



# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108262  
**Local Authority** Wakefield  
**Inspection number** 288055  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jane Hughes

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 address</b>	Highfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Hemsworth, Pontefract
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		West Yorkshire WF9 4LJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 723140
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	102	<b>Fax number</b>	01977 723141
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Morrison
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Morgan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a smaller than average school that draws many pupils from an area of social disadvantage. A larger than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The school has Investors in People status and is currently working towards the Healthy Schools award.

## **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 a satisfactory school with good elements to its work. There is satisfactory leadership and management by the headteacher, senior leaders and governors. Following a period where standards fell and pupils' achievement decreased, leaders recognise that their first priority is to improve pupils' rate of achievement and raise levels of attainment. The school has introduced new assessment systems to identify better the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Already, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making faster progress and are on track to reach higher standards in the 2007 tests. Within this context, the school demonstrates a sound capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Many children now entering Reception have skills below national expectations. Only half have any pre-school experience. Despite effective support and satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, they take time to catch up. Consequently, by Year 1, children's skills are below expectations for their age, particularly in writing. Standards are still below average by Year 2. Pupils' satisfactory achievement throughout the school links closely with the overall satisfactory quality of teaching and learning. As a result, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Even so, the school accepts that standards in reading and writing are still too low. The school is starting to offer a more appropriate level of challenge for all pupils. However, teachers' marking does not provide them with consistently clear guidance on how to improve their work. The good curriculum engages pupils' interest and they are eager learners. Nevertheless, the lack of a stimulating outdoor area restricts learning and independent choice for children in the Foundation Stage. There is satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress are relatively new and it is too soon to judge their lasting impact on pupils' rates of achievement, although initial evidence is positive. Adults take good care of pupils and provide them with good personal support. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are confident and productive members of school and local communities. School councillors play a particularly effective role in improving resources and encouraging their peers to live healthy and safe lifestyles. Older pupils are trustworthy and good role models for the younger ones. These are important life skills in terms of their future well-being.

Well established partnerships with other schools and organisations enrich pupils' learning and bring many new experiences. For instance, pupils and parents appreciate the exciting opportunity for pupils to learn German. The school fosters good partnerships with parents and welcomes their involvement in pupils' learning and in school life. Pupils say that Sacred Heart is 'a fun, exciting and friendly school'. They look forward to their days here. Parents agree that children enjoy school. Most ensure that their children attend regularly.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement and the standards they reach, particularly in reading and writing.

