

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Carlton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122811
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	319519
Inspection date	14 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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)	206
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Brooksbank
Headteacher	Mr Paul Vaughan
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Southcliffe Road Carlton Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG4 1EQ

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	14 November 2008
Inspection number	319519

Telephone number
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: attainment levels in writing for younger boys; the effectiveness of the school's assessment and tracking systems; and the impact of the 'excellence and enjoyment' initiative within the school. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, sampling of pupils' work, scrutiny of school documentation, assessment, tracking and target setting information and discussions with the headteacher, pupils, key staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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

Sacred Heart is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below that found nationally. Although most pupils are from White British Backgrounds, about 20% of pupils are of Italian descent. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Sacred Heart is an outstanding school and rightly deserves the reputation it holds within the local community. Parents are very appreciative and supportive of the school and their views of it are very positive. One comment echoed by others sums up parental feelings, 'An excellent school where children thrive and are happy.' This is a school that is never content to rest on its laurels but instead just keeps setting the bar of expectation higher. It is this approach that has been the reason for its excellent track record of improvement since the last inspection and provides a clear marker that continued development is in very safe hands.

There is little doubt that a sense of family and community envelops the school. The school is a focal point for the local community and goes the extra mile in establishing strong links with parents and parishioners alike. The school does much to broaden pupils' horizons beyond Carlton through the strong emphasis it gives to helping pupils learn about different cultures, traditions, beliefs and religions. These factors all come together very well and reinforce one of the school's core values, that pupils exist in, and should contribute to, a far wider community than just their immediate one.

Attainment when children start at the school is broadly in line with national expectations and often weaker in early communication skills. The impact of excellent teaching is apparent from the moment children enter the Reception class and continues across the school. As a result, by the time that pupils leave standards are significantly above the national average, as they have been for a number of years, and standards in key subjects such as mathematics and English are at times exceptional. Progress and achievement are also outstanding. The school knows how well pupils are doing because of its excellent assessment and tracking procedures and because it sets challenging targets for pupils of all abilities. Progress towards these targets is checked on a regular basis and teachers are held accountable for the progress pupils in their class make. The information is also used very effectively to target additional support for any pupil falling behind. Pupils play their part to the full because they have a very good awareness of their individual targets and readily act upon guidance that is given through the often high quality of marking. These significant strengths in academic guidance are matched by an outstanding level of pastoral care which results in pupils feeling safe, valued and respected, and knowing their individuality is recognised and celebrated in equal measure. All these factors contribute greatly to helping pupils leave the school as accomplished individuals, both academically and socially, more than ready to face the next challenges in their lives.

Outstanding teaching lies at the core of pupils' exceptional progress. Many lessons are vibrant, fun and challenging. Relationships and pupil management are excellent as is the contribution made by teaching assistants. The learning invariably moves along at a cracking pace and incisive questioning often brings about mature and thoughtful responses from the pupils. Lots of opportunities are provided for pupils to learn through practical and investigative tasks and pupils readily rise to the challenges that are set. Occasionally teachers do not capitalise enough on pupils' undoubted ability as inquisitive individuals who are more than ready to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning. The school has invested time and effort into making cross curricular links an established feature of its work and these efforts have reaped success. Carefully chosen topics are used as a vehicle for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills in a relevant and exciting manner and bring another dimension to pupils' learning. Add to this the excellent personal, social and health education programme, participation in enterprise activities, work with local schools and universities, the use of specialist sports teachers,

a wide range of after school clubs, visits and visitors and the recipe for an outstanding curriculum is complete.

Sacred Heart would not be the school it is and enjoy the success it does without the outstanding contribution of the pupils. They are tremendous ambassadors for the school because of their excellent behaviour, infectious enthusiasm and their desire to do well. Pupils are extremely polite and courteous and thoroughly enjoy every minute of their time at school which is also reflected in the above average attendance rates. They genuinely look out for one another, have an excellent grasp of moral and social issues and a deep awareness of Britain as a culturally diverse society. They have an excellent understanding of what is needed to follow a healthy lifestyle and of how to manage risks in their lives, including the possible dangers of use of the internet. Pupils thrive on the responsibilities that are given to them and they are ready for more, such as, for example, extending their role as school councillors. Their understanding of their position in a global community is illustrated by their willingness to raise money for local, national and international charities and their readiness to participate in community events and happenings.

