



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106643
Local Authority Barnsley
Inspection number 295686
Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006
Reporting inspector Stephen Hardwick HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lockwood Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Goldthorpe, Rotherham
Age range of pupils	3–11		South Yorkshire S63 9JY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 892 385
Number on roll (school)	157	Fax number	01709 888 168
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr G Goddard
		Headteacher	Miss M Curran
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005		

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Introduction

When Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School was inspected in September 2005 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in November 2006.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is situated in the large village of Goldthorpe. This is an area undergoing regeneration following the closure of the coal mines that formed the basis for the local economy. Almost all the pupils are White British and around a third is from Roman Catholic families. Ten per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. About a fifth of the pupils have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is similar to the norm for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Sacred Heart School has made good progress since it was inspected in autumn 2005. In the national tests for 2006 the school's results at both key stages improved in almost all respects when compared with the previous year. Across the school the provision is better and more consistent than it was, but some unevenness remains. After a sound start in the Nursery the pupils make rapid gains in Reception. Their progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and generally good at Key Stage 2. This picture is reflected in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall and much improved since 2005. The curriculum, which was inadequate, has been revised to meet requirements and the needs of the pupils.

Based on its Christian ethos, provision for the pupils' welfare and personal development are strengths of the school's work. The pupils themselves are well behaved, keen to learn and develop good work habits. Their attendance is similar to the average.

The headteacher provides good leadership and management and she is well supported by senior staff and governors. Greater stability in staffing has enabled the school to capitalise on training and establish common systems and routines from class to class. Monitoring is thorough: the school knows its strengths and weaknesses and its priorities. Deadlines for actions have been met, enabling the school to tackle successfully the issues arising from its inspection in 2005. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has good capacity to move forward.

What the school should do to improve further

The school's plans reflect its priorities but the overriding aims should be:

- to continue to raise standards, maintaining the focus on English and mathematics
- to offer consistently good provision by improving aspects of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, particularly the quality of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's results in the 2006 national tests improved at both key stages when compared with 2005. Overall about four fifths of the pupils reached at least the standard expected for their age, but with much better proportions reaching the higher levels. The results in 2006 at both key stages were similar to the national figures. The most significant gains were in English, where results were poor in 2005. The pupils who took the tests in 2006 also made better progress than their predecessors.

The higher test results are also reflected in work in lessons, where the pace of learning has risen. Overall, the pupils made satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes and good progress in Key Stage 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

There is good provision for the pupils' personal development and well-being, and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The pupils are well behaved in class and around school: playtimes are settled social occasions. They enjoy lessons and are keen to contribute in class. The school's Christian foundations permeate its work. Relationships are good and based on mutual respect and there is a strong sense of community. Assemblies are thought-provoking occasions in which pupils reflect and present their ideas maturely. The arts are well represented in the curriculum and extra activities, and the pupils study different faiths and cultures.

The school ensures the pupils' safety and has involved them closely in combating bullying. Promoting healthy eating and raising the profile of physical education have been high priorities: for instance, fruit is available at break times and the pupils have benefited from working with Barnsley Football Club and a nearby specialist sports college. There are good links with the community, especially through the parish, and the pupils regularly raise funds for charity.

The pupils are well prepared for the future. They collaborate purposefully in groups and acquire the basic skills to succeed. They readily take on school-wide responsibilities such as answering the telephone at lunchtime and they contribute to decision-making through the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

When the school was inspected in 2005 the quality of teaching was inadequate. It is now satisfactory overall but with much that is good, particularly at Key Stage 2.

All the lessons are carefully planned, prepared and organised. The learning objectives and expectations are clearly explained to the pupils. Most lessons are brisk and based on well-established routines. The teachers are particularly adept at engaging each one of the pupils when the class is being taught as a whole. The classroom assistants make skilful contributions, especially in group work. The best lessons are marked out by challenging tasks and the teachers' enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. The weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons relate to a loss of momentum in the learning at times.

The pupils bring much to their learning. They are attentive, work hard and are quick to organise materials or move from one section of a lesson to another. These habits should stand them in good stead for their secondary education.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum was identified as an area for improvement when the school was inspected in 2005. It is now satisfactory: it is broad, balanced and meets requirements. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but it is better in Reception than in Nursery, where some pupils spend too little time at activities to make worthwhile gains. In Reception there are well-organised sessions for parents to observe and support their children in lessons on literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school various strategies have been introduced to ensure that the work is matched to pupils' needs. These have included grouping pupils according to their attainment, booster classes and close checks on teachers' planning. The curriculum is enriched through visits, including an annual residential stay, through guest speakers and through a range of after-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils' welfare is a high priority for the school. The adults know the pupils well and the pupils are confident to turn to them for help. Safety is secured, for example, through regular checks on equipment and vetting staff and visitors. Governors and staff have been trained in child protection and the school works appropriately with outside agencies when necessary.

The pupils with additional needs follow detailed individual plans, which have clear targets that are reviewed frequently. There is a thorough system for tracking the pupils' progress and help is carefully directed towards the pupils who are not making the expected gains. The pupils have well-judged personal targets, which they know and are referred to in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's difficulties stemmed in part from a constant turnover in staffing. This has now stabilised enabling the school to capitalise on training and on the good leadership and management provided by the headteacher. With effective support from a newly established senior team, and the staff's hard work, she has moved the school forward rapidly. There are detailed plans to guide the key aspects of the school's work, with supporting plans for each subject. There has been a strong focus on improvement, especially in relation to standards, and on equal opportunities for the pupils. Success has engendered teamwork and raised morale. Resources are appropriate to the school's needs and have been deployed efficiently to support the actions that have been taken.

There is an extensive range of monitoring and evaluation. This has included, for example, lesson observations by senior staff who have also worked alongside their colleagues to improve practice and gain consistency from class to class. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and has good capacity to continue to improve.

The governors fulfil their responsibilities and have become increasingly involved in checking the school's performance. A core group examines pupils' attainment on a half-termly basis and one governor has utilised her particular expertise by scrutinising work in science.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
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	2
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

Congratulations! Sacred Heart no longer requires special measures.

Miss Curran, your teachers and the other adults in school have worked very hard on your behalf and there have been great improvements over the last year. You are expected to learn more in lessons, the range of work you cover is wider and, most importantly, your standards have risen. Your school's results in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 were a good deal better in 2006 than they were in 2005.

The school takes care to ensure you are safe and there is much to help you lead a healthy life, such as the fruit at break and the sports you can join. You have helped by being well behaved, settling quickly in class and doing as you are asked. You are also responsible when you are given jobs, such as answering the phone at lunchtime.

I have asked Miss Curran to carry on with the improvements that have been made to make your time at Sacred Heart even better, especially in the younger classes.

I have enjoyed my visits to your school. You have always been friendly and helpful, particularly in talking about your work. I wish you well for the future.