



Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Secondary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100860
Local Authority Southwark
Inspection number 285902
Inspection date 7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Barry Jones

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Camberwell New Road
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	11–17		SE5 ORP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02072746844
Number on roll (school)	667	Fax number	02077371713
Number on roll (6th form)	14		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev. Michael Gould
		Headteacher	Ms Sally Coates
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart is smaller than average and serves an inner city area that is more disadvantaged than most. There are higher proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their home language, than in most schools. In 2003, it became a joint specialist language college with another Southwark secondary school. Attainment on entry to the school is below average but is improving. In 2006, the school has admitted a small number of students into the sixth form who need further support before continuing to further education.

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. Its achievements are a credit to the staff, governors and, not least, to the pupils themselves. The school's work is greatly appreciated by the parents. As one parent wrote, 'The school is like a fine wine, it is getting better with age'. There is no one single reason for the school's success. It does have an 'X factor' and new staff fit seamlessly into this thriving community and are encouraged to make their own distinctive contribution. There is an expectation that excellent standards in behaviour, attitudes and achievement will continue and this positive ethos pervades the life of the school.

Pupils enter with below average standards. By the time they leave at the end of Year 11, standards are well above average and in some respects are exceptionally high. For instance, results in mathematics and history are excellent. Consequently, pupils' achievement is outstanding and is consistently in the top few per cent of all schools. This is principally because of the outstanding teaching. There are also very effective systems for monitoring the progress made by pupils. This means that dips in performance are identified early, appropriate support given and pupils' progress accelerated. A notable feature of the school is the willingness of pupils to attend extra sessions, including on Saturday mornings, for revision classes or for additional support.

Their academic gains are matched by pupils' outstanding personal development. Their behaviour is excellent and underpins the harmonious, family atmosphere. Visitors are made to feel very welcome and this reflects well the Christian values of the school. Pupils are cared for very well and adults provide good role models. In return, pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and to the wider community. They are highly motivated and this is shown by their very good attendance. They have a good understanding of healthy-eating issues. The lack of adequate sports facilities and small play areas limits the opportunities for physical development. Currently, there is no time in the curriculum for physical education (PE) for Year 11 pupils and not all of these pupils participate in the after-school sports' clubs.

The school has benefited from its specialism in languages. More languages are now offered and standards have risen. Contrary to the national picture, more pupils are choosing languages in Year 10 and this reflects their positive attitudes. Productive links have been established with local schools and abroad.

The school enjoys excellent leadership and high standards are maintained. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses very well and constantly strives for excellence. Teamworking is exceptional. As a result, there is outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school is participating in a pilot for a small number of students who are finding the transition to further education a difficult experience. They come to the school for

