

# Sacred Heart RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132728
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	323194
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Les Schubeler

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	72
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Morrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helena McGouran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 September 2007
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Broomfield Avenue Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 8UL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01609 780971
<b>Fax number</b>	01609 780982

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 November 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

When the Sacred Heart RC Primary School was inspected in September 2007, it was given a notice to improve and asked to address issues related to leadership and management, support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, appropriate challenge for able pupils and systems for assessment. It was subsequently visited in May 2008, when it was judged to be making good progress.

## Description of the school

Sacred Heart is a small Roman Catholic primary school serving Northallerton and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language but very few are at an early stage of language acquisition. An interim headteacher took up the post soon after the last inspection until a new headteacher was appointed in June 2008. There are three mixed-age classes. Two of the three class teachers were appointed this year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires a notice to improve. It now provides a satisfactory, and much improved, quality of education. Standards are broadly in line with the national average and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Standards in English have significantly improved since the last inspection and able pupils have raised their level of achievement substantially. This improvement stems directly from a strong emphasis having been placed on the development of pupils' writing skills. Standards in mathematics are not as high as those in English, which are above average. The rate of improvement in mathematics has not been as fast as that in English. More able pupils are doing slightly better than in 2007, but most pupils still have weaknesses, for example in calculation.

The good improvements made since the previous inspection are the direct result of clear direction provided by the recently appointed headteacher, building successfully on the effective changes introduced by the acting headteacher. Decisions are evaluated in terms of their impact on pupils' learning and this is fundamental to the rising standards and increasing rates of progress. Much hard work has gone into ensuring that staffing changes have not slowed the momentum of change. Pupils and staff both contribute to, and benefit from, a positive climate for learning that now pervades the school. Together with improved governance, productive partnerships with other schools and much effective support from the local authority (LA), this has resulted in good self-evaluation, perceptive monitoring and successful strategic planning.

The management of support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, found seriously lacking a year ago, is now effective. The needs of those pupils are clearly identified and effective support programmes now ensure that their progress is on a par with that of their peers. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They pay tribute to the work of the headteacher and are particularly appreciative of the improvements that have been made over the past year. Comments such as, 'The school has come a long way', and 'The school is going from strength to strength' typify their views.

Pupils' good personal development is attributable to good pastoral care. They feel safe in school. Behaviour is good because of consistent management by all staff. Pupils' rapidly developing maturity is a strength of the school. They understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and make a satisfactory contribution to school and community life. Preparation for future study and life in general is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are consistently good features, including class management, clear learning objectives and the use of questioning. There are secure systems in place to assess and track pupils' progress, and the use of such data to set targets for the school is developing well. Target setting for pupils, so that they can measure their own progress and be individually challenged to achieve higher levels, has improved significantly. It has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to, and understanding of, their performance.

The curriculum is satisfactory. New initiatives are beginning to have positive effects on learning. For example, focusing on sentence structure has contributed well to improvements in pupils' literacy skills. A similar focus has been lacking to ensure that pupils make similar rates of progress in mathematics as they have begun to make in English.

The quality of leadership and management at all levels in the school is satisfactory overall. Subject leadership is still at a developmental stage while a largely new team of staff becomes

familiar with management roles. Insufficient monitoring of mathematics, for example, has resulted in a slower rate of improvement. However, all teachers and teaching assistants are working well together with a clear sense of purpose, giving the school a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children have generally entered the school with skills and abilities that broadly match expectations for their age, but this year those skills and abilities are below average. Children make satisfactory progress, with their main strengths in personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Language and mathematical development often lag behind but there are variations in children's starting points from year to year.

Reception children and Key Stage 1 pupils learn together because of the small number of pupils in the school. Relationships are good. The mixed-age class enables younger children to use the Year 1 pupils as role models. As a result, they settle quickly into school routines. They learn from the older pupils how to get on with one another, share and choose without squabbling. Teaching shows a sound understanding of how young children learn, enabling most children to achieve the skills expected by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching assistants work closely with the teachers and make a significant contribution to children's good care. Children benefit from the supportive, cooperative atmosphere in which their welfare is well promoted.

The school's leaders have provided good support during a period of staffing changes, ensuring that leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. There are good links with parents, and high quality portfolios inform parents of the range of activities that children enjoy over a term.

