



Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105243
LEA Bolton
Inspection number 277324
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Mike Hewlett CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Central Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Westhoughton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bolton, Lancashire BL5 3DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 634681
Number on roll	281	Fax number	01942 812063
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Father Quinlan
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr J Brierley

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	Inspection number 277324
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart is an average sized primary school where a small number, one in twenty five pupils, claim free school meals. A larger number, one in ten, have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Both of these figures are below national averages. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from white, British families. On entering Reception classes, pupils generally have skills that are average or above.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Sacred Heart is an outstanding school. This judgement matches the school's own view of its effectiveness and that of parents and pupils. Standards are high and well above those found in schools nationally and children make good progress. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they also make good progress. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school, have very positive attitudes and behave exceptionally well. There are strong links with parents and other agencies that contribute to the excellent care for pupils. The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are outstanding. Self evaluation is spot on, recognising priorities as the need to challenge some higher attainers and raise the quality of the teaching to that of the very best. Strategies to make sure these happen are already in place. School leaders are committed to the safety and well-being of all the children. They make excellent use of assessment information to plan future work. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection and school leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve still further. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to provide greater challenges for higher attainers, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Iron out some inconsistencies identified in the teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges achievement and standards as good and the inspection confirms that this is an accurate picture. Parents and children hold similar views on the performance of the school. Children make consistently good progress and they achieve well. They start school with skills that are average or above and they get off to a good start in the Reception classes, making good progress during their first year. This picture continues year on year so that by the time they leave in Year 6, results are well above average. The upward trend has continued with the 2005 test results. Targets set by the school are very challenging and are generally met. One of the reasons for its success is that children's results and overall performance are carefully analysed, with lessons learned used to make changes where necessary. For example, despite Year 6 pupils reaching standards that are well above average in most subjects, more emphasis has been placed on stretching higher attainers to make sure they do even better. The school agrees there is room for these pupils to be challenged even further.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similarly good rates of progress. This is because the work they are given is carefully tailored to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school judges this area of its work to be outstanding and inspectors agree. Children's attendance is above the national average for primary schools and their punctuality is good. They describe how much they enjoy coming to the school and their attitudes and behaviour in classrooms and around the school are outstanding. Children feel very safe and secure and are confident enough to approach any adult if they have any problems or difficulties.

Children take full advantage of the wide range of opportunities provided for them to enhance personal development. A prime example of this outstanding provision is the school council, which is successfully run and managed by the children themselves. Children exude confidence when they speak and they are very keen to take on a wide range of available responsibilities such as peer mediation and being a playground pal. As a result, their independence and self esteem are high and many display a far greater maturity than would be expected for their age.

The outstanding ethos of the school is significantly underpinned by the school's excellent provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is demonstrated in practice by the exemplary way in which children show care and consideration for one another around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges this area of its work to be good and inspectors agree.

Children enjoy learning new things and they are inspired and motivated by the good quality teaching. Clear established routines and high expectations help pupils' develop very good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is excellent and staff value children's work and achievements. Praise and encouragement are strong features in all lessons and this helps raise pupils' self-esteem, feel successful and encourages them in their learning. "These questions are really hard but I can just about do them", said one girl in a Key Stage 2 class. Such an attitude goes some way to explaining why children do so well.

In most lessons, children respond very well to a wide range of challenging work. They are keen to answer questions and can give detailed explanations of their working strategies. Work is matched well to individual needs with careful planning to ensure that children of all abilities are given tasks at just the right level. Independent work is a feature across the school and children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, they have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Comprehensive monitoring and assessment systems check on how well each child is doing and pick up on any weaknesses. This is how the school found that there were some inconsistencies in teaching. Swift action was taken to put this right.

Classroom support staff are effectively involved across the school and they make a good contribution to the teaching and learning provision.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum, which is exciting and well balanced, meeting the needs of all its pupils. The school underestimates the quality of what it delivers in this area describing it as good. The curriculum for personal development reflects the hard work and effort the school has invested resulting in a caring, calm community of faith.

Close monitoring by key stage and subject leaders ensures that important skills in literacy and numeracy are effectively promoted across the curriculum. This provides children with an excellent grounding for their future development. Careful scrutiny of planning and monitoring systems ensure all children have full access to the National Curriculum. An exceptional range of extra-curricular activities and clubs significantly enriches the curriculum and includes a very strong focus on sport and the arts. This contributes to children's awareness of how they can remain fit and healthy. Their understanding of cultures different to their own is well provided for through religious education and as well as in art and music. Provision for gifted and talented children is excellent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding and better than the school's own evaluation. Child protection arrangements are in place and understood by staff. Very good attention is paid to health and safety as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle. Teachers are aware of the needs of individual pupils whilst children who are new to the school are offered sensitive help to settle quickly. In this safe, secure environment, pupils thrive. As one pupil noted, "I shine because I am loved".

Pupils care for each other exceptionally well. Peer tutors are trained to help pupils achieve their targets and peer mediators and playground pals ensure that playtimes are happy occasions in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. The school works well with other agencies and with parents to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers analyse pupils' work carefully. Through marking and the provision of targets, all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have a very clear idea of how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school judges leadership and management to be outstanding and evidence gathered during the inspection confirms this is accurate. Parents share this view. They feel the school is approachable and that it listens to, and acts on, their suggestions. "This

school wants the very best for my child and will always try to answer my concerns", said one parent.

The school has successfully created an environment where raising standards is at its heart and in which teaching and learning continue to improve. The clarity of vision of the management team results in pupils making good progress whilst still promoting a caring school.

All areas of leadership and management are regularly and rigorously monitored. The school's self evaluation is excellent, highlighting areas that need to be improved, such as ironing out some inconsistencies in the teaching, and then taking immediate action to put them right. It also provides the school with a clear direction and allows for accurate and challenging targets to be set.

Children feel valued and are afforded equal opportunities to access and be supported in the curriculum. All staff within the school are used very effectively.

The governing body is well informed and knowledgeable and challenges and supports the leadership team very well. Individual members are fully involved in the life of the school and bring a wide range of expertise. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and make an excellent contribution in moving the school forward by working in close harmony with the school's leadership team.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, a team of inspectors visited your school recently to find out if your school is giving you the education you should receive.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what you enjoyed doing. You are really proud of your school and rightly so.

Some of the things we really liked were:

- the excellent way your headteacher and other adults look after you so well and help you to work hard
- how keen you are to take on responsibilities, help to make decisions about your school and care about one another
- your behaviour and attitude to work which was outstanding
- the welcome everyone has given to children who are new to your school
- the way in which your work is planned and made interesting for you.

We were very impressed with what we saw. The adults in your school have already spotted what needs to be done to improve even further and we agree with them. These things include making sure that all of the teaching in school is as good as the best teaching we saw and planning special work for those of you who learn more quickly.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to improve Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.