

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Friern Barnet

London

LEA: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101338

Headteacher: Ms Maureen Ruane

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Canham
1353

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th January 2000

Inspection number: 181600

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	2 Oakleigh Park South Whetstone London
Postcode:	N20 9JU
Telephone number:	0208 445 3854
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Malcolm Cussell
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart is larger than most primary schools; it caters for 201 boys and 214 girls aged from four to eleven years. The large majority of pupils attending the school are practising Roman Catholics, drawn from three parishes which serve a wide area. The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is small. Only 3 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with some form of special educational need, including those with statements, is above average. The attainment of pupils on entry to compulsory education at the age of five years varies between year groups. This is due to the range of pre-school experiences. However, attainment for the large majority of pupils is above national expectations.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sacred Heart is a very good school. Pupils receive a high standard of education, they are well cared for and they benefit from good teaching which enables them to reach well above average standards in national tests by the time they leave school. The school is very well led and there is a clear focus on high standards. The school makes effective use of its resources and has good financial controls. The school is giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good leadership sets a clear direction for the school in raising standards. The school's aims, values and policies are effectively implemented by all adults.
- Standards are well above average by the age of 11, because good teaching leads to good learning.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and they want to achieve. They enjoy excellent relationships with one another, behave very well and develop into sensitive and mature individuals by the time they leave school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and reflects the school's strong Catholic ethos and values.
- The very good links with parents have a significant impact on the quality of learning.

What could be improved

- The range of pupils' writing opportunities in Key Stage 1.
- The governing body should implement formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effect of decisions on standards and the quality of pupils' achievement.
- Punctuality.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made considerable progress since its last inspection in July 1996. Standards achieved in the national tests for pupils aged 11, particularly boys, have improved at a faster rate than nationally. All four areas for action identified in the last report have been tackled very successfully. The school development plan includes a clear set of priorities and the consistency in which policies are implemented is a strength of the school. Schemes of work are comprehensive, highly detailed, include clear learning intentions, and provide teachers with good guidance. Co-ordinators have well established roles and are closely involved in the development of the school through consultation, and strategic and financial planning for their subjects. Assessment procedures are now fully implemented and planning includes assessment opportunities. In addition to the improvements made by the school in response to the issues raised in the previous report, behaviour has improved significantly during break times in the playground, due, in part, to the introduction of large play apparatus and small games equipment. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the level of parent approval, and a corresponding fall in parent dissatisfaction with the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999		
English	A	A	A	A	<i>Very high</i> A*
Mathematics	A	A*	A*	A	<i>Well above average</i> A
Science	B	B	A	B	<i>Above average</i> B
					<i>Average</i> C
					<i>Below average</i> D
					<i>Well below average</i> E

The information shows that standards are very high in mathematics, and well above the national average in English and science. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science, when compared to schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. There has been an improving trend in recent years and particularly by boys who have made a significant improvement in English. Evidence from pupils' previous work and from the work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed these standards. Pupils are achieving well during lessons and the school has set realistic targets for the Year 2000. Evidence from pupils' work in Key Stage 1 was of a similarly high standard, although pupils had fewer opportunities than those given to pupils in Key Stage 2 to write imaginatively and for different purposes.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen to learn and they give of their best at all times. They are responsive and responsible and show very good attitudes in all they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and is one of the many strengths of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are mature. The quality of relationships is outstanding and a distinctive feature of the school community.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school, although a significant proportion arrive late in the morning.

Pupils listen and concentrate well and are keen to work on their tasks. They show an enthusiasm for the work and are excited when given imaginative and challenging activities. They co-operate well with one another and take pride in their work. They are polite and show respect for each other and for adults. Pupils work well independently; their confidence and maturity lead to high levels of achievement. They improve their ability to plan, research and organise their work as they progress thorough the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Of the lessons seen during the inspection, 95 per cent were satisfactory or better, of which 15 per cent were very good and 60 per cent were good. Just one lesson was unsatisfactory because pupils were not given enough guidance nor stretched by the tasks. Teachers manage pupils particularly well with a sensitivity which helps them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The strengths of good teaching are in the detail of the planning; this helps pupils to have a clear understanding of the learning intentions and improve their understanding. Pupils respond well by showing interest and a thirst for knowledge. Careful attention to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, ensures that they achieve well. Opportunities have become well established for the development of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects, and teachers use these opportunities particularly well. Pupils benefit significantly from the teaching of basic skills, which effectively underpin teaching in several subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The well-planned curriculum ensures that all pupils are given a balanced range of experiences matched to their needs. Children aged under five are given a good start because they experience a rich range of activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is well managed and pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for pupil's spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is good. The school's Catholic ethos is underpinned by the numerous opportunities given to pupils to reflect on their work and on spiritual and moral issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared and there are appropriate Child Protection procedures.

