



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 122811
 LEA Nottinghamshire

Inspection number 274289
 Inspection dates 8 - 9 March 2005
 Reporting inspector Mr M Thompson

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Southcliffe Road
School category	Voluntary Aided		Carlton
Age range of pupils	5 - 11		Nottingham NG4 1EQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 911 2117
Number on roll	202	Fax number	0115 911 2118
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms S Parkes
Date of previous inspection	February 1999	Headteacher	Mr P Vaughan

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary is an average sized school in the Carlton district of Nottingham. Its pupils are from a wide range of home backgrounds and almost all are white, British or Italian heritage. Most pupils start school with skills which are broadly average. Across the school, a lower proportion of pupils than usual have special educational needs. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a very good and exceptionally effective school which gives very good value for money. It is very welcoming, and values all its pupils equally. Pupils achieve very high standards because they are very well taught. Teachers know the pupils extremely well and are exceptionally good at using what they know to ensure that pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, systems for checking pupils' progress are not quite as good. Pupils are very well supported by their parents and are eager to learn. Their personal development is outstanding because they are very well cared for at school, and as a result feel secure and happy. The leadership is excellent, and the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in 1999. Teaching is much better and high standards in English have been sustained; standards in mathematics and science have improved significantly. Issues raised in the previous report have been tackled rigorously. There has been excellent improvement in checking pupils' progress and in using this information to help them learn more.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, although it is over-cautious in grading its effectiveness. It is exceptionally successful in tackling weaknesses and has very clear strategies for further development. The very clear direction provided by the headteacher and his senior managers is complemented by the support of a highly committed staff team and governing body. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement at all levels within the school, leaving it very well placed to make further progress.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its very many strengths and improve further the school should:

- use the exceptional practice it has developed to check pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Children enter the reception class with standards that are broadly average for their age. They make very good progress, and by the end of Year 6 standards are consistently well above those in other schools.

In the reception class, children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and good progress in all other areas of learning. Children quickly develop skills as independent learners because of the very good range of activities designed for them, and the high quality help given to them. By the end of reception, the majority of children achieve the learning goals expected at this age.

In Year 2, standards are average in reading and above average in writing, mathematics and science. Although girls generally do better than boys in reading and writing, the performance of boys is at least in line with the national average for boys in reading and well above in writing. In Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science; and boys and girls do equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties make very good progress because their individual needs are clearly identified, and they are given high quality help. Pupils develop good skills in using computers, which they use well to help them learn in other subjects. The high number of pupils of Italian heritage achieve as well as other pupils.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in classes, and around the school, are very good. They are keen to succeed, and work extremely hard. Attendance is very good. Pupils' relationships with each other and staff are extremely good, reflecting the strong emphasis which the school places on their personal development. Pupils play happily together and say that instances of bullying or aggressive behaviour are very rare. They show initiative, for instance by organising fund-raising events in support of charities, and take on a range of responsibilities through their house groups and the school council. These are outstanding features of the school's provision as pupils have a full voice in making important decisions regarding their safety, welfare and pastoral care. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles.

Spiritual development is a strong feature of the school. Pupils respect each other and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They have a good understanding of the cultural traditions of others which is developed through

activities such as a visit to a Hindu temple, a visit from a member of the Sikh religious community, and celebrations of the cultural traditions of Italy.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall and, as a result, all pupils make very good progress. The best features of teaching are focused and detailed planning, excellent relationships, interesting and challenging activities, and work that is very well matched to pupils' differing capabilities. In lessons, there is a very good working atmosphere and pupils are highly motivated, listen well and work hard. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning through, for example, the high quality help that they give to those who are experiencing difficulty with their work. All staff ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science, is outstanding and is used to set targets for them to improve. Pupils know precisely what they have to do and work very hard to meet their targets. The school makes very good use of what it knows about pupils to provide highly effective help for those with specific learning difficulties or whose progress is slow, and to stretch those who are talented. However, while assessment procedures are excellent in English, mathematics and science, and good in ICT, they could be improved further in other subjects. The procedures for checking how well children are doing in the reception class are excellent. They cover all areas of learning and enable the teacher to provide well for children's individual needs.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The school provides a broad range of activities which promote learning very well. Its curriculum for the youngest children is very good, and ensures that children are given a good platform for future learning. Staff are very good at developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and providing opportunities for them to use these skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 applied their skills in writing to produce high quality booklets about the Great Fire of London. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is exceptionally good. The clear and detailed individual education plans for these pupils contribute strongly to their very good progress. The school organises a wide variety of activities such as football, basketball and lunchtime

recorder groups, which attract many pupils. There are also very good opportunities for visits and residential trips, which are greatly enjoyed by the pupils. The school makes outstanding provision for ensuring that its pupils' keep healthy and safe. There is an effective personal, health and social education programme, including activities such as a visit from the 'Life Caravan', health and drug education, healthy lifestyle initiatives and advice on road safety.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The school's care and support for pupils is outstanding. Through a variety of initiatives, staff very carefully promote and monitor pupils' health and progress. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 confirm that they know their opinions are valued and that they will be listened to when they need help. For example, some were worried about the forthcoming national tests and put this information in the school's 'worry box'. The school responded promptly, and helped alleviate these anxieties. The quality of academic guidance for pupils is very good. High expectations of pupils' behaviour are implicit in all activities. Pupils also have excellent opportunities to express their views through their house teams and school council, or by simply describing acts of kindness. There is excellent care and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. Very good child protection procedures ensure all staff are aware of the needs of vulnerable pupils. The quality of care provided for these pupils is extremely sensitive and thoughtful, and contributes strongly to the very good progress made by these pupils.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership that focuses strongly on raising standards and improving the achievement of all pupils. He knows the school exceptionally well, and makes very good use of information gathered through rigorous monitoring to plan its development effectively. He is supported very well by his deputy, who provides outstanding leadership of the school's provision for special educational needs, and by his very good senior managers. There is a clear sense of shared responsibility among all staff and governors to ensure that pupils do well.

The headteacher has built an excellent staff team, and deploys them very effectively. There are good opportunities for training, closely linked to staff responsibilities and the school's needs. Very good use is made of the building, and the grounds provide a stimulating learning environment.

The governing body is highly effective in both supporting and challenging the school, and in meeting its statutory responsibilities. A particularly noteworthy feature of governance is the governors' monitoring group, which meets fortnightly to scrutinise pupils' work and discuss any issues arising with the headteacher. The accuracy of the school's assessment of its effectiveness, discussed by governors and monitored by the local authority, is fully supported by the judgements of inspectors.

Grade: 1

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Dear Pupils,

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you what we think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

We enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes, and liked talking to you.

There are lots of things that we like about your school. Some of them are:

- Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave very well and get on very well with each other.
- You listen very well to what your teachers have to say and try very hard in your lessons.
- Your teachers teach you really well, and when you find work hard you are given the right sort of help.
- Your teachers spend a lot of time looking at what you have done in class and working out how to help you to make your work even better.
- All of the adults who work in your school make sure that you are safe and are well looked after.
- Your headteacher, and all of the other people who help run your school, are excellent at making sure that you get the very best education.

We agree with your parents that you go to a very good school.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that the thing to do next is to make the teachers' checking of your progress in subjects like art, DT, geography and history as good as it is in English, maths and science.

Yours sincerely,

The inspection team