

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105243
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	324189
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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)	303
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	Fr Michael Johnnett
Headteacher	Mr Martin Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Central Drive Westhoughton Bolton Lancashire BL5 3DU
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School is larger than average. It includes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It serves a predominantly socially advantaged area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number of pupils of differing ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that it provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Their personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school, have a good range of after-school activities, and their attendance is above average. They have confidence in their teachers and feel safe. Pupils benefit from healthy menus and snacks and take the many opportunities offered for exercise. They make a good contribution to the school community by undertaking many duties. For example, among a range of responsibilities, older pupils help to set out playground toys for the younger pupils and act as peace garden monitors. Pupils are adequately prepared for adult life by working cooperatively together, though inconsistent progress in developing basic skills hampers some pupils' achievement.

Pupils make satisfactory progress. They enter the school with skills that are generally at levels expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in the EYFS because teaching is good. Many children enter Year 1 at levels above those typically expected. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average, which represents satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. In the 2007 national tests for Year 6, while standards were above average, pupils' achievement was satisfactory when taking into account their starting points. The results indicated a dip in those achieved in previous years. The school assessment records clearly show that this lack of progress took place in lower Key Stage 2 and, although the school did not identify this weakness promptly, the school's leaders have now taken effective action to improve teaching and tackle underachievement. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good, because teachers do not consistently use the outcomes of assessment to challenge pupils' learning effectively. Recent assessments of pupils' achievement show that there were improvements at the end of Year 6 in 2008, compared to the previous year, with a larger proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science. Standards are above average and meet the school's targets. However, insufficient challenge for pupils means that they do not achieve as well as they can.

The school places great emphasis on the personal development of its pupils. Care and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of good quality. Clear school rules are consistently applied to guide pupils' personal development. However, pupils are not always given sufficient guidance individually about what they need to do to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The governors are an active presence in school and governance is sound. The school has adequately addressed issues raised in the previous inspection and has plans in place to extend outdoor play provision further. The good quality of the EYFS, the recent reversal of the dip in standards in Key Stage 2 and a clear focus on improvement from the recently formed leadership team indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the EYFS is good. Children arrive in the Reception classes from a range of pre-school settings, and most are achieving within national expectations. Through good teaching they move on with their learning at a good pace, so that by the start of Year 1 most are working above typically expected levels. The thorough induction arrangements help children to settle quickly. During this induction, parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's introduction to education, and this results in strong links being formed with parents. Children

make good friends, treat each other and adults with respect and become happy learners. Teachers and support staff, led by a very forward thinking coordinator, are managed enthusiastically as they all continually strive to improve the provision. Identification of 'the next step in learning' for individual children is in place, and thorough observation and assessment of children informs this. There is good teamwork within the whole EYFS team and good procedures are in place to ensure that care and welfare have a high priority. Children are aware of healthy eating habits, they enjoy their fruit, are eager to run around, and also understand the need to wear appropriate clothing when outside. Teachers' planning and assessment take account of individual needs and all the areas of the EYFS curriculum are covered. The indoor areas are interesting and provide a relevant and appropriate focus on personal development and basic skills, as well as the wider curriculum. Very thorough and careful planning ensures that the very best use is made of the outside area, and this, together with many outside visits, ensures that children receive a wide range of experiences during their time in the EYFS.

What the school should do to improve further

n Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently at least good, so that the rate of pupils' progress is sustained in all year groups.

n Make rigorous use of available information to identify and tackle any underachievement promptly.

n Provide clearer guidance to individual pupils on what they need to do to improve.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory, though progress is inconsistent across the school. Achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory because the support they receive adequately addresses their learning needs. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. The 2007 national assessments in Year 2 showed above average overall standards, although relatively few pupils reached the highest levels of attainment. Latest assessment information indicates that standards were above average in 2008. In the 2007 national tests in Year 6, standards were above average but had dipped from previous years. A focus on developing pupils' understanding of number and application of key literacy skills, with pupils working in small groups, has led to an improvement in standards in mathematics in the current year. Teacher assessments in Year 6 show that current standards are above the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils consider that school is good because, 'The staff work hard to help us, and teachers make lessons fun.' Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They form good relationships with each other and adults, and collaborate well. They show confidence and a willingness to engage in conversation with visitors. Girls and boys of differing abilities work and play well together. Behaviour is good in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Pupils have a clear sense of how to live healthily, and this is reflected in the meals and snacks