Children receive a good start in the early years because the curriculum is well balanced and it gives them a rich range of activities which match their needs. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to benefit significantly from a well-planned curriculum which is underpinned with some examples of very good subject guidance. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with examples of good cross-curricular links which add richness to pupils' learning. Pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy are developed well in subjects other than English and mathematics. Detailed planning ensures that areas of the curriculum are taught systematically and that pupils learn about subjects in sufficient depth; consequently, levels of achievement are high.

The school has strong procedures for ensuring the care of its pupils. The excellent relationships throughout the school and the well-established routines such as registration, break and lunch-time, help pupils to feel settled and secure from the time they start in the reception and throughout the school. The school has a very strong behaviour code and expectations are consistently high. Teachers know the pupils well and good assessment procedures ensure that teachers are effective in their monitoring of pupils' behaviour and levels of achievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led; the headteacher is supported effectively by the deputy and co-ordinators who have a clear vision for the work of the school. A strong feature of management is the successful delegation of responsibilities.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The knowledgeable governing body is very supportive and well informed about the work of the school. However, it has yet to develop formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is regular analysis of performances which are used to help with planning. The school is beginning to identify the value added to its work.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources and financial administration is good

The school benefits from the skilled, conscientious and sensitive leadership of the headteacher. The newly-appointed deputy and subject co-ordinators share the vision of high standards and they feel well supported in their work. The headteacher delegates effectively and subject co-ordinators are closely involved in the development of the school, through consultation and strategic planning for their curriculum areas.

Members of the governing body have been involved with the school over many years and they give generously of their time and expertise. They are dedicated, know the school well, and are instrumental in raising considerable funds to improve the school's environment and develop resources to improve the quality of education and raise standards further. Money for major projects has been well used to improve accommodation, such as the library, and strengthen the school's provision for the teaching of information technology. Grants for specific purposes, for example, special educational needs, are used appropriately. The school makes good use of the principles of best value for routine and major expenditure but does not yet include this in the assessment of the cost effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership and management.• The caring ethos.• The personal development of children.• Children's attitudes to work.• The quality of teaching.• The approachability of the school.• Children's behaviour. The progress made by their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility and range of opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Inspection evidence supports all the positive features expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire and at the meeting of parents with the registered inspector. The parents' perception is that the school provides a limited range of extra-curricular activities. The school engages outside agents to organise after school sessions and pupils are charged a fee to attend.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Very good leadership sets a clear direction for the school in raising standards. The school's aims, values and policies are effectively implemented by all adults.

1. The headteacher and staff set high standards and the school is oversubscribed. The headteacher is highly conscientious, and gives very strong leadership. She is very well supported by the recently-appointed deputy headteacher, who is already well-informed and has effectively taken effective responsibility for a number of key areas, for example in relation to assessment and staff development and to improving the quality of teaching. The school has made good progress with regard to the development of the role of co-ordinators, a key issue raised during the previous inspection. The extent and impact of delegation is a strength, and subject co-ordinators are closely involved in the development of the school through consultation and through strategic and financial planning for their curriculum areas. A particular strength of the school is the consistency shown by the staff and other adults in all aspects of school life. For example, pupils benefit significantly from the calm approach used by all adults and the consistently high expectations of behaviour and standards. All pupils are expected to achieve well and reach high standards, and they, in their turn, want to their best.

2. There is very good support for the professional development of staff. Teaching quality is regularly and frequently monitored by both senior staff and subject co-ordinators, who provide verbal and written feedbacks to teachers. Appraisal is linked to classroom monitoring, and all staff receive an annual professional interview with the headteacher. The school has established effective systems to monitor the curriculum and the quality of learning. This strategy has helped the school to develop a consistent approach to planning and teaching.

3. As was reported at the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher and staff are well supported by members of the governing body in their emphasis on high standards. Long-standing members of the governing body give generously of their time and expertise, and work closely with the school.

Standards are well above average by the age of 11 because good teaching leads to good learning.

4. In the 1999 national tests, standards were very high in mathematics, and well above the national average in English and science. There has been an improving trend in recent years and particularly for boys who have made a significant advances in English. Evidence from work pupils were doing during the inspection mirrored these standards, with particular strengths in speaking and listening, and very good writing skills. Pupils also achieve above average standards in other subjects, and this reflects the broad curriculum and the school's ethos of caring and providing for pupils of a wide range of abilities and aptitudes. Teaching is good across both key stages and in the reception where children are encouraged to use their imagination and be creative. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, 95 per cent were satisfactory or better, of which 15 per cent were very good and 60 per cent were good. Examples of very good, detailed planning, such as that seen in English and mathematics, ensures that pupils can work productively and at a good pace.

