared text for them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because staff provide them with the knowledge they need to do so. They have a strong understanding about the risks associated with the internet and how to manage them.
- Pupils have opportunities to take the lead on safety matters. In Year 5, for example, there are safety officers who present monthly messages to the whole school about issues such as road safety and 'stranger danger'.
- Pupils gain an excellent appreciation of the wider world and of the importance of helping the community through fundraising for various national and international charities. They also develop a strong sense of responsibility through their work as school councillors and as 'buddies' to children in Reception.
- Pupils show high levels of confidence, greeting adults willingly and cheerily. They are articulate and thoughtful in conversation.
- Leaders provide for pupils' mental health well, organising programmes such as 'mindfulness' and yoga sessions to support them.
- The large majority of pupils come into school ready to learn because they enjoy taking part in the daily 'Sacred Shake' dance activity with staff in the playground.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils show outstanding attitudes to their learning that contribute well to their good and improving progress. They show excellent behaviour and cooperate well with each other in class.
- Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. They show impeccable manners, making way for adults they meet and going out of their way to hold doors open for them. The school is an orderly environment, owing, in large part, to pupils' self-discipline.
- Pupils play well in the playground and move safely around the dining hall at lunchtime. They are fully aware of the rules and routines and adults very rarely need to intervene or raise their voices to make themselves heard. Staff supervise them well during breaktimes and pupils enjoy playing with a range of equipment.
- Attendance has shown rapid improvement this year and is now slightly above the

national average. This is because leaders have taken action to encourage pupils to come into school, such as 'first day telephone calls' and home visits.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across all year groups and in most subjects, the progress of current pupils is good. In some year groups, such as in Year 2 and in Year 6, progress is outstanding, especially in mathematics and writing. In writing in Year 6, for example, pupils use sophisticated sentence structures with well-chosen vocabulary designed to engage the reader, such as, 'It was like the hands of death were just out of reach of grasping her.'
- Recently published assessment information shows that pupils made good progress over time. The majority of pupils left Year 6 with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least as good progress as other children. This is because leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding, providing a range of support activities to develop their skills in English and mathematics, as well as supporting their social and emotional needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from a good range of intervention activities, which leaders evaluate regularly to check their effectiveness. As a result, this group of pupils makes good progress from their starting points.
- An increasing proportion of Year 1 pupils have been reaching the expected standard in the phonics check. In 2016, the figure was higher than the national average. This means that a high number of pupils had the basic reading tools they needed to progress into Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and leaders promote reading well, through such actions as providing high-quality texts and refurbishing the school's library. Most-able pupils read fluently and with good expression, while less-able pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to help them to read unfamiliar words.
- The large majority of most-able pupils receive suitably challenging work in English and mathematics. However, challenge is more inconsistent in a few subjects and year groups. While these pupils acquire knowledge and understanding well, there is sometimes a lack of demand in the development of the relevant skills. Leaders have identified this fact and have plans to make improvements.

Early years provision

Good

- From starting points that are below those typical for their age, children make good progress. The majority achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. This means that most children are well prepared for the transition to Year 1. The early years staff work in close partnership with Year 1 staff to help this process, arranging visits to the class, for example before the end of the Reception Year.
- Children thrive in the stimulating environment provided. They engage enthusiastically in the broad range of activities that promote their learning effectively. For example, children were developing their communication skills well as they made cakes excitedly

for Little Red Riding Hood's friends in the outdoor mud kitchen.

- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They show high levels of concentration as they work together imaginatively to 'mend pipes' outdoors, for instance. They cooperate well together and show maturity as they share ideas and resources.
- Relationships between children and staff are positive. Staff know children's skills and capabilities well. They question children effectively to extend their thinking. For example, children were asked how they knew that a piece of counting apparatus had six holes in it without counting them.
- The early years is well led. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements to the learning environment, particularly outdoors. This has had a positive impact on children's engagement in their learning and progress. Children's progress is tracked carefully, and support put in place where children are lagging behind.
- Leaders identified that children eligible for pupil premium funding were not making as much progress as other children. Leaders put effective support in place to accelerate children's progress. As a result, the majority of this group are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Children show a strong sense of security in the Reception class. They select their own activities confidently and use equipment safely. Adults care for children well and there are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.
- Staff establish a positive partnership with parents. Parents share their observations of their children's learning at home with the early years staff. Parents are invited to workshops, for example, on the school's approach to teaching phonics. This positive partnership supports children's learning effectively.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of their provision and areas for further development. They have identified that, although children's progress is good, there is more to be done to ensure that an even greater proportion of children reach expected levels by the end of the early years, particularly in reading and writing skills.
- Leaders organise some links with private pre-school providers, such as visits to the school, to aid children's transition into Reception. However, leaders acknowledge that this is an area for development.

School details

Unique reference number	111306
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10032254

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Christopher Cunningham
Headteacher	Mrs Colleen Everett
Telephone number	01925 636235
Website	www.sacredheartcp.co.uk
Email address	sacredheart_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support in school for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils that leave or join the school at times other than the start of

the Reception Year is below the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the lead inspector. The headteacher was also present at inspection team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school’s self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors held discussions with various stakeholders, including the headteacher and other senior leaders, subject leaders, other members of staff, governors, a representative from the local authority, a representative from the archdiocese, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils’ work in writing and mathematics, as well as their work in other subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- The lead inspector evaluated 33 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, and 15 responses to the staff questionnaire. There was only one response to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine White	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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