



# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104641  
**Local Authority** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 286995  
**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Bamber

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hall Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Merseyside L7 8TQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 7091782
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	169	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 7095646
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs A O'Connell
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C Daniels
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5–6 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 286995
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Sited in the city centre, this average sized school serves an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. Much higher proportions than average come from a minority ethnic background, are entitled to free school meals, join or leave the school at times other than normal or use English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. Over the last three years there have been considerable changes in leadership and staffing. The school has Investors in People status, a Healthy School Award and is a Fairtrade School.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving school that provides the pupils with a satisfactory education. The headteacher provides a clear, positive focus for the school's aims and ethos. There is energetic leadership of staff unified in their determination to drive up standards and to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can.

Over the last two years, standards have improved well overall. The best gains have been in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics. Standards have also improved significantly in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. Improvement has been slower in English, and pupils' standards and achievement remain too low in all aspects of the subject.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Some aspects, for example their healthy lifestyles and the eagerness and competence with which they take responsibility for each other and contribute to the running of the school, are outstanding. While pupils seem naturally positive about learning and participate keenly in the good range of out-of-class activities, their very effective personal development is in no small measure due to the good quality of care and support they receive. Although the school has put in place systems to track pupils' progress and to set targets, these are not yet fully effective in ensuring that all pupils, especially the more able, achieve as well as they can. Mainly due to inexperience, not all teachers' assessments are fully secure and this has hindered accurate target setting and rigorous checking on progress. The school acknowledges this and has instigated support and training to help improve this aspect of teaching. Pupils enjoy school because lessons are predominantly positive experiences enabling them to relate well to each other and to learn by their mistakes.

The overall satisfactory quality of teaching and learning results in pupils' satisfactory achievement. In some classes, they achieve well and this is directly linked to the quality of teaching. As a result of interventions by the headteacher, senior managers and the local authority, the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum continue to improve. However, the frequent turnover of staff has slowed the rate of improvement in teaching quality, particularly as new entrants to the profession find their feet and hone their skills. The satisfactory curriculum provides pupils with many enriching experiences, including residential visits, Spanish lessons and specialist teaching for music and sport. However, as the school acknowledges, the topics covered in many subjects are not sufficiently relevant to pupils, nor do they currently give pupils enough opportunities to practise their basic skills in all subjects.

The school knows itself well and what it needs to do to improve. In grading its overall effectiveness as good, it somewhat overestimated the influence of the outstanding elements of pupils' personal development and of the recent improvements in standards and achievement. The new leadership is only now coming to grips with some of the relative weaknesses in provision. Its attention had been diverted by serious issues about staffing and in prioritising improvements in the school's environment and instilling a renewed pride in the school by parents, pupils and staff. Parents are

unanimous in their support for the present leadership team, especially the headteacher, reporting great improvements over the last three years. The school's progress since its last inspection has been erratic. Satisfactory overall, it has been much more rapid over the last two years. The school provides satisfactory value for money and given the evident unity of purpose and sustained progress over the last two years it demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and achievement in speaking, reading and writing.
- Ensure that all teachers' assessments are reliable so that there is more accuracy in measuring pupils' progress and in setting challenging targets, especially for the more able.
- Improve the curriculum so that the topics pupils study are more relevant to their experiences.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are close to average in mathematics and science but are below average in English by the end of Year 6. When children enter Nursery, many have skills that fall well below those expected. They get off to a good start and make overall satisfactory progress by the end of the Foundation Stage. At the start of Year 1 many still have well below average literacy and numeracy skills but broadly average standards in other areas of their learning. In the last two years, in Year 2, standards have improved considerably in reading and writing and especially in mathematics. Similarly, in Year 6 standards have been rising over the last two years in mathematics and science. In 2006, Year 6 pupils made significantly better progress than average in these subjects. Improvements in standards and achievement in English have been slower and remain a priority for development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily. The more able pupils sometimes fail to achieve as well as they should because they are not set challenging enough work. The school sets realistic targets which it broadly meets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in this area is good with some outstanding features. Pupils behave sensibly and are very eager to take responsibility. For example, there is a 'friendly fifteen' of older pupils who look out for younger ones and lend a sympathetic ear to any pupils who are upset. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is reflected extremely well in the very close racial harmony present in the school. Pupils talk sensitively about their feelings and about the wonders of God's world, and take an active part in charitable works. The outstanding school council plays a highly active and important role in school life. Its members represent their classmates extremely

