

# Sacred Heart Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109640
<b>Local Authority</b>	LUTON LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310051
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Goodchild

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 category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	399
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Horstead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joan Cullen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Langford Drive Luton Bedfordshire LU2 9AJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 730781
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 457382

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Most pupils are from families that practise the Catholic faith, and who live within the parish. Fewer pupils are eligible for free school meals than in most schools. Pupils come into school with standards broadly in line with those expected for this age. Fewer have learning difficulties than in schools nationally. Most of these pupils have specific learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased significantly since the last inspection and is now twice that found in schools nationally. A high proportion of pupils are at an early stage in learning English. A substantial number of Eastern European pupils joined the school in the last two years. The population is less stable than that in most schools, and pupils join and leave at various times. The school has gained the Primary Quality Mark and 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 a number of good features. It is a popular choice with parents and the vast majority are satisfied with its work. In particular, they praise 'the wonderful community feel' and 'warmth and friendliness' of the school.

The good care that pupils receive, the positive relationships they enjoy and the Christian values that underpin the school's work make pupils feel secure and valued. Their personal development is good and they are eager to learn. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful and respond exceptionally well to opportunities to take responsibility. The progress they make in basic skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. National Curriculum assessment results at Key Stages 1 and 2 have been consistently average in recent years but the latest Key Stage 2 results were better in English than in mathematics and science. Currently, standards at the end of both key stages are average for those pupils who have been in the school for all or most of their primary education and they are on course to meet their targets. Since most of these pupils joined the school with broadly expected levels of attainment, this indicates that they have made satisfactory progress. Standards are necessarily a bit lower for those who arrived more recently and who are at an early stage in learning English, but these pupils are making good progress in acquiring the language. Pupils who need help, for example, because of specific learning difficulties, make good progress and are well supported by skilled teaching assistants.

The curriculum is matched well to the interests and aspirations of most pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, manage classes well and in nearly all lessons, pupils concentrate fully and work hard. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment information to match work to the needs of different groups of pupils. Marking, although sometimes detailed in praising pupils' efforts, does not often inform them how to improve. Consequently, progress remains satisfactory rather than good. This is the case particularly in mathematics and science; some more focused work in English has begun to bring about improvement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is developing her role well and has established a positive climate for change. Some aspects of leadership are good. For instance, leaders ensure that the school is very caring and inclusive. For example, the effective support put in place rapidly for pupils who needed extra help in learning English. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but with the progress seen, the school shows a good capacity for further improvement. Good systems have been introduced for tracking pupils' progress and identifying any underachievement. However, the recent developments have not had time to make a clear impact on pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation is detailed and thorough so that leaders have accurate information about the improvements needed, although they do not always provide sufficient clarity of direction.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and teaching is good. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together. A thorough tracking system is in place and staff regularly observe and record how well children are doing. Progress is good in

communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Staff promote speaking and listening skills well and children's increased knowledge of phonics is raising their achievement in writing. Their progress in other areas of learning is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory, but does not consistently provide challenging opportunities in problem solving, investigation or independent creative work. The outdoor area is used well. It has improved significantly since the last inspection, but it does not offer much physical challenge, for example, to develop climbing skills. Partnership with parents is a strength. They are kept well informed and have good opportunities to contribute to their children's learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use the evidence from monitoring and evaluation to provide clearer direction and take more focused and rigorous action to raise achievement, especially in mathematics and science.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment information to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils, and ensure that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

National Curriculum test results in recent years show that pupils have made consistently satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. Apart from a dip in 2006, Key Stage 1 assessment results have been consistently average in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have also been average, although in 2007 pupils did better in English than in mathematics and science. At both key stages, a good proportion of pupils reached higher levels. Last year, pupils who were at the school from the outset did significantly better in Key Stage 1 assessments than those who joined later. There was less difference between the performance of these two groups in Key Stage 2 tests as some pupils had made slower progress in earlier years. Lessons observations and pupils' work show that progress is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. However, some pupils make more progress than others do when work is not matched closely enough to the needs of all the different groups. Pupils with specific learning difficulties or who are learning English as an additional language make good progress when they receive intensive support from skilled teaching assistants.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend regularly. They feel safe and are confident that there is always an adult to turn to should they have a problem or need help. Behaviour is outstanding and many pupils exercise considerable self-discipline. They have a good understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues and of their own and others' cultural traditions, which they gain from assemblies and a developing programme of personal, social and health education. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and participate actively in physical education and a range of after-school sports. They have good awareness of how to keep safe. School council members are proud of the contribution they make to improving the school, for example, in planning the prayer garden. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school, local and wider communities. They help at the nearby school for pupils with learning difficulties and very much enjoy raising funds for many charities. Pupils' strong interest in learning and their satisfactory progress in basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