Outstanding schools are often the direct result of outstanding leadership and Sacred Heart is no exception. The headteacher is an excellent leader because he constantly drives the school forward but always brings staff, pupils, parents and governors with him. He ensures that new initiatives are evaluated for their impact on standards and achievement and has instilled rigour in the way the school determines the quality of teaching and learning and in its use of performance data. Equally, he ensures that the school is a very enjoyable place in which to learn and work. He is supported in a highly effective manner by a senior leadership team and together they identify areas for development and tackle them robustly. This is no better illustrated than in the significant improvements brought about in boys' writing which is now becoming a strength of the school. This is a school that leaves no stone unturned in its quest for excellence and its evaluation of its own effectiveness is spot on. The quality of leadership is completed by high calibre governance which supports, challenges and evaluates the work of the school excellently and knows it is part of a tremendously strong team that provides a high quality of education for the children in the community it serves.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

All children in the EYFS make excellent progress because of the excellent teaching and rich and vibrant curriculum. Adults work together outstandingly well to provide an array of activities that capture and maintain the interest of the children. Staff go out of their way to promote children's personal development and as a result children quickly settle into the daily routines and become confident and independent learners. Procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress are excellent and the data clearly shows that by the time that children leave the Reception class, standards are above national expectations in all areas of learning. Teaching consistently strikes an excellent balance between adult and child led activities and excellent use is made of the outdoor play area. The accommodation as a whole is very attractive and excellently resourced and provides a terrific learning environment. Children behave excellently because of the high expectations that adults set and are already developing a very strong awareness of the importance of eating healthily. Add to this the excellent levels of pastoral care and it is easy to see why children feel safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy their time in the EYFS. Leadership of provision is first class in ensuring that all children achieve as well as

they do, as well as establishing strong and purposeful links with parents, other settings and support agencies that start here in the EYFS and are then maintained throughout the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take responsibility both for their own learning and within the wider school community.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	1
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

17 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Carlton, Nottingham, NG4 1EQ.

Many thanks to you all for making our visit to your school so enjoyable and worthwhile and one that we will remember for a long time. We greatly appreciated the opportunities to talk to you about work and school, and a special thanks to the pupils who met with us to discuss their views. It was great to hear how much you love school and all the terrific activities you take part in both during and outside of the school day. It was good to hear how safe and secure you feel and that there is always someone to talk to if you have any concerns.

I found so many good things about Sacred Heart School that I have to agree with you and say that it is an outstanding school and a great and fun place to learn. Teachers and other staff make learning exciting and in doing so help you achieve exceptionally well. The curriculum is exciting with many interesting activities on offer and lots of visits, visitors and after school clubs. The school is excellent at helping you keep safe, fit and healthy and the way that it cares for you is outstanding. Mr Vaughan is a terrific headteacher and the teachers, staff and governors are a premiership team in providing a high quality of education for all of you.

There is another fantastic strength that I have not mentioned yet and that is you - the pupils! I thought your behaviour, enthusiasm and desire to do well were all outstanding. Add to this your knowledge about healthy lifestyles and just how well you all get on together and it is true to say you are excellent ambassadors for the school. Well done!

Even outstanding schools like yours can get better so I have asked Mr Vaughan and the teachers to make sure that every opportunity is seized to let you become independent learners and to give you even more responsibilities around the school, for example in your roles as school councillors. You are certainly ready for the challenge! I know you will want to continue playing your part in the success story that is Sacred Heart by working as hard and behaving as well as you do now. I wish you every success in the future. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Yours sincerely

Martin Newell

Lead inspector