available for them. Pupils act sensibly and safely. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils are rightly proud of the contribution they make to their community; 'gardeners' from Year 6 take care of their 'seedlings' in the Reception class. As they mature, pupils take responsibility for others through the many tasks they fulfil across the school. They have a very strong voice through the 'Pupil Voice' school council, and have raised money for various charities. Members of the council have been instrumental in designing various improvements to the school environment. These include a peace garden and playground markings. Recently, the school was awarded UNICEF's Rights Respecting School status Level One. The pupils are now very eager to gain Level Two.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Relationships are positive, school rules are consistently applied and so behaviour is good. Shortcomings in teaching in lower Key Stage 2 over time are now being addressed, and a reorganisation of staffing and an effective programme of staff training are bringing about improvements. The most effective teaching is characterised by the teaching assistants being clear about how to support pupils, a range of approaches that match learning opportunities to the specific needs of pupils, and good pace and duration of learning activities. Where teaching is less effective there are few opportunities for pupils to work independently, they are unclear about what they need to do to succeed and are not sufficiently challenged. Teachers mark work regularly, and some give helpful suggestions about how pupils can improve. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily and promotes their personal development well. There is sufficient focus on literacy and numeracy skills for most, but planning to meet the needs of all pupils is not consistent throughout the school. Improved provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has had a positive impact on pupils' skills in this area. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and citizenship is well established. As a result, pupils are prepared well to make informed choices about their personal safety and well-being. The school is effectively beginning to plan links between subjects and to provide opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. A good range of sports and non-sporting activities enriches the curriculum during and after school. The school has made good progress towards introducing French to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care for pupils is good. Academic support and guidance are not as strong, which is why this aspect is judged to be satisfactory, rather than good, overall. The care shown to pupils is rooted in the school's strong Christian teaching, which is praised by parents and pupils. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children's welfare is in safe hands. The school follows policies and procedures to justify that confidence, and all statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Adults do all that they can to accommodate vulnerable pupils, including those who join from other schools during the school year. Pupils are given clear guidance about behaviour

and relationships, and attendance is above average. Reviews of pupils' progress, to check that they are on track to meet targets, are too infrequent. There is good practice developing whereby pupils are engaged in setting targets for improvement, but this is not shared by all teachers and it is not uncommon for pupils to be confused about what they need to do to improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is successful in promoting good personal development for its pupils. The headteacher provides clear direction and good leadership. However, actions to address underachievement in the lower Key Stage 2 over a period of time, clearly shown in the school's records, were not taken promptly enough, leading to a fall in standards. This is now being addressed and, consequently, teaching and standards have improved in Key Stage 2. The recently reorganised leadership team ensures that the school's work is monitored regularly and is fairly accurate in its self-evaluation. The school works effectively with its local community and, in partnership with its local community college, is successfully offering learning opportunities for adults to enable them to support their children's learning. Strong links with a community in Palestine contribute to pupils' understanding of the global community. Governors are actively involved in school and have a sound understanding of its work. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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 Roman Catholic Primary School, Bolton,
BL5 3DU

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in meetings with the children who spoke about your school. We were particularly impressed by your behaviour, your good attendance and the way so many of you join in the wide range of school activities. We enjoyed your assembly about the importance of helping your neighbours. You show how much you care for others through your links with people in Palestine.

Yours is a satisfactory school. There are good things about it but some things could be even better. We agree with you and your parents that the school takes good care of you. There is always an adult in class to give you extra help when you need it and help you get on. You are making satisfactory progress in your work but some of you could do even better.

We have suggested that the staff do these things to improve your learning.

- Make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best.
- Look more closely at how well you are learning to identify what you need to learn next.
- Give clear advice to each one of you, so that you know exactly what you need to do to improve.