- Ensure teachers' marking provides consistent guidance for pupils on how to improve each piece of work.
- Provide a stimulating outdoor learning area in the Foundation Stage so that children can choose to learn outside.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Trends in test data must be viewed cautiously as the small numbers in each year group cause results to fluctuate considerably, more so when some pupils have debilitating medical problems. Key Stage 1 assessments in 2006 show a rise in standards, although these are still below the national average, particularly in reading and writing. Standards in Key Stage 2 rose in English, mathematics and science. However, few pupils reached the higher levels in writing and standards in reading were below average. The school, with local authority support, recognises that standards in reading and writing are too low. This is an identified key area for improvement throughout the school. More detailed analysis of pupils' test results now take place, along with more regular assessments of pupils' progress. Staff confidence in teaching and assessing these areas has risen as the result of more training. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are now making faster progress because of the more rigorous monitoring and tracking systems. These are leading to better achievement and higher standards, with more pupils on track to meet challenging targets. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. Their individual needs are identified early on so that appropriate support can be provided either by staff in school or from outside agencies. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to other pupils because they receive increasingly well targeted support in small groups or on a one-to-one basis.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils really enjoy school. They behave well and are eager to learn. Most come to school regularly and attendance levels are satisfactory. Pupils settle quickly in lessons and show a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct and teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. Many pupils say that adults teach them how to act in a safe and considerate manner. School councillors take their role very seriously and make regular safety presentations to the whole school - on fireworks, for example. Pupils understand what it means to live healthy lifestyles. They enjoy fruit snacks, healthy lunch options and a variety of sporting opportunities. Opportunities to learn about many faiths and cultures, through visits to other schools in different areas, help pupils learn more about what it means to live in a diverse British society. They fundraise assiduously in support of charities and enjoy regular visits to the local church for services. As a consequence, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Strong relationships and high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour from adults encourage a committed approach to learning. Teaching assistants increasingly use their expertise to support pupils' learning in classrooms. Effective mentoring also provides good support for more vulnerable pupils. Careful support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to grow in confidence and enthusiasm so they make similar progress to other pupils. Until recently, the lack of a consistent system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress slowed their learning but more rigorous assessment systems are now starting to indicate the gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers question pupils carefully in order to check what they know and consolidate their learning. However, in some lessons, activities set do not always offer enough challenge to pupils or move their learning on fast enough. In the Foundation Stage, lessons promote children's personal, social and language skills well but do not incorporate enough opportunities for learning outdoors.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The rich curriculum places a strong emphasis on all aspects of personal, social and health education. This helps pupils to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. Initiatives such as 'Fitbods' allow pupils to support each other in physical activities. Pupils enjoy weekly opportunities to study German, led by a teacher from the local secondary school. These productive links help to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. Imaginative curriculum opportunities are provided, for example, pupils work together in mixed age groups on a range of activities, they plan, assemble and decorate Russian dolls, knit or make different foods. This helps to consolidate and extend their creative skills. Older pupils relish visits outside school and the many links they form with the local community. Strong creative partnerships include 'dance days' that extend pupils' physical prowess and cultural understanding. The school enjoys a high profile in the local community and strongly established church links. As a result, pupils experience a range of social settings as they entertain local residents or visit local places of interest.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Parents praise the caring pastoral support their children receive. Adults are good role models for pupils. Regular mentoring provides support for pupils and families. Immediate follow up of any unexplained absence underlines the importance of regular attendance to parents. Daily opportunities to discuss emotional and practical problems help to keep pupils in school and focused on their work. There are appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their health and safety. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to turn to with problems. They agree that behaviour is

good with little bullying. Skilled staff identify and support vulnerable pupils and parents appreciate this. Systems to track pupils' progress are developing but are at an early stage. Teachers effectively support pupils' personal development in lessons. Nevertheless, it is not always made clear enough to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision of what they want pupils, staff and governors to achieve. Subject leaders play an increasingly effective role in the development of the school and this ensures that all staff have a similar focus on raising pupils' achievement. Governors understand the school's priorities and accept that they need to challenge the school to improve, particularly in terms of pupils' achievement and attainment. Good partnerships with other schools and agencies help the school with its work. They make a particularly strong contribution in terms of pupils' cultural development and their future economic well-being. All staff take good care of pupils and work hard to make learning fun. Conscientious administrators, lunchtime and ancillary staff help the school to run smoothly. The school listens to the views of pupils and parents and acts upon them. For example, it has improved communication with parents and introduced a healthy tuck shop for older pupils. Inspection findings reflect the school's own evaluation of its work in four out of the eight areas. In all other areas, the school's self-evaluation is overly positive. Inspection findings show these areas are satisfactory rather than good.

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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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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>	2
<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	2
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	3
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 your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I was delighted to chat to so many of you and to hear your views about your school. You told me that Sacred Heart is a very friendly, fun-filled school where everyone behaves well and takes good care of each other. I agree with you. I was pleased to hear about your German lessons and all the sporting and creative activities you enjoy in your school which I judge to be a satisfactory school overall. You certainly had a good workout during the 'dance day' - along with the aches and pains the next day to prove it! You all worked very well during the popular 'PPA afternoon activities'. You are understandably proud of all the funds you raise for good causes. The school council is very active and keen to work hard for the good of the whole school. You showed me that you all have a good knowledge of healthy and safe living and that you learn a lot from the school council safety presentations in assembly.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school could improve. I have asked your school's leaders and teachers to help you do even better in your work, particularly in reading and writing. I have also asked your teachers to make sure they show each of you how to make your work even better when they mark your books, so you know exactly how to improve what you have written. Children in the Foundation Stage need to be able to learn outside with lots of exciting activities as this helps them to become more independent and to work in different ways. I have asked your school to provide a fun and exciting outdoor learning area for children in Reception. As you are so successful at organising fundraising events, perhaps you could all think of some good ideas to help pay for some of this?

Carry on working hard and enjoying school.