one or two days per week and attend a college or do work experience for the other days. This is managed well and the links with the colleges, employers and other partners are exemplary. Their increased motivation is shown by their very good attendance and that all have now raised their aspirations. They are actively pursuing applications for courses and have been guided very well by staff and careers advisers. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of the project but it has made a good start. They start with standards that are well below average but monitoring by the school indicates good progress by these students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils take part in physical education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 are above average, having improved significantly in 2006, particularly for more able pupils. Standards in the GCSE examinations are consistently high and were exceptionally so in 2005. In particular, results in mathematics have improved and have been exceptionally high in the last two years. This is due to the excellent teaching, a well-designed curriculum and very good leadership. Expectations for what pupils could achieve in mathematics were raised following careful analysis of data and this approach has borne fruit. Standards in art have improved markedly since the previous inspection and all pupils achieve well in the GCSE examinations. Displays of pupils' art do much to enhance the environment within the school. There are no underachieving groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same progress as their classmates. Girls do better than boys and the school is developing further strategies to raise the attainment of boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, are outstanding. The school has strong links with charities. Staff and pupils raised a considerable amount of money that enabled some of them to work with children in an orphanage in Thailand. This good work is continuing. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and feel very safe there. They speak highly of the teachers and typical comments were, 'the teachers respect us and that is why we get on so well' and 'lessons are interesting and fun'. The school council takes its responsibilities very seriously. They say that their views are valued. They have influenced some changes in the school uniform, have initiated a refurbishment of the toilets and new drinking fountains were installed in the playgrounds at their request. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Monitoring by the school shows that nearly 90% of lessons are good or better. There is some outstanding teaching in most subjects but particularly in mathematics and history. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have cultivated very good learning atmospheres in classrooms. This means that lessons can be conducted at a good pace without disruptions through minor misbehaviour. The teachers make very good use of resources including interactive whiteboards to add stimulus and interest to lessons. They are skilled at questioning and checking whether pupils have grasped a topic. As one pupil said, 'If you tell a teacher that you do not understand, you will be taken to one side and he goes through it step by step until you do.' The school uses its most effective teachers to support other teachers and this helps to maintain the high standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good and contributes significantly to pupils' progress academically and socially. For instance, there is very good provision for personal and social education as well as for numeracy and literacy. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection in improving the resources for ICT. Its designation as a specialist languages school has helped considerably in developing the use of ICT in languages and in many other subjects. The curriculum is modified to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are very able or have particular talents. Consequently, together with the well-organised extra support available for these pupils, they make excellent progress. The school achieved the 'challenge award' in 2006 in recognition of excellence in meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils. There is no PE provision for Year 11 pupils. This arises partly because of shortcomings in the accommodation but also because the school was not able to appoint a head of PE for two years. This has been addressed for next year. Pupils are offered many opportunities for participating in sports after school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school is relatively small and means that the staff know their pupils very well. They are very committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves their full potential and is involved fully in the life of the school.

The school employs a full-time counsellor and a part-time chaplain and this complements well the support given by individual teachers. The pastoral system is very strong and links well with the academic guidance. The school has an aptly named 'track and act' system for monitoring progress and this is used well to ensure that any dips in performance are remedied. The pupils know their targets and what they have to do in order to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are outstanding and have successfully raised standards and maintained high levels of care. The headteacher has high expectations for the performance of her staff and the pupils and they respond well. She is ably supported by a very competent senior leadership team. The high level of consistency achieved every year across all the subjects is testimony to the excellent and consistent leadership. Middle managers are very effective and receive good support and challenge from senior managers. The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously and constructive feedback, allied to in-service training, leads to better teaching. The governors have considerable expertise and are fully involved in the work of the school. They hold the school to account well. They recognise the shortcomings in the accommodation. However, they are hampered in their attempts to resolve this issue because of uncertainties over timescales for plans to rebuild the school.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I write to thank you for all your help and cooperation when I inspected your school. You made me feel very welcome. I spoke to some of you around the school and to members of your school council. They told me how their views are valued. They have been able to bring about changes to your school uniform, the toilets and to have drinking fountains installed in the playground. You told me that you very much enjoy coming to school, feel very safe there and that you get along very well.

My main finding is that Sacred Heart is an outstanding school and I know that you and your parents think the same too. You are rightly very proud of your school.

There is no single reason for the school's success. Everyone plays their part - headteacher, staff, governors, parents and, not least, yourselves! This means that yours is a very thriving community that reflects well its strong Christian ethos. Your achievements in SATs and the GCSE examinations are excellent. Your progress in your subjects compares well with any school in the country. You also develop well into mature, responsible young people and are a credit to the school and to your parents and carers. Keep up these excellent standards.

The school is always striving to improve further. There is one way in which I am asking the school to make improvements. Your school has limited space and many other schools have better facilities for PE and sport. The school is doing what it can. The governors wish they could do more. The school is part of a re-building programme but dates have yet to be decided. In the meantime, I have asked the school to ensure that pupils in Year 11 get time to do PE too. I know that they plan to do this next year.

I wish you continuing success.

Barry Jones
Lead inspector