

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hastings

Old London Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5NA

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this friendly and happy school. One pupil voiced the views of many when they said, 'Our teachers truly care about us here.' Pupils enjoy the company of one another in class and when at play. Staff and pupils live out the school's values through the actions of staff and interaction between pupils. Pupils are safe. They understand the school's rules for behaviour and see these as fair. When pupils misbehave, there are helpful strategies in place to help them improve their behaviour. When bullying happens, adults respond swiftly to put things right.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They provide a curriculum that inspires pupils to learn and develops their interests. For example, pupils learn about local history and create artwork with local artists. They explore the forest school area and use this to develop their problem-solving skills. Pupils delight in helping one another. For example, older pupils take on roles of 'Best Buddies' to support younger pupils in the school. Pupils elect their peers to prayer council and school council. This helps pupils to feel part of the school community and have a say in the running of the school.

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

Leaders ensure that staff deliver the school's curriculum well. Leaders have identified the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in most subjects. This helps teachers to know what to teach. They provide training to support teachers to deliver these plans effectively. Leaders and governors are conscious of the workload faced by teachers. They think about this when reviewing the curriculum. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge pupils need to learn in order to succeed. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and do not learn as well as they could.

Teachers help pupils to read fluently and gain a love of reading. Children in the early years learn to read simple words quickly. Teachers ensure that pupils read books that

match the sounds they are learning. This helps pupils to read confidently. Staff provide helpful interventions for pupils who have fallen behind with their reading. As a result, as pupils move through the school, they learn to read fluently and with confidence.

Teachers review what pupils know and use this to refine their teaching. They use questioning to check for gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use more formal strategies to identify pupils who are not able to recall what they have learned. Teachers use this information effectively to address any gaps in learning. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They adapt their teaching to help pupils with SEND to achieve well. For example, teachers make sure that all pupils understand the vocabulary used in science lessons. This enables pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language to learn alongside their peers.

Pupils achieve well across a broad range of subjects. Teachers in the early years provide children with activities that prepare them well for future learning. Children develop their mathematical knowledge and apply this in a range of play activities. Older pupils are supported well to strengthen their mathematical skills. They use these to solve mathematical problems with increasing accuracy.

As they move through the school, pupils develop their knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects competently. For example, in computing, pupils learn to write codes that operate digital devices. In art, pupils learn about a range of artists from different cultures. They produce artwork that is displayed across the school and in the wider community.

Pupils behave well. This is because teachers have high expectations for the behaviour of pupils. Staff support pupils with SEND who struggle to manage their behaviour. They are sensitive to their individual needs and support them to return to their learning quickly.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of activities and opportunities beyond the classroom. For example, pupils attend an outward bounds residential trip and visit the beach as part of the 'beach school' curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 learn the ukulele and perform at local musical events in the community. Pupils also attend a range of clubs on offer at the school. Leaders ensure that clubs and activities are accessible to all pupils at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. They ensure that staff receive regular training to help them identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders carry out all necessary checks on adults in the school to make sure that they are safe to work with children. Leaders act swiftly when concerns are raised to provide support for pupils and their families. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about how to stay safe. For example, in computing, pupils learn about the risks of emerging technologies. Pupils can explain confidently how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the sequence of knowledge that pupils need to learn precisely enough. This means that, sometimes, pupils develop gaps in their understanding, which is not addressed effectively. Leaders need to ensure that there is a clearly sequenced curriculum for all subjects. This should identify the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 114575 |
| Local authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10256466 |
| 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 | 238 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Richard Parker-Harding |
| Headteacher | Sue Allen |
| Website | www.sacredheartastings.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 and 2 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character in November 2018. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 headteacher, other leaders, and a range of staff at the school. The inspector met with the chair of governors and four members of the governing body. The inspector spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including those relating to the governance of the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers through responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey. The inspector spoke to staff, parents and pupils during the inspection and took account of the confidential online survey for staff.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and considered safeguarding documents and records. This included the school's records and plans for supporting pupils who have been referred to outside agencies.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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