

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106643
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	324436
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	157
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 G Goddard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss M Curran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2006
<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>	Lockwood Road Goldthorpe Rotherham South Yorkshire S63 9JY

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 February 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324436

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small school serves an area of some social and economic disadvantage. It has classes for Nursery and Reception age children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is part of a federation with two other Catholic primary schools in the area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is below average, with a small number who do not speak English as their first language. The school holds the Healthy Schools Bronze Award, Activemark, the FA Standard Charter Mark, and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. It has definite strengths in the excellent care, guidance and support it provides for pupils' pastoral and academic progress, the good progress all pupils consistently make, both academically and pastorally, and the clear and forthright leadership of the headteacher.

When children join the Nursery, their knowledge, skills and understanding are below what is typical for their age. Many have particularly low language and communication skills, and most have less well-developed personal and social skills. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children get off to a flying start. When they move into Year 1, their standards are broadly average. Good foundations are laid in Key Stage 1. Pupils learn to work collaboratively, come to understand tolerance and mutual respect, and reach average standards in writing, reading and mathematics. From the start of Year 3, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their standards are above average and achievement is good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, and benefits from the caring ethos, which pervades the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Spiritual, moral and social development are outstanding, as demonstrated through their politeness, consideration and appreciation of others' efforts. These are hallmarks of pupils' consistent excellent behaviour throughout the school. Cultural development is satisfactory. They have a sound understanding of the wider multicultural world in which they live. It reflects the satisfactory provision the school makes for promoting community cohesion beyond the local area.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and other adults are deeply committed to providing a safe and happy environment for learning. The very best teaching is dynamic and exciting; much is good. This ensures that pupils achieve well. However, in some lessons learning slows as teachers miss opportunities to get pupils to think for themselves, or to allow them to work independently.

The curriculum is good. It is kept under regular review to make sure that the changing needs of pupils are met effectively. The school is not afraid of learning from others to help improve the progress its pupils make. A wide variety of visits and visitors bring classroom work to life, and widen the learning horizons of pupils.

The quality of the care, guidance and support which the school provides for pupils is outstanding. Safeguarding is robust and has high priority. The school is exceptionally good at providing a supportive and caring environment in which pupils become well-rounded, confident and mature individuals. Rigorous pastoral and academic assessment systems track all aspects of pupils' progress. These ensure that the right level of guidance and support is provided to ensure that pupils reach the challenging targets they are set.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and has built a good team spirit in this happy school, which operates smoothly on a day to day basis. Staff morale is high, professional confidence is rising. The school's self-evaluation is clear and largely accurate if a little modest. Some middle managers do not have enough opportunities to make checks on the progress of pupils. The school has successfully addressed all its previous weaknesses and has good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children start in Nursery with skills below those typical for their age. Their communication skills and their ability to share and behave well in a group are particularly weak. All children settle quickly into school life because they are well supported and cared for. Very close links with parents underpin this. Once settled in, children make good progress. Teaching is good. Adults get to know the children quickly, they promptly and accurately assess their learning needs, and ensure that work is planned very closely to help them move forward rapidly. Children quickly build their communication skills, and learn to work and play together effectively. A good balance between teacher-led activities and activities that the children choose for themselves keeps levels of motivation and interest high. This ensures that learning is good and children achieve well. Staff are adept at taking advantage of situations to broaden children's learning experiences. Children's 'All my own work' booklets are shared with parents who also contribute supporting evidence. This excellent practice creates a clear understanding of children's progress and is typical of strong links between home and school. Leadership and management are good. Early Years Foundation Stage staff and Key Stage 1 teachers hold regular joint planning meetings. This ensures that children move from Reception class to Year 1 smoothly and easily, maintaining their consistent development. Some written policies and documents, in relation to welfare requirements, to back up what happens in practice are not yet completed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching consistently provides opportunities for pupils to be independent learners.
- Ensure that all middle leaders have sufficient opportunities for checking on the progress pupils make.
- Ensure that the school's provision for community cohesion includes the wider perspectives of the United Kingdom and globally.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

