

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101338
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323453
Inspection date	25 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	402
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 Kevin O'Callaghan
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Ruane
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	2 Oakleigh Park South Whetstone London N20 9JU
Telephone number	020 8445 3854

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	25 November 2008
Inspection number	323453

Fax number

020 8445 0862

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of leadership and management on the drive to raise standards and achievement, with a particular focus on mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and writing across the school; how effective teaching and learning and academic guidance are in raising standards and the progress of all pupils; and how good is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work, including lessons; discussions with the chair of governors, members of staff and pupils; and the questionnaires returned by parents. 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart is a larger than average size primary school. Boys outnumber girls. There is EYFS provision in two Reception classes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. There is a higher than average percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which includes a group with speech, language and communication difficulties, is average and those who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The school has awards for Active mark and Investors in People. It also has the International Schools Award.

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 of which pupils and parents are exceedingly proud. Typical of the views of parents are, 'This is a fantastic school - the communication between the school and parents is exceptional'; and 'We as a family feel we are very lucky to belong to such a wonderful school'. It is a most effective school where pupils' achievement and personal development are outstanding. This is due to the school's outstanding pastoral care, outstanding creative curriculum, excellent teaching and excellent leadership and management. It is a truly inclusive school where careful attention to the needs and interests of all pupils results in the school being so successful.

Children get off to a flying start in the EYFS because provision here is outstanding. Staff devote their attention successfully to meeting children's individual needs so that all, including those who face particular learning difficulties in speech, language and communication difficulties, achieve exceptionally well, often making excellent progress from their various starting points. During their time in school, the progress of pupils in the EYFS and in Key Stage 2 is excellent and never less than good in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high. Even so, the school is not complacent and a recent focus on pupils' writing across the school and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 has helped raise achievement in these areas so that it is now excellent. This was confirmed from the school's recent assessment, the work in pupils' books and lessons observations during the inspection.

The school's Catholic values underpin successfully the outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive. The comment made by one parent sums up the views held by many, that 'the sense of community caring and nurturing is very real in this school'. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and children build strong and trusting relationships quickly. They say they that adults listen to them and respond quickly to their needs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They show high levels of respect for each other, they act very safely and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils make particularly good use of the sporting activities the school offers. They understand very well the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. Attendance has improved and is now excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school greatly and understand well the benefits of taking on responsibilities. For example, the Year 5 and 6 pupils enjoy being 'Problem Solvers', people to whom the younger children can turn to. Pupils feel that the school listens to them and they are proud of being instrumental in some of the improvements in the playground. When asked how their school might be improved, one pupil spoke for many others when he said, 'I wouldn't change a thing'.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic learners because they find lessons exciting and interesting. One pupil commented, 'What I like best about the school is the way we learn in a fun way'. Teachers have high expectations and make lessons challenging. They use questions and discussions very effectively to extend pupils' understanding and to make them think for themselves. Pupils are guided extremely well, so that they know how well they are achieving and what they have to do to improve their work. This active involvement of pupils in their own learning has played a large part in raising standards. Pupils greatly enjoy discussing their ideas with each other and assessing how well they have learned their work. These kinds of activities, together with the pupils' excellent skills in literacy, mathematics and their outstanding personal development and well-being, provide a powerful basis for pupils' future learning. The outstanding curriculum is very creative and is further enriched by many exciting

activities, such as learning about what life was like in World War II from a visiting speaker. The pupils talked most enthusiastically about the extensive range of clubs on offer after school, from Spanish to street dancing.

There is no doubt that the leadership and management of the school have played a large part in its success. The dedicated headteacher, very ably supported by a talented leadership team, has instilled a culture of pride and self-reflection amongst the staff. School self-evaluation is accurate and, increasingly, subject leaders are becoming more involved in holding all staff accountable for the progress of the pupils, resulting in their improving achievement. The school encourages its teachers to take on the role of subject leaders. Many of these subject leaders are relatively new in post and the school recognises the need for their further development. Parents appreciate the 'Parents' Forum', where their views can be discussed and many are proud to have the opportunity to support their children's education in ways such as coming into school to help with reading. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are involved fully in evaluating the quality of provision and in holding the school to account for its work. The school's capacity for improvement based on the progress pupils make and the improvements since the previous inspection is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter Reception with a wide range of knowledge and skills that are overall slightly above that expected for their age. They all settle quickly and develop an appetite for learning, due to the simulating environment and the high quality care and support. Parents are most appreciative of this, exemplified by the comment, 'My child has only been at the school for 2 months, but I am really happy with how he has settled in and the amount he has learnt already - it's incredible'. Children make outstanding progress to reach well above expected levels by the end of the Reception. Excellent transition arrangements ensure that their progress continues to be well documented when they enter Year 1. Teaching is of very high quality and carefully planned activities spark the children's curiosity and stimulate their learning well. Independent learning skills are developed well through a careful balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities, both indoors and outdoors. Teaching assistants are well trained and work successfully with small groups and individuals to ensure all children's needs are effectively met. Role-play was seen as its best during the inspection, as children enjoyed 'travelling on the underground train, after the mechanic repaired a fault on the line'. Leadership is excellent, with the children's progress meticulously and imaginatively recorded. This is used particularly well to plan the next steps in their learning and has resulted in significant improvements in achievement in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. Welfare procedures are securely in place and result in children who feel happy and safe as they learn. This contributes greatly to their outstanding personal development, giving them the best possible start in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the roles of the middle leaders, especially those who are new in post.

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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

08 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, London, N20 9JU

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and we are very grateful for the excellent contribution you made to the inspection. You believe that your school is an excellent one that 'makes learning fun' and we agree with you.

Here are some of the things that we particularly liked.

- You behave exceptionally well and you are most polite.
- You love coming to school and you are very keen to learn.
- You look after each other well, in roles such as 'Problem Solvers'.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent leaders.
- Your teachers make your lesson exciting and listen carefully to your ideas.
- The adults in school make sure that you are very safe and well cared for.

We have asked your headteacher to:

- help the teachers who look after the different subject areas to do their job even more efficiently.

You have your part to play too, please continue to work hard and keep enjoying your lessons!

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector