

# Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105828
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	287343
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Lewis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Catherine Moody
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Christine Holdgate
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Kingsway Rochdale Lancashire OL16 4AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 649981
<b>Fax number</b>	01706 656239

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is an average sized primary school and is oversubscribed. Pupils come from a wide area and a variety of socio-economic backgrounds but a significant proportion are socially less advantaged. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The majority of pupils are of White British background. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority and the school has a few children from Traveller families. Very small percentages speak English as an additional language. The school holds a Healthy Schools Mark. The attainment of pupils on entry to the Nursery is below that generally expected for children of their age.

## 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 gives children an outstanding education in a vibrant and stimulating environment. The school has been cautious in its judgement on its work and considers its effectiveness to be good, but inspectors judge it as outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school life, are happy and thrive in the warm and welcoming atmosphere it provides. The school lives up to its mission statement admirably and provides excellent pastoral care for its pupils. This is underpinned by the strong Christian values that pervade the school. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding; their behaviour is exemplary and they have excellent attitudes to learning. By the time they leave the school, they are well-equipped and rounded individuals who are able to make the most of their future education.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher who is extremely well supported by senior staff. There is a shared vision across the whole-school community. Governors play a significant part in the school's development and are extremely effective and knowledgeable about its work. They support the school wholeheartedly by working closely with staff. Parents are extremely pleased with what the school provides saying that it is approachable and staff are always available. They particularly appreciate, 'the helpfulness and genuine kindness shown by staff who make you feel part of a big, happy, family'.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good, although the outdoor learning area for children in the Reception class limits their experiences, particularly in physical development. It does not mirror that of the good indoor provision. The separate nursery building hampers the operation of the Nursery and Reception classes as a true Foundation Stage, although staff work tirelessly to overcome this.

Elsewhere, excellent teaching and a good curriculum with a high level of enrichment in sport, drama and music, such as a Samba Band and Cheerleading ensure that pupils are well motivated and achieve highly. Pupils say that their school is a 'fun-filled and happy place'. Many children arrive in the Nursery with limited life experiences, communication and mathematical development skills. Generally, their skills are below and for some, far below those expected for their ages. They make rapid progress and by the end of the Foundation Stage, many reach standards expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress in reading and mathematics and very good progress in writing in Key Stage 1 and as they move through Key Stage 2. The quality of learning and assessment is outstanding and consequently, pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is excellent. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are significantly above those noted nationally. The school has sustained these high standards over the past two years.

The school has improved further since the last inspection when it was judged to be very good in many areas. It has dealt very effectively with the issues identified. It has an excellent capacity to move forward and improve further. It knows its many strengths and exactly what it needs to develop next; staff have the enthusiasm and the skills to continue to be successful. The school provides excellent value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the outdoor learning environment provides for and supports all areas of learning within the Foundation Stage.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils in Key Stage 1 build effectively on the good start secured in the Foundation Stage. So that by the end of Year 2 they are confident and articulate speakers and have well developed skills in reading and writing and mathematics. Standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics and are improving. In English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, standards are above average overall. In 2006, pupils reached high levels in English and science and were only slightly lower in mathematics.

The school has acted swiftly and successfully to identify and close the gaps in pupils' mathematical vocabulary and understanding. Thorough analysis showed that the middle band of pupils did not always understand the meaning of mathematical vocabulary. The school is now focusing successfully on the practical aspects of mathematics to improve pupils' mathematical understanding. This is having a positive impact already. The school exceeded its challenging targets in 2006 and is on line to meet even higher targets this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those with English as an additional language and those from traveller families also progress very well and most reach at least the average level because of the high quality of teaching and help they receive from staff.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding personal development contributes significantly to their learning. Behaviour is exemplary because of the ample opportunity and encouragement pupils are given to understand their own behaviour and that of others. Pupils report that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a problem. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop into thoughtful, considerate young citizens with very strong values by the time they leave.

The school works hard to improve attendance, which is good for the majority, but is adversely affected by a small number of families. School councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and are proud of the work they do for improving the school and their positive contribution to the school community. For example, their very good efforts have resulted in improvements to playground facilities and in providing healthy lunchtime menus. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards healthy living. Through working together in groups on enterprising activities, pupils develop life skills which will be helpful to them in the future. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their community by taking part in many worthwhile activities, including charitable fund-raising and giving performances for the community, including the elderly.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers prepare lessons very carefully and plan work that is very well matched to pupils' needs. Particularly clear learning objectives are set and are revisited at the end of lessons. Lessons have pace and challenge. This, along with the individual targets set, means that pupils are very aware of what they are learning and what is expected of them. Teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting with the use of practical activities and first hand experiences. An excellent example of this was when pupils in Year 6 acted out a telephone conversation with an insurance

company before writing a formal report for a claim. Questioning, demonstrations, timed short activities and interactive whiteboards are used extremely well by teachers and support staff to promote and engage pupils.

Teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils rise to these challenges and as a result, are motivated, confident and achieve very well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive first-rate support. High flyers and those newly learning English extend their learning effectively. Very thorough and helpful marking informs pupils of what they have done well and how they can improve their work consequently, pupils are quick to achieve their targets and move on. As a result, pupils show enthusiasm for learning, are careful listeners and diligent in their work. They take a pride in their handwriting and presentation of work which is of high quality.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English for the first time. However, although children make good and rapid progress in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum presented to them to support all areas of learning is limited in the Reception class because of the restrictions imposed on outside play. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities particularly in the arts and sport, such as netball, cheerleading, French and homework clubs. These thoroughly capture pupils' interests and foster enjoyment.

Learning is enriched by visits from musicians and artists and visits out to museums and places in the locality. Pupils play an enthusiastic part in the Rochdale Music Festival especially with poetry reading and recitations, recorder and Samba Band performances. This enriches pupils' experiences well and widens their horizons. Excellent partnerships with other schools help the school with its work; for example, sport links with local high schools promote pupils' physical development and enjoyment of sports effectively. Residential visits and links with the local parish, contribute very well to pupils' outstanding personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's commitment to caring for, guiding and supporting all pupils shines through in its work. Pupils feel safe and are confident that there will be someone to whom they can talk if needed. Personal development is monitored particularly well and support is very well focused to give guidance, particularly to those pupils who are vulnerable. The very good programme for promoting pupils' personal, social and health development ensures they know how to stay safe and healthy. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including arrangements for child protection and health and safety, are securely in place. The school works extremely well with parents and rightfully enjoys their confidence. The role of staff in developing this partnership is exemplary. Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to ensure that no pupil struggles with their work. All pupils are quickly identified if they have difficulties and enabled to work to their full capabilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others because of the positive support they receive, especially from teaching assistants. Tracking of pupils' progress is excellent. The school assesses how well pupils are doing and uses this information to set challenging targets for the next steps in their learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is the driving force behind the determination to reach high standards along with the inclusive Christian ethos that welcomes and values all pupils. She is dedicated and constantly striving for excellence and to make things better in all aspects of the school's work. She has established a strong leadership team who are all extremely effective and committed to provide high quality experiences in all aspects of school life so that pupils become responsible and caring and are very well prepared for their future education.

Senior managers carry out their responsibilities extremely well. They have excellent expertise and strong knowledge of their subjects. The school's own evaluation and grading of its performance is modest. Evaluation is continuous. It is always analysing its work to do better and constantly looking for improvement. This provides a firm basis for acting promptly and tackling any identified shortcomings in the pupils' achievements and for setting rigorous objectives for teacher's performance. For example, actions to improve mathematics are having good results in a very short time. Governance is excellent and the governing body is experienced and knowledgeably led. Governors bring much professional experience to their positions and undertake training to build on their knowledge. They play a major part in the work of the school, make an excellent contribution to leading its development and hold the school to account. Budget management and staffing decisions are astute.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Sacred Heart R C Primary School, Rochdale OL16 4AW

As you know, two inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome and the help you gave us in the inspection. I would like to share with you what we think about your school.

You will be pleased to hear that we think your school is outstanding. It provides you with an excellent education so that you make extremely good progress and reach above average standards by the time you leave. You are outstanding in your personal development and well-being. Well done to you all!

So why is your school so excellent? Well, your headteacher leads your school exceptionally well. She is very dedicated and enthusiastic. She is extremely well supported by your deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers as well as other adults who work in the school and the governors. She and the teachers know each one of you very well and know what you are capable of and are determined that you will all succeed. The teachers and their assistants teach you extremely well. They are determined to make things even better for you and all have a very clear idea of what needs to be done next. For instance, they know that you need to improve your mathematical vocabulary to help you get even better in mathematics. We think that the outdoor area for the youngest children could be improved to help more learning to take place outside.

Your school cares for you exceptionally well and you respond very well as sensible and mature people. You are happy and proud of your school. Many of you told us that school is a happy and fun-filled place to be. You know a lot about keeping healthy and safe and are extremely well behaved and polite to everyone.

Keep up the first rate attitudes you have to learning and continue to work hard and enjoy school. I would like to send you very best wishes for the future.