

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102668
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	323673
Inspection date	7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	444
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	Mrs S Harvey
Headteacher	Mrs I Pinner
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Burlington Road New Malden KT3 4ND
Telephone number	020 8942 0215

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	7 July 2009
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Fax number

020 8336 0941

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues in particular.

- Are effective strategies in place to raise attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 and in science in Key Stage 2?
- Is pupils' progress carefully assessed and tracked effectively to guide lesson-planning so that pupils are suitably challenged and involved in their own learning?
- Is strategic planning clear, appropriately structured and regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness in moving the school forward?

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussion with staff, governors and pupils also contributed to the judgements. 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than other primary schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language are much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need is smaller than the national average. The difficulties and/or disabilities of pupils principally comprise moderate learning difficulties but there are some pupils with sight problems. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two classes in Reception. The Kidz Klub, which uses the school premises, is privately managed. The school holds Eco Bronze and Healthy School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sacred Heart is a good school where pupils achieve well because they are well taught and enjoy learning. A loving Catholic ethos is underpinned by a high level of pastoral care; every child is valued. A large majority of parents are pleased with the school and the quality of education that their children receive. One parent wrote, 'My son goes to school happily every day. He's made lots of friends there and fantastic progress. He loves the teachers and there is nothing he would change.' The new headteacher has, in a very short time, gained the confidence of staff and parents and the affection of pupils. Areas for improvement have been accurately assessed and there is a new team spirit and impetus in the school to drive it forward and raise standards further.

Pupils make a good start to their learning in Nursery and Reception and enter Year 1 with standards that are similar to those found nationally. Current assessment test data show that standards in reading and writing are average and are above average in mathematics. Good progress continues through the school and at the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English and mathematics but average in science. Progress in science remains a focus for improvement with links developed with the local secondary school, staff training provision and more stimulating activities in lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make the same good progress as other pupils because their needs are carefully assessed and good support is provided by well-trained teaching assistants.

The curriculum provides a balanced and broad range of learning experiences for pupils. One pupil said, 'I really love my school because we learn a lot and our teachers make learning interesting.' Information and communication technology (ICT) has been improved and extends learning through other subjects in the curriculum. Resources for ICT, although adequate, are to be expanded to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills further. The school's focus on improving writing has been successful. Similar initiatives to help raise attainment in science and for girls in mathematics are showing early signs of success. The linking of different subjects to provide more interest for pupils is improving and the school recognises that it needs to do more in this area. Creative subjects, especially music which is a strength of the school, are well planned. Learning is enriched by a good range of clubs and out-of-class visits that take learning beyond the classroom and extend pupils' horizons. The school's Eco Bronze award reflects its great enthusiasm for plants and growing things, from runner beans in Reception to the well-managed school garden cared for by the garden club.

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are attentive and enthusiastic in lessons, especially when they are motivated by interesting work and fun activities. Good relationships help create a positive learning climate and well-paced lessons, based on the teachers' good subject knowledge, contributes to the good progress pupils make through the school. A more consistent and detailed approach to assessing the progress pupils make has been introduced to provide teachers with an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving. Some teachers are applying their new skills in the use of assessment data well so that activities in lessons are carefully matched to the different abilities of pupils and ensure they are suitably challenged with work that stretches them. This is not consistent throughout the school. The same is true for the use of assessment information to set targets to guide pupils in the next steps in their learning. Pupils do not always find targets helpful and they are not always a focal point to guide them academically to move forward and make better progress. Marking is of consistently good quality.

Pupils enjoy praise for the work they have done but also say they find the comments in their books that show how and where a piece of work can be improved helpful.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave safely and have a well-developed understanding of how to stay healthy, which is reflected in the Healthy School Award. They love their school, as is shown by their good and prompt attendance. Pupils play happily together when at leisure and in lessons most behave well and remain on task. They work sensibly alone and in small groups and love to share ideas. The behaviour of some pupils can be challenging, but this is well managed and does not interrupt the learning of their classmates for any significant time. Bullying is rare and pupils know they must report unacceptable behaviour. They also know they can share problems and have confidence that all adults will help them. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and deeply rooted in the strong Catholic ethos in the school. The pastoral care that pupils receive is very good. All aspects of safeguarding and pupils' welfare are secure and supported by a range of appropriate policies.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership which has brought about rapid improvements in the school and the senior leadership team are good role models, motivating staff and leading by example. The headteacher has accurately assessed the strengths and areas for development in the school and set in place important initiatives to raise standards further. A small minority of parents were concerned that their views were not considered by the school. This was not substantiated during the inspection and was contradicted by many parents who wrote positively about recent improvements in the school. One wrote, 'The parents at the school are much more involved with the introduction of: parent consultation group, massive improvement to parents evenings, foundation stage literacy and numeracy talks, parent-craft sessions, sessions on how to help your child at home.' Another wrote, 'Have noticed lots of improvements in the last few years, including free clubs, increased opportunities to get involved in music, drama and sport. Also consultation with parents has increased.'

Middle leaders, some new to their role, are rapidly gaining skills and confidence to promote their subjects, monitor improvements and raise standards. Not all middle leaders are playing a full part in supporting senior leaders and managers to drive the school forward because they are not yet effective in their roles. Governors are very supportive but do not provide equal challenge. Some of the governors are new to their role and all recognise the importance of improving their skills to ask searching questions so they can play a full part in evaluating and monitoring improvements. The good progress that pupils make and their good personal development ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Community cohesion is carefully planned and monitored, and is reflective of the school and its community. Resources and school facilities are good and continuing to improve and the school provides good value for money. The school's self-evaluation is secure and it has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills ranging from those broadly typical for children of similar age to skills that are just below expectations, notably in elements of literacy and numeracy. They settle quickly and happily because they are well cared for and good routines are established. Children develop confidence, learn to share well and are encouraged to be independent. They learn from a stimulating mix of well-planned activities both in the classroom and the recently improved outdoor learning area. For example, a large trough of runner beans was planted by the children and linked to a literacy focus of Jack and the Beanstalk. Now the beans are growing

children are waiting gleefully for the giant to appear at the top of the beanstalk. Children have good opportunities to initiate activities for themselves and learn through exploration as well as structured adult-led learning tasks. Teaching is good but sometimes opportunities are missed to help stimulate independent learning by children. Children's progress is carefully monitored and their parents are kept well informed of their development. One parent wrote, 'My son has developed from a very shy child into a confident one. They [the staff] proactively engage parents in workshops/coffee mornings where they demonstrate some of the key teachings so we can compliment what they teach at home.' Leadership and management are good and staff work as a close team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use made of assessment information by teachers so that the tasks planned in lessons are suitably challenging and the targets set for pupils make clear the next steps in their learning.
- Share existing good practice among subject leaders in directing and monitoring their subjects to help raise standards further.
- Improve the skills of governors to ensure they offer the school consistent challenge.

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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?	2
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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

17 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, New Malden, KT3 4ND

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a very busy time at the end of term, so as well as coming to your lessons, we enjoyed seeing some of the Year 6 cycling proficiency session and a small part of their end-of-year production. You were very friendly and your helpful approach made our visit very pleasant. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, looking at your work and finding out the things you enjoy most about school. You told us you love your school and you learn a lot. We agree with you that yours is a good school.

We saw that the majority of you behave well in lessons and around the school. You are enthusiastic about learning and want to do as well as you can. Your teachers make your lessons interesting and enjoyable. We saw that the adults in your school take good care of you and you know you can go to them with any problems you may have. You understand about keeping safe and what you need to do to be healthy. We think your school is well led and managed and that is why you enjoy learning and make good progress.

We have suggested three things to make your school even better.

- We have asked your teachers to use what they know about the progress you are making very carefully. This will help them to plan activities in your lessons that stretch you so you make even better progress. It will also help them to set clear targets for you to help you see for yourself what you have to learn next.
- Some of your teachers look after the subjects you are taught. We have asked them to make sure they work hard to improve their subjects and keep a close watch on how they are developing, so they can be sure you are making the best progress possible.
- We have also asked the governors to learn more about the work of the school, ask lots of questions and keep a close check on the new things that are happening.

We know you will continue to work hard and help your teachers to make your school even better. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Norma Ball

Lead Inspector