In the best lessons, learning proceeds at a rapid pace, teaching is lively and teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively and they generally make good use of the support provided by teaching assistants. Improvement in assessment means that all teachers now have clear information about what pupils can already do, but they do not always use this information effectively when planning lessons. They have been trained to share information with pupils about how they can succeed with the work. They generally communicate this clearly, but, in some cases, they are not always certain themselves how best to support and challenge pupils to make good progress. Despite a fair amount of good and occasionally outstanding teaching, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development which reflects the Christian ethos of the school. Visiting specialists are used well in teaching French and German and for coaching in physical education. An extensive programme of visits and visitors makes learning enjoyable, for example a theatre group promoted healthy living during the inspection. After-school clubs provide a good range of choice. French, craft and gardening clubs are popular in addition to sports and music. The school has very strong links, through music and other activities, with the parish and local community. The choir is very successful and regularly performs in local concerts. There are good links with other schools, particularly with a neighbouring school for pupils with learning difficulties and a local high school. The school is developing the range of opportunities for gifted and talented pupils and increasingly forging links between subjects.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Parents appreciate that their children are well cared for, want to attend school and feel safe and happy. Procedures for health and safety and for safeguarding and protecting pupils meet statutory requirements. The school is exceptionally effective in promoting good behaviour and this has a highly positive impact on pupils' readiness to learn. It provides effective support for pupils who need extra help with learning and good bilingual support for pupils at an early stage in learning English. Good links are in place with outside agencies, which provide additional support for pupils where necessary. The school has developed thorough procedures to assess, track and monitor pupils' academic progress. However, marking is variable and pupils are not all clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

Senior leaders ensure that pupils are well cared for and that those with additional needs are fully included. Staff morale is good and leaders at all levels are committed to raising standards. Senior leaders meet regularly to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Performance data is

analysed carefully to inform target setting and monitoring is thorough. For example, a recent review of teaching in mathematics indicates what is working well and what needs to be done to raise achievement. The extended absence of three key members of staff reduces the support available to the headteacher. Although this has been managed well, it does mean that some teachers do not always get as much guidance as they need, for example, clear direction on a day-to-day basis to ensure that teachers are making consistent use of assessment information. Governance is good and the knowledgeable chair of governors leads the governing body very well. New governors have undertaken a wide range of training and all governors are closely involved in the life of the school. Governors link well with subject leaders but have not yet established a programme of regular visits to observe the school's 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?	3
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?	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	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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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.

## Annex A

**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	3
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	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	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

17 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Primary School, Luton, LU2 9AJ

We enjoyed our visit to your school very much. It was interesting to see all the things you do and we were pleased to hear how much you enjoy school. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school.

It is a satisfactory school and does many things well. These are some of the best things about your school:

- everyone gets on well together and the school has a friendly atmosphere
- your teachers and the other people who help you all look after you well and care about you
- the school gives you really good opportunities to take responsibility and you respond exceptionally well by helping in and out of school
- your behaviour is outstanding, and you work hard and do your best
- those of you who find learning difficult, and those who are at an early stage in learning English make good progress from the support you receive

Your headteacher and the staff want to make your school better, and I have asked them to:

- use the information they collect about what is working well and what needs to be improved, and make sure all the staff know what they need to do to help you to make better progress
- make sure work is exactly right for you, not too difficult and not too easy, and to make sure you know what you can do to improve your work.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at Sacred Heart and keep working hard.

Best wishes

Ms M J Goodchild

Lead inspector