

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 1BL

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at this school. They are enthusiastic and keen to do well. The pupils are caring and thoughtful to others. Adults are excellent role models; they are kind and respectful to each other and pupils.

Pupils behave well. Although some say there are occasional disagreements at breaktimes, pupils know that adults and play leaders are there to help resolve any minor conflicts. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils rarely need adults to tell them how to behave. They know they are responsible for their own behaviour and act accordingly. Pupils know what bullying really means and know that teachers will help should it occur.

Parents who responded to the Ofsted free-text online questionnaire made comments such as, 'we are extremely happy with the school – especially the quality of teaching and pastoral care. The school provides an excellent education for the all-round development of the children in its care'.

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

The curriculum is planned to engage and excite pupils. Subjects are organised so pupils learn knowledge in a carefully planned order. For example, pupils studying the Black Death explained how this helped them to understand aspects of the Great Fire of London. However, sometimes links are not as clear as they could be. As a result, in some foundation subjects, pupils struggle to make relevant connections in their learning and do not build the secure knowledge base they need. Teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons and also use information in curriculum plans to check learning over time.

Pupils learn to read well. From Reception Year, pupils are immersed in literature. A phonics scheme is well delivered by well-trained staff. A minority of pupils struggle to read fluently. Teachers take every opportunity to give these pupils the time they need to practise reading. A love of reading is encouraged throughout the school, with a wide

range of books available for pupils. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically of the books by different authors which they love to read. A poetry basket and the rule of 'five quality texts' means that pupils are exposed to lots of different genres.

Senior leaders ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to support pupils. Ongoing training plays an important part in staff development. Staff are very well supported by senior leaders. They are appreciative of the consideration leaders give to their workload. Leadership roles seamlessly transfer to others as succession planning is good. For example, the current special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has continued the effective procedures and practices already established to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need. Consequently, pupils with SEND access the curriculum in a way that helps them learn.

Governors know this school well and promote the school's virtues and values meticulously. However, their strategies for challenging and supporting leaders around the curriculum are less clear. The academy board is relatively new. This and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic means that some members have not received any or recent quality training to support them in their role.

Senior leaders make sure that pupils develop good personal characteristics and become valuable members of society. Staff help pupils manage their own behaviours. Pupils do this well. Staff take great care to plan activities to enhance pupils' personal development. The forest school plays an important part in pupils' personal development; it helps in building resilience, collaboration skills and knowledge about their environment. Visitors in school such as authors make learning even more interesting and support pupils' aspirations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know that keeping children safe is everybody's responsibility. Clear procedures are in place to raise any immediate or ongoing concerns. Pupils know that they can talk to a teacher or the pastoral lead if they have any worries. Administrative staff are highly organised and ensure that careful checks are made on new adults and visitors in school.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe. Visitors such as Police Olly, Yorkshire Water and the Canal River Trust help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and complement the work they do in lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, curriculum planning does not make strong enough links with prior knowledge so that it can help pupils understand new learning. Therefore, pupils do not always make the connections. On occasion, this prevents the building up of strong schematic knowledge. Curriculum leaders need to look carefully at their

curriculum to ensure that when teaching, the sequential building blocks are reinforced, and links made to help pupils build up expert schemas.

- The academy council is relatively recently formed, and training opportunities have been limited throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This has hindered the members of the academy council in challenging and supporting the school leadership team as well as they could. Governors need to ensure they receive good quality training to help equip them in performing their roles.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017. The school received a monitoring visit in December 2020.

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.

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	141479
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10255823
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	198
Appropriate authority	The board of Trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Williams
Headteacher	Sue McManamin
Website	www.sacredheart.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school received a section 48 inspection in December 2017, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the senior leadership team, members of the academy council, including the chair and vice-chair, a representative of the board of trustees and the director of education.
- The inspector spoke to pupils on informal basis during breaktimes and in more formal meetings.
- Responses to the Ofsted online surveys were received from staff members, pupils and parents. All views expressed were taken into consideration.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, history and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, listened to pupils reading to familiar adults, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the SENCo.
- Several formal and informal discussions were held to consider the culture and procedures around safeguarding in the school, including a review of the school's single central record and recruitment checks.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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