

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart Primary School

Convent Road, Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 9XZ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2023

Outcome

Sacred Heart Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sacred Heart Primary School is a welcoming and happy school. Pupils and staff develop strong, trusting relationships with each other. Pupils benefit from many residential visits and wider opportunities in school. For example, staff and pupils have worked closely over the years to develop the school's outdoor provision. Pupils of all ages play happily in the well-maintained adventure area. They take advantage of the many opportunities and activities on offer, including the cycle track, the garden and greenhouse and the recently installed tadpole pond.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They are committed to developing pupils' character, values and behaviour through the Sacred Heart Goals. Pupils are keen to do well and to support each other. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils are proud of their 'buddy' roles supporting children in Nursery and Reception.

Pupils behave very well in school. They are polite, respectful and considerate. Pupils are eager to learn in lessons, and there is little disruption to learning.

Pupils feel safe. They do not worry about bullying, as they feel they all get along well with one another. Pupils know that if bullying did happen, adults would deal with it straightaway.

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

Leaders are ambitious, and want all pupils to achieve the best they can. They have designed a curriculum with reading at its heart. This helps pupils to be confident and fluent readers, ready for secondary school.

Children develop their vocabulary through songs and rhymes in Nursery. This is a strong foundation for learning phonics in Reception. Leaders have ensured that all staff are exceptionally well trained in teaching early reading. Staff use consistent and effective approaches to develop pupils' knowledge of phonics. Pupils read books that are matched

to the sounds they have learned. Leaders and teachers quickly spot if a child is falling behind and provide help to make sure they catch up.

A love of reading runs through the school. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and genres. Their choices are often inspired by story time and recommendations from teachers and peers. Leaders work with a charity that celebrates the world of children's books to select thought-provoking and topical books for pupils to discuss.

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and remember in each subject. The curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils build on their previous learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils used their prior knowledge of vertices to help them learn about the different types of triangles.

The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. Teachers focus heavily on developing pupils' mathematical language and reasoning skills. They model key words and check pupils' understanding. In Reception, children explore numbers through a variety of activities, for example by using counting frames. This prepares them well for key stage 1. Pupils regularly apply their mathematical understanding in problem-solving activities.

Leaders check pupils' learning in English and mathematics using the regular checks that teachers make of what pupils know and can do. As a result, they spot and swiftly address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. In other subjects, these checks are not as well developed. Leaders have identified that they need to further refine assessment in the wider curriculum to evaluate how well pupils' knowledge is developing in these subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff know the pupils with SEND in their classes. They adapt lessons so that these pupils can access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders have ensured that staff promptly identify pupils with SEND. Sometimes, the information provided for teachers about the support pupils with SEND need is not sufficiently detailed.

Leaders develop pupils' skills and personal qualities beyond the academic curriculum. They encourage pupils to be responsible members of the Sacred Heart family of schools by showing excellent behaviour. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning and are attentive in lessons. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils speak maturely about outdoor play and learning time. They set high expectations of their own behaviour during playtime, considering their own safety as well as the safety of others.

Pupils value the wide range of opportunities to make positive contributions to the local community. These opportunities give pupils the chance to be active citizens. For example, the 'Mini Vinnies' organised a fundraising day to help a school in Malawi build a toilet block. Each week, pupils hold 'Canny Friday', donating canned goods to the local food bank. Leaders have instilled in pupils the importance of mutual respect and tolerance.

Staff are extremely proud to be part of Sacred Heart Primary School. They enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders, who consider their well-being and workload. Staff appreciate the professional development network across the trust schools.

Governors and trustees support leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders provide regular, relevant training to ensure that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are vigilant to the signs that a pupil may be at risk. This means that pupils get the right support, within school and from external agencies. Records about safeguarding incidents are detailed. Leaders make the appropriate checks on adults working with children.

Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. The school is situated on a busy road. Pupils learn about road safety in personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils understand the importance of talking to trusted adults if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills in subjects beyond English and mathematics is developing. At present, leaders do not have a clear understanding of how well pupils' knowledge builds in the wider curriculum. This means some gaps in pupils' learning can go unchecked. Leaders should develop better ways to check pupils' learning in the wider curriculum so that any gaps in understanding can be addressed.
- The targets and strategies identified to support pupils with SEND are sometimes not specific enough. This means that some teachers are not clear on the strategies to use to help particular pupils. Leaders should work with staff to give them better guidance of the small steps needed to support these pupils to help them to learn well.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sacred Heart RC Primary School, to be good in May 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.

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	145624
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10268621
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Liz McLellan
Headteacher	Barbara Brown
Website	www.shprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in May 2019.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. To do this, they met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils' read and met with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.

- The inspector also met with governors, the chair of the trust board and representatives of the trust.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and experiences in school. They also considered pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the pupil survey and the staff survey, along with written comments from parents. The inspector spoke informally to parents outside the school.

Inspection team

Kate Morris, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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