

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102426
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	308001
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	553
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Lavery
Headteacher	Mr D Manley
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	Herlwyn Avenue Ruislip HA4 6EZ
Telephone number	01895 633240
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

- standards and pupils' progress in the current Year 2 and Year 3
- pupils' higher order skills of self-assessment and independent study in Years 3 to 6.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Nearly three quarters of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a range of other backgrounds with any other White background being the next largest group. Few pupils speak English as an additional language and very few are at an early stage of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average; the nature of these includes specific learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. During the past two years the whole school has been rebuilt. During this extensive building programme many of the pupils were taught in mobile/temporary accommodation. The building programme was completed in June this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary is a good school. There are outstanding aspects to its work. Children get off to an outstanding start in the Foundation Stage. Across the school, a very high quality of care, guidance and support, and a very positive school atmosphere, lead to excellent personal development and well-being for pupils. Pupils in Year 1 to 6 achieve well because of good teaching and a first-rate curriculum. Parents hold very positive views about the school and most are extremely pleased with both the care and education provided. Typical comments from the responses to the parents' questionnaire were, 'Pleased with standards', 'Very well managed school', 'Great community spirit', 'Wonderful headteacher', 'Dedicated teachers' and 'The new building and equipment are excellent'.

Good leadership and management are key factors contributing to the school's success. An experienced and established headteacher provides outstanding leadership and educational direction. He is very well supported by the deputy and other senior staff. Other leadership roles have developed well since the last inspection, particularly skills in monitoring performance and action planning. There are good systems for reviewing the school's performance and effective action is taken to bring about improvements. Despite the inevitable disruption caused by a major building programme, leaders and managers have remained relentlessly focused on providing a good quality education. One parent wrote, 'Staff showed their true professionalism during the school expansion and never allowed it to impact negatively on the children'. There is strong teamwork and a positive 'can do' culture among the staff. Leaders and staff are striving for outstanding teaching and achievement by pupils. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance. They provide very good support and hold the school to account well.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are normally above average but dipped to average in 2007. The school introduced a range of effective measures so that pupils in this year group make good progress. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average and the school has made good strides in improving writing. Pupils produce good quality and detailed writing in a range of subjects. National test results for Year 6 in 2007 were exceptionally high in mathematics and above average in English and science. The expertise of the staff, setting by ability and an emphasis on problem solving contribute to the high performance in mathematics. National comparative data show that pupils made good progress from their starting points in all three subjects. School assessments and pupils' work indicate that standards and progress in the current Year 6 are similar to previous years.

Teaching promotes good progress. There are examples of outstanding practice. As some pupils said, 'Work is hard but it is also fun'. Teachers have outstanding relationships with the pupils and manage them extremely well. The purpose of the lesson is effectively shared with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. In two Year 5 English lessons, pupils had excellent opportunities to review the characters in a film and explore their personalities and feelings through drama and role-play. Pupils were creative, articulate and showed a very clear understanding of the work. Most teachers use assessment well to match activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. When this happens, pupils are challenged well and make good gains in their learning. Just occasionally, tasks are not sufficiently challenging and pupils have limited opportunities to plan and organise their own work. By contrast, there are good examples of pupils using information and communication technology (ICT) and research skills in independent work. For example, pupils in Year 5 produced well-organised and informative projects on St

Lucia. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who need additional support with language and literacy.

The curriculum promotes good achievement for pupils and makes an excellent contribution to their personal development. Good emphasis is placed on literacy, numeracy and science. There are good links between subjects, which add enjoyment and relevance to pupils' learning. In Year 2, art, history, ICT and writing were all skilfully incorporated in the 'Great Fire of London' topic. In Year 6, pupils designed and made high quality fairground models driven by electric motors. Provision for music and sports are strong features. Pupils have good opportunities to learn musical instruments such as cello, brass and violin. The school choir and orchestra perform successfully to the public, for example, at the recent opening of the new building. A very good range of clubs, visits and visitors enhance pupils learning and enjoyment. Popular clubs include cricket, football, netball, running, rounders and tennis. A successful Year 6 residential trip to the Isle of Wight provides exciting outdoor activities and builds pupils' geographical, problem-solving and team skills. Architects have wisely sought the views of the school in designing the new building. Pupils and staff are delighted with the spacious and impressive new accommodation.

Pastoral care is outstanding and there are highly effective procedures to safeguard pupils. 'Teachers work extremely hard and put the children first', a parent commented. Systems to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress are good. Pupils have specific learning targets, so they know what they are working on to improve. They are developing skills in reviewing their own performance well. An effective range of social and academic programmes are tailored to the needs of pupils who need extra support. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate of others. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their good attendance and their enthusiasm for learning. High expectations by staff and excellent relationships lead to exemplary behaviour. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, exercising regularly and keeping safe. They thrive on the responsibilities given. Those on the school council have improved playground facilities. Pupils contribute well to the wider community by raising funds for well-known charities. At Sacred Heart, pupils are extremely well prepared for the future. They have good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Their personal and social skills are extremely well developed.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

In most year groups, children enter the school with knowledge and skills expected for their age. Outstanding leadership has led to considerable improvements to the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. High quality teaching and an exciting curriculum enables children to make exceptionally good progress in all areas of learning. A wide range of stimulating activities are planned inside and outside around themes such as, 'animals', 'ourselves', 'summer' and 'people who help us'. Teachers and teaching assistants provide a highly effective blend of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to explore, be creative and work independently. Basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy are very well taught. Children are extremely well prepared for entry into Year 1. Assessments show that standards in the current Reception are well above those expected.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lessons are suitably challenging and provide good opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their own work.

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Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

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

Annex A

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

02 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Ruislip, HA4 6EZ

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you about some of the things I found out. Yours is a good school and one you can be very proud of. There are some outstanding features.

These are strengths of the school.

- Children in Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start.
- You all thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- The school is a very caring, welcoming and pleasant place to be.
- Your behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- You are taught well, which is why you are making good progress.
- Your independent study skills and your ability to assess your own progress are developing well.
- You show an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.
- An outstanding range of learning activities are provided for you, including clubs, visitors and visits.
- The school is extremely well led by your headteacher and he receives very good support from other senior staff.
- Staff take excellent care of you and give you outstanding support.
- Your parents give the school good support and are very pleased with the care and education provided.
- The new building and the wide range of facilities are first class.

There is one area that the school could work on to make it even better.

- In some lessons, your teachers could challenge you more and give you the chance to plan and organise your work.

I wish you all the very best for the future and keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector