

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Wigan

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106461
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309134
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynne Sudworth
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Poskitt
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Springfield Road Wigan Lancashire WN6 7RH
Telephone number	1942 231478
Fax number	1942 323641

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves a mainly White British population and has very few pupils from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average, although this does not accurately reflect the range of socio-economic circumstances of the families who attend the school. A below average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and a very small number have a statement of special educational need. Extended provision includes before and after-school clubs and the school is developing a Children's Centre in partnership with a neighbouring school. The school has Eco School, Activemark, Wigan Early Years Quality Standard, and Healthy Schools accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with senior leaders that this is a good school that provides its pupils with a good education firmly based on Christian principles. Pupils and parents praise the school for much of its work; typical comments include, 'My children have flourished and their achievements are celebrated well.' This statement accurately reflects the good progress that the school has made in the last few years, particularly in raising standards and improving pupils' progress. Overall, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. Their behaviour is excellent and they show good respect for the needs of others. They say that they feel safe and secure in the school. Pupils enjoy school and the range of extended services that it has to offer. Attendance is satisfactory. As a result of the Healthy Schools accreditation, pupils know the importance of leading healthy and safe lifestyles and many make a good contribution to the day-to-day life of the school.

Achievement is good and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Most children join the school with lower than expected skills. They get a good start in the Foundation Stage where they make good progress overall, particularly in the Nursery, and they enter Year 1 with broadly typical skills and abilities for their age. Standards at the end of Year 2 are slightly above average, reflecting a rising trend over recent years. Standards at the end of Year 6 also indicate a rising trend. Observations during the inspection indicate that current standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in English and science, but only average in mathematics. Overall, pupils make good progress but the rate varies across the school because there are inconsistencies in the generally good quality of teaching and learning. In particular, there are inconsistencies in the use of the good quality assessment information and academic tracking systems, to ensure that the learning needs of pupils of all abilities are met. Moreover, whilst pupils are aware of learning targets, the information does not always enable them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number from minority ethnic groups make good progress. They benefit from the good support provided through extra staffing and helpful resources. Pupils are prepared well for their future education and later life.

Pupils' academic and personal development is promoted well by the good curriculum and the effective care and support. The curriculum is filled with enriching activities from the variety of the Foundation Stage and the enjoyable visits and visitors, to the wide-ranging opportunities provided before and after school. Nevertheless, pupils are not given enough opportunities to use and develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Leadership and management are of good quality. The headteacher continues to lead the school vigorously towards a clear vision for improvement. He is well supported by senior and middle leaders and governors. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's education gets off to a good start, thanks to effective provision and the nurturing ethos in the Foundation Stage where they quickly become happy and receptive learners. When they enter the Nursery class, their knowledge, skills and understanding are below those typical for their age. They make good progress, so that by the time they leave the Reception class,

they have caught up and are operating at expected levels for their age in all the areas of learning. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development because of the effective way staff and the curriculum enable them to build good relationships, to be increasingly independent and to care for themselves competently. The well-led staff team provides a range of stimulating activities to promote the children's learning. Adults use questioning and prompts well, to promote the children's thinking and investigative skills. The quality of teaching is consistently good across the setting, with some outstanding practice, particularly in the Nursery class. The learning environment in Reception is good and in the Nursery is of outstanding quality; this supports the imaginatively planned curriculum well, providing very good opportunities for children to engage in learning through imaginative and investigative play. The Nursery provides good opportunities for learning outdoors, but restricted space limits the scope of outdoor curriculum provision for children in the Reception classes. Children with additional learning needs are identified promptly and supported and included well, so that they are enabled to make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that all teachers use assessment and academic tracking information as well as the best, to improve pupils' achievement.
- Improve the process of setting targets so that pupils can play a stronger role in assessing their own work and that of others.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards are above average in English and science by the end of Year 6. Results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 were close to or below average up to and including 2005, but since then, there has been an upturn in results, particularly in reading, and standards are now slightly above average. Similarly, test results at the end of Year 6 show an upward trend with overall standards being above average in 2007, and currently in Year 6. As the result of the school's focus on mathematics, standards have risen but they still lag behind, being broadly average by the end of Year 6. The school is acutely aware of this and is working on a planned programme to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of ways to raise standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in other groups are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. This is particularly noticeable on the playground where a wide variety of activities encourages them to have fun and be very active at playtimes. They cooperate and interact extremely well together. Because of the work in gaining the Activemark and Healthy Schools Awards, pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good; a good example of this is the Seeds and Gardeners initiative where Reception and Year 6 pupils work together. Cultural development is satisfactory and the school improvement plan identifies further development to help ensure that the pupils have a greater knowledge and understanding of the world. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils feel safe and are safety conscious. They know about internet safety and rules at playtimes. They contribute well to the community, for example, through the Good

