

# Sacred Heart Catholic School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113470
<b>Local Authority</b>	Torbay
<b>Inspection number</b>	311284
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frances Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cecil Road Paignton TQ3 2SH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 558298
<b>Fax number</b>	01803 664838

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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of actions taken to eliminate low-level disruptive behaviour; the effectiveness of systems to track pupils' progress and how the information is used to decide on actions to raise standards; and the contribution made by all leadership staff and governors in the drive to raise standards and move the school forward.

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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This Catholic primary school serves the parish of Paignton and the surrounding community. It is an area with some socio-economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average.

## 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 providing a sound education for its pupils. There are particular strengths in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage, which is good. Pupils throughout the school are very well cared for and this is having a positive impact on their personal development and well-being.

The exciting provision in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children get a good start to their schooling. Interesting activities motivate them and they make good progress. Progress in the rest of the school is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. The school has focused on improving the standards in writing and this is proving to be successful. Well-constructed programmes have been introduced to teach early literacy skills. This is proving to be effective, although there are still weaknesses to tackle. In Year 6, pupils' writing about 'Weather wages war on Paignton' is of a good quality. Exciting imagery has been used to support original and interesting ideas. However, spelling is a weaker element in written work in some classes. This prevents standards from being as high as they could be. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards their targets because of the good support provided for them in class.

The school is currently undergoing a full review of its curriculum in order to make it more relevant to the pupils and sustain their motivation to learn. This is entirely appropriate. Although the curriculum includes all the subjects that it should, and occasional theme weeks, it does not provide enough opportunities for the development of themes and topics which are relevant to all pupils. A good personal and social education programme makes a positive contribution to the pupils' good personal development. A wide range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs serves to broaden pupils' experiences and enrich their learning effectively. On the day of the inspection, pupils in Year 1 brought their fathers, and some their grandfathers, to school. Initiatives such as this give parents an insight into how their children spend their time in school and encourage them to work together to further their education.

The pupils enjoy school. Although attendance is below average, this is not unusual in a seaside resort where many parents work in the tourist industry. However, the school works hard to encourage regular attendance. Most pupils are considerate in their dealings with each other, and the playground is generally a happy and harmonious area. Behaviour is satisfactory. Older pupils say that bullying does not occur, although it has taken place in the past. Pupils are well aware of what actions to take should this happen. However, pupils agree that behaviour is not always as good as it should be. Positive strategies have been adopted to deal with this. Pupils in Year 6 eagerly explained their whole-class behaviour policy, and said that behaviour had significantly improved 'because we have all signed up to it'. Pupils develop positive social and moral attitudes, which are firmly underpinned by the strong spirituality that is an essential element of this community. There are many opportunities to explore the traditions of other cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They eagerly take on responsibilities in school, such as peer mediation, and actively participate in fundraising events for local, national and international charities. Pupils leave the school with average standards in basic skills and are prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education and future life.

The school is a caring community and the relationships between adults and pupils are good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. A number of good links with outside agencies

considerably enhance the provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. New systems for checking pupils' academic progress have recently been introduced and as a result, the school is able to identify more effectively where pupils need more support. Pupils know and understand their targets and say that they are given good guidance on how they can improve their work.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. They say that lessons are usually interesting and teachers help them to learn. Teachers plan carefully and make good efforts to motivate pupils. Humour is used well to enliven lessons. Although good lessons were observed during the inspection, teaching is only satisfactory overall. This is because an examination of pupils' work indicates that teaching is not always consistently good and progress, although satisfactory, is sometimes patchy across classes. Tasks are usually matched to the differing abilities of pupils. The school has begun to introduce opportunities for pupils to assess the quality of their own learning but this is not yet consistent practice. Although pupils say that marking helps them to understand what they need to do to make progress in their learning, it does not always identify errors in spelling unless spelling is a particular focus.

A few parents expressed some concerns over the leadership of the school. The inspection found that leadership and management are satisfactory. The use of data by senior staff to check the school's performance is improving. As a result, appropriate strategies to bring about improvements, in order to meet challenging targets, have been adopted. This impact of these is illustrated by better progress being made in writing and the improvements made in the Foundation Stage. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The senior leadership team is made up of committed and hard-working teachers with a good deal of expertise. Individually they work well to improve the areas for which they are responsible. However, leaders do not yet work as a cohesive team and not enough has yet been done to resolve this. It means that some issues are skirted round and there is not always clear enough direction as to how these should be tackled. For example, staff know that roles and responsibilities are to be reviewed, but do not yet know how this will happen. Where there is a unified approach and clear direction, significant progress has been made. This is evident in the whole-school actions taken to tackle problems with behaviour, where there have been considerable improvements. Many governors are new and although they are supportive of the school, they do not yet have sufficient expertise to effectively monitor its work and challenge its performance.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Reception and Nursery classes make good progress from starting points which are lower than those expected for their age when they enter the Nursery. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are broadly in line with those expected in most areas of learning. However, a significant minority are still working towards the goals expected in their early writing skills. As a result, a wide range of activities are being provided to promote the development of basic skills, such as phonics. Teaching is lively and stimulating activities are carefully planned to motivate and excite the children. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Visits and visitors, as well as lively interesting themes, make the curriculum and learning relevant and exciting. The care and attention given to children's welfare are good. Parents are well informed as to how well their children are doing and have easy access to children's 'Learning Diaries'. The leadership and

management of the Foundation Stage are good and staff show a good understanding of the needs of young children.

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

- Increase the knowledge and understanding of the governors so that they are secure and confident in monitoring the performance of the school.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their spelling skills in order to improve standards in writing.
- Ensure there is a united and consistent approach by the senior leadership team to improving standards, and that leadership and management at all levels play a full part in setting and achieving the school's goals.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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	3

### 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	3
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	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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	4
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic School, Paignton TQ3 2SH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You certainly seem to be happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. I think your school gives you a sound education and is working hard to make it better than this.

I think that you are keen to learn and most of you behave well. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start. I thought that Year 6 have put together a good behaviour policy and I am pleased that it is having a positive effect. Your writing is improving well and you have lots of good ideas, but you need to check your spelling more carefully. You take seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise. The curriculum covers all the subjects you are supposed to learn and you enjoy the visits and visitors which bring learning alive for you. Teachers make sure that you make the progress you should, and you say learning is often made fun. The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.

There are some things that I think can be improved to help you make good, rather than satisfactory, progress. The people who run the school need to work more effectively together to decide what needs to be done to help you improve your work. You have some new school governors who need some training to help them understand what they have to do to help the school get even better.

We hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes,

Christine Huard Lead Inspector



14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

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