



Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Comprehensive School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111763
LEA Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number 278773
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Paul Hancock

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Derwent Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Redcar
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		TS10 1PJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 473221
Number on roll	739	Fax number	01642 473741
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Joan Gillis
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Pat Hibbert

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school in Redcar. It gained new status as a specialist science college in September 2005 and caters for learners from the age of 11 to 16. Students live up to 20 miles from the school and there are 393 boys and 346 girls on roll. Most start at the school with above average standards. Standards on entry are falling because there are more students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language or from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased in the last two years and is now above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sacred Heart judges itself to be an effective school and science college. Inspection confirms the school is providing a satisfactory standard of education and agrees with the school that it has made significant improvements in the last two years. The personal development and well-being of students is a strength of the school, together with the high quality care, guidance and support provided for learners.

The school's capacity to improve since the last inspection is satisfactory. Little happened to address serious key issues identified in the report until an acting headteacher was appointed two years ago. A decline in achievement, standards and the quality of teaching has been stopped and students' progress is improving. This is because changes to the curriculum and management practice are making an impact. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results are best in English and history, and weakest in French and religious education. The school recognises the need to make further improvements and is in a strong position to achieve them. Subject leadership in science is a strength and provides a good starting point for the science college which started in September. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make teaching and learning at least good.
- Improve standards in French and religious education.
- Evaluate the work of subjects and the school more sharply.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school judges achievement and standards to be satisfactory and inspectors agree. Pupils start with above average standards and make satisfactory progress. GCSE results are above average but dipped slightly in 2005. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, largely as a result of the increased support provided by the school.

Standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were above average in 2004, except in English. The achievement of girls in English was not as high but their results did improve this year. Not enough of the most able pupils reached the grades of which they were capable in science.

GCSE results in 2005 are still above average, but not as good as the school's results in 2004. Achievement was good in English and a significant number of students gained the highest grades. Staffing difficulties in the core subjects adversely affected some results. In 2004, French and religious education were the worst performing subjects. Results in these subjects are improving but pupils are still achieving lower standards than they should.

The school now has detailed information on the attainment of pupils and is starting to analyse the progress and achievement of different groups of students. This is an important step in helping to raise achievement across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges this aspect to be good and inspectors agree. Students feel safe and secure and know adults listen to them. They say the school deals with any bullying incidents very effectively and racism is not an issue. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are good. Attendance is average.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; it is effectively underpinned by the Christian ethos of the school. Opportunities for pupils to learn about and contribute to the community and other cultures are very good. Students raised over £10,000 for different charities in the last three years. Other activities include sponsoring children in Africa and Christmas hamper appeals. Future economic well-being is developed through enterprise activities, for example it is part of the Year 8 course.

Students are encouraged to eat and drink healthily. They have stopped selling carbonated drinks in the tuck shop and have used the salt, sugar and fat levels in products as criteria when deciding what to sell. Learners make a strong contribution to school life and readily take on responsibility, for example as prefects, librarians, and peer mentors. The school council represents pupils very well and is effective in bringing about change.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspection confirms the school's judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Evidence from the school's internal monitoring system indicates a higher proportion of good lessons in the last 12 months. Sometimes the school's judgements are higher than those seen during the inspection. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and there are examples of good and outstanding lessons. The best are well structured, with learning objectives shared with pupils and learning reinforced through carefully planned practical activities. In these lessons, the quality of interaction is good and teachers use questions well to challenge and engage pupils. Where teaching is satisfactory, there are fewer opportunities for students to learn for themselves. In some lessons, such as in personal, social and health education, teachers do not effectively build on previous work and spend too long talking to the class.

The school has responded to parents' requests for more information about their children's progress. A new assessment policy is in place and a system has been introduced to provide reports on progress against National Curriculum levels every term. In some lessons, for example English, geography, music and mathematics, students are aware of their current levels and have individual targets for improvement. The

school has provided training for staff in the use of assessment data to improve learning and this is becoming established in some subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school judges the curriculum to be good. This was not the case at the time of the previous inspection when issues were identified in six subjects and in work-related courses. All have been addressed and inspectors agree the curriculum is now good. Changes are relatively recent and are beginning to have an impact on achievement.

Inspection confirms the curriculum provides a full range of opportunities to match learners' aspirations and capabilities, including alternative arrangements to meet specific individual needs. Vocational options are available in Years 10 and 11. There is a very wide range of enrichment and extracurricular activities. These allow pupils to develop personal skills, self-confidence and gain extra qualifications.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Pupils learn about staying healthy and safe and are given opportunities to make contributions to the community through fundraising and involvement in parish meetings held in school. Activities within the curriculum help pupils to acquire skills to support their future economic well-being. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities available to them and say that they enjoy what they do.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school accurately judges care, guidance and support to be good. There is a good, well established and inclusive system with a pastoral leadership team meeting every week to monitor welfare. The team effectively intervenes to help students overcome difficulties and problems. Learning mentors support pupils well and help them to try and achieve challenging academic targets.

Effective child protection procedures are in place and provision for vulnerable learners is good. A new system to track pupils' performance has been introduced at Key Stage 3. Students now have targets and a better understanding of how well they are doing. Learners at Key Stage 4 know what their personal targets are and what they need to do to achieve them. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Careers guidance and work-related programmes are strengths and all students undertake work experience. Learning mentors play an important role in supporting students. Contributions to charitable and voluntary activities are strong and students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and stay safe. A governors' committee also monitors health and safety effectively. The school gives high priority to supporting pupils' pastoral and emotional needs and pupils receive good information about future pathways.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school evaluates leadership and management to be good. Inspectors judge it to be satisfactory because it is not consistently strong at all levels. The good leadership of the acting headteacher provides drive and clear strategic direction to the school. This has been instrumental in change and recent improvement, such as the increased focus on strategic working for leaders at all levels of the school.

Monitoring and evaluation by subject and aspect leaders are inconsistent and not well focused on achievement. The quality of information provided to governors on achievement and standards varies too widely across subjects. The governing body has a declared commitment to the school and now acts much more as a critical friend. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents and others linked to its activities and responds to the issues raised.

Recruiting teachers has been difficult, for example attracting applicants for subject leadership posts, and this is slowing the drive for improvement. The constraints of waiting to move into a new school building in October 2006 are also having a negative impact. For example, the school is reluctant to invest in computer facilities, which are presently limited in the old school building. Resources are satisfactorily deployed and the school offers satisfactory value for money. The school recognises the need to make further improvements and is in a strong position to achieve them.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Sacred Heart School

Derwent Road

Redcar

TS10 1PJ

2 December 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for all your help when we inspected your school on 30 November and 1 December. We particularly enjoyed hearing your views and listening to you talk about the work you were doing in lessons. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account.

I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

It is an effective school and science college.

Significant improvements have been made in the last two years, driven by the strong leadership of your acting headteacher.

The school is in a good position to improve even more when you move into the new building next year.

Your personal development is a high priority.

You are very well cared for and supported.

Your teachers and all the staff are dedicated and work hard. They want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they could:

Make all the teaching and learning consistently good.

Improve standards in French and religious education.

Evaluate the work of subjects and the school more sharply.

Thank you for all your help. You are a credit to yourselves, your parents and your school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock HMI

Lead Inspector