

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Springfield Road, Sacred Heart RC School, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 7RH

Inspection dates:

30 and 31 March 2023

Outcome

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud ambassadors of their school. The school motto permeates everything that they do. Added to this, pupils have a deep understanding of equality. They champion diversity. Pupils were adamant that at this school, everyone is accepted for who they are. They told inspectors that they are 'all individual pieces of a jigsaw, unique but connected'.

Pupils are happy to be greeted each morning by welcoming staff and Albie, the school dog. Pupils are incredibly kind to each other. They are keen to live up to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. Leaders deal with any bullying swiftly and effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Leaders are passionate about raising pupils' aspirations. They expect pupils, irrespective of their background or ability, to succeed. Pupils, including children in the early years, flourish.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered programme of wider development that prepares them well for life in modern Britain. This helps to bring the curriculum to life and encourages pupils to be ambitious for their futures.

A wealth of experiences support pupils to develop their character and resilience. Pupils are confident, articulate and spoke openly about the importance of the strong relationships that they have with staff. Pupils value the support that staff give them for their emotional well-being.

Pupils relish opportunities to act as positive role models for younger children. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoy being 'gardeners' to their 'seeds' in the Reception class.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). To this end, leaders have designed a well-thought-out curriculum that

addresses disadvantage and ensures that pupils are prepared sufficiently well for the next stage of their education. Children in the early years are eager to embark on key stage 1. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have acquired the rich knowledge that they need in readiness for secondary school. Pupils achieve well.

In the main, leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and when this content should be taught. From the early years to Year 6, the curriculum is organised well. Leaders are unwavering in their determination to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, follow the same aspirational curriculum. Teachers successfully make adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, so that pupils with SEND can learn well alongside their peers.

For the most part, the curriculum is implemented skilfully. Most teachers are adept at encouraging pupils to deepen their understanding and build on prior learning. Pupils are empowered to learn well. Many pupils spoke confidently about their learning. They explained, with ease, how they apply their knowledge to more sophisticated ideas. In the early years, children learn to use a wide range of language and vocabulary.

In a small number of subjects, some teachers are not as confident in their delivery of the curriculum. On occasion, some teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn the important knowledge in these subject curriculums. From time to time, some pupils do not build on prior learning as well as they should.

In most subjects, leaders' assessment systems are well established. Teachers use their expertise to successfully identify and address pupils' misconceptions. However, in a small number of subjects, current assessment systems sometimes hinder teachers from checking quickly enough whether pupils' knowledge is secure. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils do not recall knowledge as fluently as they should.

Leaders prioritise reading. For example, prior to children starting in the Nursery or Reception classes, leaders provide them with story books and book bags as gifts. Leaders have also invested in new books to ensure that pupils in key stage 2 have access to high-quality texts. Across the school, there is clearly a love of reading. Pupils said that reading opens their minds and their imaginations. They told inspectors that they value learning new vocabulary. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read fluently and accurately.

Staff are experts in early reading. Pupils practise their reading using books that match the sounds that they have learned. Most pupils secure a strong knowledge of phonics. This provides them with a solid foundation for future learning. Leaders have effective systems in place to help pupils who are behind with their phonics knowledge to catch up quickly.

Leaders quickly and accurately identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use their considerable expertise to support pupils with SEND exceptionally well. Pupils with SEND thrive. They enjoy all that this school has to offer.

Pupils have a fervour for learning. They are excited to learn new topics and concepts. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, listen attentively to their teachers. They behave well and learn without disruption.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the wide variety of opportunities available to them through extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits. Pupils also learn about democracy and British values, for example, through taking on roles as eco representatives, school councillors and play leaders. Leaders foster pupils' sense of community through various projects, for example a recent rainforest project with Chester Zoo and fundraising for outdoor equipment. Pupils readily assume roles of responsibility.

Staff are immensely proud to work at the school. Morale is high. Staff were effusive about leaders' support for their workload and well-being. Subject leaders are well equipped to carry out their roles effectively.

Governors support and challenge leaders in equal measure to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are alert to the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They report any concerns about a pupil's welfare diligently. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate and timely support.

Staff are well trained to identify the dangers that pupils face online and in the local community. They ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe and how to develop healthy relationships. Pupils were clear that they have someone to go to if they have any concerns. They are confident to report any worries that they may have to staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not select the most appropriate pedagogy to deliver the knowledge in the curriculum. This sometimes hinders how well pupils can build on their prior learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers are equipped with the confidence to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders' assessment systems do not enable teachers to check sufficiently well that pupils have learned the knowledge in the curriculum. This sometimes hinders teachers in identifying pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. As leaders refine their approaches to assessment, they should ensure that teachers are equipped to check that pupils have embedded their knowledge securely.

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 February 2018.

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	106461
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10283616
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katherine Gaskell
Headteacher	Samantha Stirrup
Website	www.sacredheart.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2018.
- Governors provide before- and after-school provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a range of teaching and support staff. She spoke with four members of the governing body, including the co-chairs and vice-chair of governors.
- An inspector also met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the archdiocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. She met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited some lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a trusted adult.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils from Years 1 to 6. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtimes.
- The inspector checked the school's safeguarding procedures and the checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school self-evaluation documents, the curriculum, minutes from meetings of the governors and behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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