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

- Raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics as has been done in English.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders in the school to monitor and evaluate performance in their subjects.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

At Key Stage 1, standards are generally in line with the national averages in English, mathematics and science. The number of pupils is small and there tend to be variations from year to year. This accounts for the fact that the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in 2007 was higher than average, but no pupils managed to do so in 2008. At Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average overall. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in English exceeded the national average for previous years. Although standards have fallen slightly in mathematics overall, provisional results for 2008 indicate that a higher proportion of pupils reached the higher levels than did previously. Nevertheless, weaknesses for the majority of pupils in calculation and problem-solving remain. The school has improved its support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by identifying their individual needs precisely and providing appropriate help for them. Consequently they make progress in line with their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have responded positively to the many changes introduced in the last 12 months. There has been a significant change in their attitudes to school and their enjoyment of it. They raise their hands above their heads and say they are now 'up here' in contrast to being 'down there' before. They talk enthusiastically of the pride they now take in their work and in presenting it as best they can. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and recognise that adults in the school help them to feel safe. Cultural development through art and creative activities, together with a range of visits and visitors to the school, contributes to the breadth of pupils' experiences. Pupils are beginning to make a constructive contribution to the life of the school. For example, through the school council and other initiatives, where pupils make sure that no one is lonely. The school is inclusive and the strong thread of personal development applies to all pupils including those who are vulnerable or need additional support.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The school has placed a strong focus on improving pupils' writing skills however the impact of teachers' actions has been more effective in English than in mathematics. Positive relationships with staff motivate pupils to learn. The combination of sharply focused teaching, incisive assessment and precise feedback is evident in good lessons. However, these features, which help to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should, do not yet characterise all lessons. Teachers track pupils' progress closely and use this information to plan lessons. The most effective lessons engage pupils' interests, match their abilities, and enable them to make good progress. Pupils are able to discuss their work and are aware of their targets for improvement. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. The role of teaching assistants has developed well and they provide valuable support for pupils' learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

During the past year, the curriculum has been reviewed and reshaped. Planning has begun to take into account the skills pupils need in order to reach the standards expected of their age group. Making more use of information and communication technology (ICT) for research is helping to make learning more enjoyable. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors, and good enrichment through the arts, sport and an introduction to French. Some of these arts and sporting activities involve the local community and so extend pupils' direct experiences beyond the school environment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good pastoral care for all its pupils. Everyone is valued and relationships are good. Pupils new to the school, and in some cases new to the country, are sensitively supported. There is very good support for pupils with emotional difficulties. Well trained

teaching assistants as well as teachers play a major role in helping pupils to understand their feelings and relate to other people. Safeguarding and child protection requirements are fully met. Effective procedures are used to maintain rates of attendance that are above average. Support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. There have been major improvements to the quality of pupils' individual education plans, with precise, challenging and achievable targets.

Academic guidance has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and effective interventions are put in place to address underachievement. Pupils have challenging improvement targets, which the older ones in particular understand well, and these contribute to their accelerating rates of progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Significantly strengthened leadership and management, established since the last full inspection, have galvanised the school and been effective in bringing about improvements. Strong, productive links have been forged with other schools to enhance pupils' learning and to provide valuable training for staff. Currently they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the performance of subjects across the school. Governors are now well informed and have a clearer understanding of how to support the school while holding it to account. Leadership and management have a substantial impact on pupils' learning by ensuring that teachers' planning is securely rooted in an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The introduction of a manageable system to assess and track pupils' progress has heightened teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, improved the quality of teaching, and begun to accelerate progress rates. The school now sets challenging targets but the initiatives have not yet had time to push standards up to the level the school is capable of reaching, particularly in mathematics.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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**

Inspection of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, Northallerton, DL7 8UL

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I inspected your school recently. I would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views about the school. I spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. I came to the conclusion that Sacred Heart no longer requires a notice to improve. It is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features.

Your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you very well. This helps to keep you safe and healthy. You told me that you enjoy school because you all know one another well and because everything is, as you say, 'much, much better' now. You also said there are opportunities to take part in many extra activities that your teachers arrange for you, such as sports, sewing, cookery and dance. All of these activities help to keep school interesting for you. I know you are pleased to have the opportunity to share some of these activities with pupils from other schools.

I know, too, that you are pleased about other improvements that have taken place in the last year or so. You told me that you enjoy your lessons so much more because 'we like a challenge' and your teachers are so helpful. It was very pleasing to see that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you. You told me that behaviour is much better now and you look forward to periods of 'golden time' as a reward. I was pleased to see the older pupils showing kindness to younger children who had minor accidents in the playground.

You are now making better progress in English than in mathematics because your teachers have helped you to concentrate on improving your writing skills. Therefore, I have asked your teachers to now help you make better progress in mathematics. You could help too by making sure that you pay careful attention to the advice you are given. I have also asked that teachers responsible for particular subjects check the progress being made in all classes in the school.

I am sure that you will carry on enjoying school. Most of all, I hope that you will continue to work hard and help all the staff to make Sacred Heart an even better school in the future.