

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103709
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	308396
Inspection date	25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Cole

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	304
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	45
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Taggart
Headteacher	Helen Quinn
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brays Lane Stoke Coventry CV2 4DW

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	25 September 2008
Inspection number	308396

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the most recent evidence of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science

the level of challenge in the work given to more able pupils

the guidance pupils receive in their work.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessment information, planning and monitoring documents, observation of lessons, examination of a sample of pupils' exercise books, discussions with staff and pupils, and from parents' written comments. There was no detailed investigation of other aspects of the school's work but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Two thirds of the pupils are White British. There are small numbers from each of a wide range of other White and minority ethnic groups. Pupils start at the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises a Reception unit for 45 children. There is also onsite childcare provision in the form of a pre-school unit and a before-and-after-school ('Rise and Shine') club. However, neither of these is managed by the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils of all backgrounds achieve well both in their academic work and in their personal development. Enthusiastic leadership creates a lively, 'fun' environment for learning and a friendly, caring and very purposeful atmosphere. Pupils greatly enjoy school and their behaviour is excellent. From their early days in Reception onwards, pupils grow greatly in confidence and take pride in their achievement. They feel happy and safe at school, thanks to the very good pastoral care the school provides. Formal procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their personal welfare, are thoroughly carried out. Pupils have much confidence in the support of the teachers and teaching assistants. Good guidance helps pupils to relate harmoniously to each other, whatever their background, and to know how to be healthy, by exercising and eating well. In what one parent called this 'lovely environment', pupils take full advantage of the good teaching and curriculum provided. As a result, they achieve well at each stage of their education. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards are comfortably in line with national standards. This represents good progress from their starting points, which are below expectation for their age when they start at the school. A particular strength of the teaching is the way it usually presents pupils with tough challenges at the same time as making learning fun. Lessons are imaginatively planned and attractive visual resources are employed. Across the subjects, opportunities for drama, role play, investigation, discovery and using computers excite pupils' interest. Teachers manage pupils skilfully with warmth and encouragement. Pupils want to learn and lessons are happy and busy events where behaviour is usually excellent. Pupils willingly pay attention to their tasks and try hard so that they progress well. Carefully devised additional support, often effectively provided by teaching assistants, enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. Although good overall, the quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding. This mainly reflects a number of recent staff changes, often when teachers have left for promotion or are absent on maternity leave. Inconsistency is seen in the marking of pupils' work, which sometimes gives pupils too little guidance on how they can improve their work. It also gives pupils too little feedback on their progress towards the potentially helpful targets they are given. Also, some lessons provide insufficiently challenging work for the most able. The curriculum is lively and stimulating. Many thoughtful ways are devised to promote both academic learning and personal development through enjoyable activity. A good example is the project allowing pupils to grow and cook their own foods, an aid to understanding dietary needs and the development of healthy eating habits. Well-planned and effective programmes of formal work in subjects are supplemented by a good range of educational visits, visitors, special events and cultural activities. Some of these exploit the school's good links with the local community and with other schools and bodies. A growing international dimension within the curriculum includes introduction to modern foreign languages and new links with two European countries. There is a good range of optional after-school activities, including opportunities for sport, although some pupils and parents wish for still more. The many good qualities of the school reflect the enthusiastic, determined and visionary leadership of the headteacher. She inspires a dedicated, hard-working and united staff team in a shared drive to give all pupils a high-quality education and equal opportunities. There is a tireless search for improvement. One parent described the school as 'an exciting and innovative place'. Many improvements, including raised standards and significantly improved attendance, have occurred since the previous inspection. The capacity for further improvement is good. Thorough planning is based on the school's accurate evaluation of itself through careful checks, particularly on pupils' progress. Governors give good support

to checks on the school's performance and the drive to improve. The school is very supportive of all associated with it and enjoys a mutually beneficial relationship with the wider community. The school reaches out to parents, helping them to encourage their children to learn and they in turn think highly of it. Many, however, do not take advantage of the opportunities to give practical support to their children's education, although when they do, their support is greatly valued.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although still very new to the school at the time of the inspection, Reception children were settling happily and rapidly into their new environment. A well-managed and close-knit team of adults provide a warm and caring setting. They sensitively guide the children toward constructive activity, sensible behaviour and cooperative relationships with both adults and each other. Much care is taken to ensure the children are safe, happy and healthy. The attractive indoor accommodation is well organised to allow children to move around well-planned, stimulating activities, learning through purposeful play and enjoying themselves. Adults also lead well-focused small-group sessions where the children develop specific knowledge and skills, such as within language or mathematical development. Careful, regular and systematic assessments of the children give the staff a good understanding of each child. This is reflected in the grouping of the children and the teaching provided. Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum are helping the children achieve well. Children completing the Reception stage earlier in the year attained standards generally in line with national averages. Having started out with below average attainment, this was good progress. Good management has led to good recent improvement in the provision. The school recognises the need for further developments to smooth children's experience as they move on from Reception to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- In marking pupils' work, give consistently clear guidance on how to improve and on the progress made towards their targets.
- Ensure the most able pupils are always fully challenged by the tasks set.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Coventry, CV2 4DW

The inspectors who visited your school recently really enjoyed the day they spent with you. We thank all of you for your friendly welcome.

It was good to see that you really enjoy school. Some of you told us that you have a lot of fun and we could see this for ourselves. We also saw how well you get on with each other and with the adults. You have a sensible attitude to school and to your work. We think your behaviour is excellent. You pay attention well to your lessons and try hard. All of this is helping you make good progress.

You also learn well because the teachers give you good lessons. They provide you with good work that helps you learn a lot. They also make learning enjoyable and interesting. They arrange a good variety of activities and visits that make learning fun. All the adults give you lots of help and encouragement. They look after you very well.

We have said that yours is a good school. The adults in charge of the school are doing a great job by seeing that you have a good education. However, we have suggested two ways that the school could be even better:

- We think that, when the teachers mark your work, they should give you more help to understand how to improve your work and more information about the progress you are making towards your targets.
- We think some of you could do harder work in some of your lessons. We have asked the teachers to provide this.

We hope you will play your part by trying to follow your teachers' guidance and tackling the challenges they set for you.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

M H Cole Lead inspector