well. Impressively, they assist in staff appointments, lead improvements for safer parking and help devise a school code of conduct.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the way in which they relate to adults and to each other are very positive. They like school and are keen to learn. Pupils know how to stay safe. They also know a great deal about how to stay fit and healthy. They are prepared well for the next stage in their schooling because they have very positive attitudes to learning. Effective procedures, including reward systems, support pupils' satisfactory and improving attendance.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and varies between satisfactory and good. Where it is good, lessons enthuse all pupils and enable them to make effective progress. A successful Year 4 lesson, for example, made pupils think carefully about how the layout of a book balances text and pictures and the words used vary according to the intended audience. Time for paired discussion and reflection enhanced pupils' ability to respond thoughtfully and articulately. Where teaching is not as successful, the pace is not always brisk enough and the tasks set for pupils, especially the more able, do not fully meet their needs. Some weaknesses in pupils' language and literacy skills are attributable to the lack of opportunities available to them for discussion, reflection and using different styles of writing across all subjects. Teachers mark pupils' work according to the school's policy but this sometimes restricts the amount of information available to pupils about how to improve their work or their ability to be involved in assessing their own work. A strength in teaching across the school is in the way in which staff promote pupils' good behaviour, effective relationships and self-esteem.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. Provision for personal and social education is good and helps prepare pupils to contribute to society. Pupils have opportunities to work together, to reflect and to express their feelings. The provision for literacy requires some improvement and the school rightly has this as a priority area. Good provision is made for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the curriculum is enriched well through a very good range of educational visits, visitors and out-of-school activities. The curriculum supports the development of healthy lifestyles very well.

A particularly good example of partnership working involves links with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra for the promotion of music and instrumental tuition. Such experiences stimulate enjoyment in learning. However, as the school acknowledges, some of the topics studied by pupils fail to exploit their own experiences.

A weakness in the curriculum is that it does not yet fully meet the needs of the more able or gifted and talented pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory with some good features. Staff are very caring and offer good support to pupils. They work well with parents and other agencies to enable vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to receive the help they need and to make satisfactory progress. The required child protection and health and safety procedures are in place. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for because the staff deal effectively with any problems, such as bullying. They are well prepared for starting school and make a smooth transfer into their next stage in education.

Improvements have been made to the way in which pupils' progress is tracked and in setting targets. However, all pupils, and the more able in particular, are not yet given sufficient guidance on how to improve their work further and this contributes to their inconsistent progress throughout the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Parents understandably attest to the effectiveness of the headteacher. 'The school has come on in leaps and bounds since this headteacher arrived!' is a typical response from parents. The influence of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has been most significant in improving pupils' personal development, especially their behaviour, attitudes and feeling of self-worth. 'There is a new pride in the school' is a quotation from parents and governors. There is a determination by senior leaders to continually improve standards, achievement and provision. They are not afraid to admit mistakes and to learn from them, embracing partnerships with the local authority and other schools and agencies in order to secure advice and expertise. Plans for improvement are focused satisfactorily on the expected impact on pupils' learning, on ensuring that pupils enjoy a healthy lifestyle and are safe and on their regular attendance and punctuality. Mainly because of staff turnover, the role of the subject coordinators remains underdeveloped in many areas. Governors are becoming more effective and support the school's work unflinching. However, they realise that their monitoring role and their ability to act as a critical friend of all of the school's work needs further development.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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**

Thank you for making us so welcome during the days we spent in your school. We enjoyed our visit to your school. It is currently giving you a satisfactory education.

There are several things that particularly impressed us.

What is good about your school:

- the great work of the school council and the 'friendly fifteen' in helping run the school and making playtimes so enjoyable
- how much you know about how to be healthy, by eating sensibly and taking regular exercise
- the lovely way in which all the adults in the school look after you and help you if you have any problems
- the fact that you have Spanish lessons and opportunities to learn a musical instrument
- the way that your teachers and the governors have made the school look so nice, encouraged you to look smart in your uniform and to improve your attendance.

These things have obviously made you very proud of your school.

There are some things the school needs to do to make it even better. We have asked your headteacher and the governors to:

- help you to improve your speaking, reading and writing
- make sure that all the teachers know exactly how well you are getting on with your work so they can set accurate and challenging targets to help you make the best progress, especially those of you who find learning easier than most
- change some of the topics you study so that they are more about the things you are familiar with. For instance, there is a lot of very interesting science, history and geography to do with Liverpool.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you continue to really enjoy school and carry on working really hard.