

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Ripley Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 2NU

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2022

Outcome

Sacred Heart School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy, continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that the best thing about this school are the teachers. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are motivated to do well. They are also grateful for the help they get from other members of staff. Staff are proud to work at the school.

The school's curriculum has improved over time, recently in reading and science. Teachers prepare and deliver lessons with pride. They consider the needs of all pupils and ensure that lessons are adapted for individuals when necessary. Teaching assistants further enhance pupils' experiences. The systems that leaders have put in place to check what pupils can remember is less well developed. In addition, although work has been done to enrich the curriculum with key vocabulary, this is not fully embedded.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and they attend regularly. They behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils and parents and carers indicate that bullying at the school is rare. However, it does occasionally happen. There are other times when pupils may fall out or disagree. Over the last 12 months, leaders have introduced improvements to the way in which bullying incidents are handled and recorded.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They know where they can get help when they need it. A system of 'emotionally available adults' means that there is always someone for pupils to talk to. Pupils speak highly of the support available to them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Subject leaders have invested time in identifying the most important skills and knowledge for pupils to learn. Leaders have planned lessons so that pupils can build up their knowledge over time. Teachers are encouraged to think creatively about how to bring the lessons alive. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and deliver lessons with authority and passion. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and engage with the work given to them.

The school's science curriculum has improved over time and is particularly successful. The science leader has worked alongside an external organisation to audit the curriculum in the subject. New topics have been introduced and staff have received appropriate training. The school has also introduced a science week and planned science-based school trips for all pupils. As well as being able to recall what they have learned in science, pupils speak highly of the subject.

There is some variation in the way in which teachers assess pupils in subjects. Some of the systems in place are more effective than others. Although teachers monitor the topics that have been taught, they do not always check what pupils have remembered. Subject leaders also need to do further work in analysing assessment information, to enable them to make decisions about any future adaptations to the curriculum.

The early years provision is an exciting place to be. It is well resourced and engaging. Parents value the support from the early years team as children are welcomed into school. Children begin to learn to read from their first days at the school. The school's programme for teaching early reading is embedded across all year groups. Staff have been trained and stick closely to the schemes of learning. The reading leader is highly knowledgeable and closely monitors the progress that pupils are making.

Staff have started work on infusing rich vocabulary throughout the curriculum. They have identified important vocabulary lists for all year groups. Their plans to embed these words in lessons have been affected by the pandemic and now need revisiting. Leaders are also aware that pupils would benefit from more opportunities to access the school library.

Pupils are taught about other important topics, such as relationships and sex education (RSE) in an age-appropriate way. They are taught about equality and diversity. They also take part in enrichment activities, such as a 'parliament day' debate, where pupils were joined by a representative from the House of Commons. Very recently, the school council has been collecting items for a local food bank. Pupils also enjoy attending various extra-curricular clubs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support that enables them to access the curriculum effectively. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable. They know and understand the needs of the pupils with whom they work. This includes those pupils with more complex needs.

Staff support pupils to behave well in and out of lessons. Where pupils do make poor choices, systems are in place to address this. Although records of behavioural and bullying incidents have not always been as detailed as they could be, leaders have implemented new systems to address this. As a result, leaders are now better placed to monitor trends, make early interventions and ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

Most parents rate the school highly. They say that their children are happy there. However, a small number of parents report difficulties with home-school communications. Some feel that their comments are not always taken seriously enough. Others feel uninformed about what pupils are learning in their lessons and want to be more involved. A few want to

know more about the recent changes to the governing body. The headteacher and those with responsibility for governance are aware that they need to act on these concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The systems in place when recruiting new staff and carrying out necessary checks are thorough. Records are detailed and complete. All staff receive regular training as part of the school's safeguarding arrangements. They are aware of the risks pupils face and are confident in what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders take appropriate steps when necessary and work with external agencies where appropriate. Ensuring that pupils are safe is built into the curriculum. For example, older pupils have benefited from workshops promoting various aspects of social inclusion.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The plans in place to develop pupils' love of reading are not yet fully embedded. The lists of key vocabulary identified by subject leads are not being used in all lessons. Many pupils do not use the school library. This is partly because of the pandemic. Leaders should take the necessary steps to address these points as part of their ongoing work to encourage pupils to read more widely.
- Leaders have identified the most important content that pupils should learn in their subjects. However, the way in which teachers check what pupils can remember from their lessons is not as well developed. There is variation between subjects and between classes and some systems are not fully effective. Leaders should audit the current methods of assessment and make improvements as necessary.
- A small number of parents face frustrations when communicating with the school. They do not always know what their children are learning, or how well they are doing in lessons. Sometimes, they feel that their comments are dismissed too easily. The headteacher and members of the governing body should ensure that parents have the information they need, and ensure that they respond to concerns when these arise.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, to be good in December 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140439
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10200196
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Lee Higgins
Headteacher	Catherine Kelly
Website	www.sacredheart.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in December 2013. It is the only school within the Sacred Heart Hillsborough Academy Trust. The trust is currently a member of the Diocese of Hallam schools' partnership agreement, for which the diocesan bishop approves the appointment of foundation governors.
- The school is currently planning to join a larger multi-academy trust later in 2022.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, most recently in March 2016.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector spoke to several members of teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives

from the board of trustees, also referred to as governors. The inspector also met an advisor from Learn Sheffield, and, briefly, a representative from the Diocese of Hallam.

- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in reading and history. In both subjects, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Aspects of other subjects, including science, mathematics and RSE, were also reviewed.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school site and in lessons. He also spoke to pupils, formally and informally, to discuss their reflection on behaviour. Behaviour, bullying, attendance and complaints records were reviewed.
- As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and other records were reviewed. The checks that the school makes when appointing new staff were checked.
- The views of 19 members of staff and 49 parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys were also considered. A number of parents were also spoken to on the school site and by telephone.

Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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