5. Lively and stimulating presentations bring stories to life and capture pupils' imaginations. Teachers manage pupils particularly well, with a calmness and sensitivity which helps them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils respond well by showing interest and a thirst for knowledge. Pupils understand what they are doing because the learning intentions are made clear in the well-planned lessons. They have a good understanding of classroom routines and feel secure in the stimulating learning environment. Pupils often acquire new knowledge and skills through open-ended imaginative projects which give them good opportunities to work independently from the teacher. Consistently good teaching gives pupils many opportunities to think beyond the superficial and to learn for themselves.

Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and they want to achieve. They enjoy excellent relationships with one another, behave very well and develop into sensitive and mature individuals by the time they leave school.

6. Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and to their work and this has a significant impact on their learning and the standards they achieve. They come to school regularly and are prepared to work. They are sensible in moving around the school during break and lunchtimes when they play sensibly. The school is a very orderly and calm community and much of this is due to the very good attitudes of the pupils who take pride in the school.

7. The positive behaviour is reflected in the lessons seen. Pupils listen and concentrate well, and are excited by some of the imaginative and stimulating tasks which capture their imagination. They treat one another with respect and are polite with each other. In lessons, pupils work hard and persevere with tasks until they are satisfied with their efforts. Pupils develop excellent relationships with their teachers and with each other. They respect others' views, listen carefully and the older pupils acknowledge similarities and differences in beliefs and attitudes. Pupils show independence and self-sufficiency in lessons which helps them to achieve well. By the age of 11, pupils work together very well, in pairs and in small groups; with some instruction they organise themselves, materials and equipment and settle quickly to work.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and reflects the school's strong Catholic ethos and values.

8. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and reflects the school's strong Catholic ethos and values. Around the school there are many prayers and religious artefacts for contemplation, and areas where pupils may have quiet moments. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils' spiritual and cultural growth is further enhanced by opportunities to appreciate poetry, art and music, as, for instance, when they studied illuminated manuscripts in Year 4. More attention should, however, be given to multicultural aspects of the arts. Considerable attention is given to social development, and the pupil councils provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the improvement of the school community through effective debate and decision-making. The school's moral values are reinforced by the very good role models provided by staff which powerfully influence the high quality of relationships with staff and between pupils.

The very good links with parents have a significant impact on the quality of learning

9. The school has developed a very strong partnership with parents. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant strengthening of relationship the school shares with parents. Parents have expressed an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the school through the parent questionnaire and at meetings. In particular, parental approval for the school's policy on homework, levels of achievement and standards are very high. In consequence, parents are now very much involved in their children's learning *and* are very supportive of the school in striving to raise standards further.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

10. Despite their above-average national test results in writing, a significant proportion of pupils in Key Stage 1 achieved a standard which was just average nationally. The school has identified this area for further development and sees the need to extend the range of opportunities for pupils to write for a further range of purposes, not only in English lessons but in other subject areas also.

11. Members of the governing body have been involved with the school over many years and, with parents, and are instrumental in raising substantial funds to improve the quality of education and raise standards further. Money for major projects has been well used for several projects and initiatives, such as the introduction of large and small play equipment in the play ground, the building of the new library, and the purchasing of additional equipment to support the teaching of information technology. Governors know the school well, although they have yet to introduce formal systems to evaluate the cost effectiveness of their decisions against educational outcomes. For example, the governing body takes a keen interest in the performance of the school and the way it is perceived locally, but it has yet to make effective use of detailed assessment results, including comparisons with other schools, to target its spending and bring about further improvements to standards.

12. Although attendance levels are good and above average, a significant proportion of pupils arrive late to school in the morning. It is recognised that parents are very supportive and work closely with the school. However, they have yet to ensure their children do not disrupt the smooth start to the day by arriving on time in the morning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Provide pupils in Key Stage 1 with further opportunities to write to write imaginatively and for different purposes.
- The governing body should implement formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the cost of decisions on standards and the quality of pupils' achievement
- In partnership with parents, improve punctuality

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	53	26	5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	415
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	99

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	30	31	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	30
	Girls	28	30	29
	Total	53	57	59
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	87	93	97
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	28
	Girls	29	29	27
	Total	55	59	55
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	90	97	90
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	22	35	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	22	22
	Girls	29	30	33
	Total	50	52	55
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	89	91	96
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	21
	Girls	30	30	29
	Total	49	50	50
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	86	88	88
	National	68	69	75

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	348
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	14

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	771096
Total expenditure	752416
Expenditure per pupil	1813
Balance brought forward from previous year	19330
Balance carried forward to next year	38010

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	278
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	41	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	39	7	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	49	18	1	0
The teaching is good.	60	36	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	13	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	28	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	35	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	48	45	5	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	34	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	34	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	35	18	7	13