Shepherd programme. They make good progress in developing those personal skills that will help them become good citizens in the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is of good quality overall. In most classes, learners make good progress and show positive attitudes to work, thanks to teachers' good subject knowledge, effective adaptation of activities according to pupils' needs, and the quick pace in lessons. In some classes the progress of learners is limited because the teaching does not take full account of the information available through assessing individuals' prior learning, and lessons are not delivered as effectively as in other classes. In the best lessons pupils' learning is extended by detailed follow-up questioning. Classes are managed well and pupils enjoy lessons, especially those that are practical or that incorporate information and communication technology (ICT). Target-setting procedures are in place but the school recognises that these could be developed further by encouraging pupils to assess their own work and that of others. The progress of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is tracked carefully and monitored regularly. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support learning. The school actively supports parents in helping the children to succeed, for example, it recently held an information evening for parents on dyslexia.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that is organised well to provide full access for pupils with additional learning needs. Provision for literacy and mathematics has, correctly, been given a very high priority in recent times and this has had a positive impact on standards in these subjects. New initiatives have been particularly successful in raising standards in writing, and in understanding the sounds of letters and words. A focus on practical work and investigations in mathematics has begun to have an impact but the school acknowledges that standards are not yet high enough. The school has undertaken a review of its provision in other subjects and is currently designing and trialling a skills-based curriculum to be delivered in cross-curricular topics. This is work in progress and it is too early to assess its impact. Pupils' ICT skills are developed well and ICT is used well to add interest to lessons across the curriculum. Opportunities are being developed for pupils in Key Stage 1 to learn through participation in practical activities. This is having a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and on progress, particularly for pupils who learn more readily through hands-on tasks and experiences. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors, including residential opportunities for older pupils. Extra-curricular clubs provide sporting and cultural opportunities that are taken up enthusiastically by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the good care the school provides for their children, and pupils are confident that there is always someone ready to help them if they have a problem. Safeguarding, child protection and health and safety procedures meet statutory requirements. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities supports their good progress effectively. A good

range of additional programmes has been put into place to meet their learning needs and the school's inclusive ethos ensures equality of opportunity for all learners. Marking often provides good guidance to pupils, with useful advice as to how they can improve their work. This is not consistently the case in all classes, however, and opportunities are sometimes missed to help pupils understand how well they and others have done and what the next steps in their learning could be. The use of learning targets to support improvement is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear vision is widely shared by all those involved in the life of the school. The recent improvements in pupils' progress, together with the effective way in which the issues from the last inspection have been dealt with, testify to the strong leadership. A parental comment, 'The school has improved significantly in recent years because of the leadership,' sums up the views of many. Morale is high. All who are involved in the school work effectively as a team and are committed to the pupils' welfare and progress. Through accurate self-evaluation and a strong commitment to the school, leaders have a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. The school is currently developing the expertise of middle leaders to enable them all to play a full part as monitors and evaluators, although there is still more to be done. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are not yet fully effective, particularly in removing the inconsistencies apparent in the use of assessment information to inform planning and challenge pupils' learning. Overall planning for improvement is thorough and the school's development plan is a very effective tool to move the school forward. Governors carry out their duties well. They play an active part in strategic and financial planning and purposefully challenge the school to do its best.

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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	2
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?	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
How well 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 the 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

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	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 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

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Wigan, WN6 7RH

What a good school you attend! I am writing on behalf of all the inspectors to thank you for your help during our visit to your school and to share with you our opinions about it. We were impressed by how friendly you are, not just with us, but most importantly with each other. Your behaviour is excellent; you work hard and try your best in lessons. We agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are caring and help you very much if you have a problem or personal issue. The younger children in the Nursery and Reception settle well into school life. In Years 1 to 6 you do well in English and science and reach above average standards because of good teaching. However, the test results have not been as good in mathematics.

We have asked your school to try and make sure that the standards you reach in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2 are as good as those in English and science. You can help by always trying your very best in your mathematics activities. We have also asked the school to find ways for all teachers to use the results of your assessments as well as the best teachers do, to help you to do even better. You have a good understanding of the learning targets the teachers set for you but we have also asked the school to ensure that you are more involved in assessing how well you are doing with your work.

All the jobs you do in school and the way many of you help others, for example, at lunchtimes, are certainly helping you to become good citizens for the future. We hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you the very best for your future.