When pupils start Year 1, their standards are broadly average. However, because of relatively small cohort sizes, standards can fluctuate from year to year, sometimes widely. At the end of Year 2 in 2008, standards were broadly average. For these pupils, this represented good progress. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007, results were well above average across all subjects. Standards were not quite as high at the end of 2008 but all the school's challenging targets were exceeded, and pupils had made good progress. Inspection evidence shows that progress for all pupils continues to be good in each year group. No group of pupils underachieves. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, as do the small number of pupils learning English as an additional language.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. This is the result of the very good role models adults provide for pupils in terms of patience, respect and tolerance. Pupils say they feel secure and safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of how to adopt safe practices because of a good personal, social and health education curriculum and strong

links with outside agencies such as the police, fire services and school nurse. They are confident to express their views. They are insistent that bullying is rare, and they know what to do if it does occur. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles; most are active and regular participants in the wide range of sporting activities available to them. Many older pupils take on key roles of responsibility within school: as members of the active and energetic school council; as first aiders; as road safety officers; and as playground buddies. Pupils have a strong voice in the school. They choose the charities they generously support. The work of the school council has led to a number of improvements to the school grounds. Because standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and progress is good, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A notable feature of all lessons is the excellent mutually respectful relationships between pupils and adults. The best lessons are characterised by tightly planned tasks which encourage pupils very successfully to think for themselves. In these lessons, pupils have many opportunities to engage in learning activities without direct supervision, often working in small groups to develop their ideas. They like taking on this responsibility, and with their very good attitudes to learning, make rapid progress. On other occasions, for example when the introduction to the lesson is overlong, pupils have less time to be independent learners and their progress slows. Learning activities are set at different levels so that work is well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers and active classroom assistants check unobtrusively on what pupils are doing, keeping them focused on explicit learning objectives, and thus ensuring that they achieve well. Marking is regular and celebrates the good work pupils have done.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Detailed planning ensures that mixed-age classes do not repeat previous work. Throughout the school there is a consistent focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Very recent changes have been made to the way subjects are linked together. These are increasingly giving pupils opportunities to take the skills they have learned in one subject, and apply or develop them in another. Pupils enjoy this way of working and talk enthusiastically about their learning activities. The comment, 'Learning is fun because it is always different', typically illustrates pupils' attitudes towards the new developments. Pupils and parents appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities on offer in school. These are well attended and enrich pupils' personal development. Close links with external partners and agencies have helped the school build its 'Peace Garden'. Here, pupils are able to spend quiet moments reflecting, as well as using the space as a focus for learning outdoors.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The school takes its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils' welfare seriously. It meets current government requirements. Staff know pupils very well, and make every effort to ensure that

their pastoral needs are met. This personal knowledge is supplemented by an excellent system for identifying and following up any out of character behaviours which pupils might display. The system is explicitly focused on the five aspects of 'Every Child Matters', helps keep individual pupils safe, and gives assistance and support to families experiencing difficulties. Pupils and parents recognise this, and appreciate the support they receive when it is needed. This strong commitment to the care of every pupil is a thread which runs through the school. It has created an environment in which pupils feel confident and secure, and in which they can flourish personally and academically. The school has excellent links with parents, outside professionals and other agencies. In addition, the school has robust systems to assess and track pupils' academic progress throughout school. The information generated is accurate and reliable, and is used effectively by teachers to plan work which meets pupils' learning needs well. Targets for literacy and numeracy are well established, and clearly understood by pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully built a culture of continuous improvement which is shared by all adults in the school. Staff morale is good, and everyone is aware of their part in making the work of the school effective, which includes setting challenging but realistic targets for each pupil, as well as maintaining a happy and safe learning environment. School self-evaluation is accurate. It is based upon objective regular and robust lesson monitoring which has a clear focus on learning. In this very inclusive school, leaders assertively tackle discrimination and ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed. This aspect of the school's work is good. Some middle leaders are beginning to play a more active role in checking on the effectiveness of learning in their areas, though not all of them have sufficient opportunity to do so. The school makes satisfactory provision for community cohesion. The school has a strong influence within its local community. Its strategy for raising pupils' awareness of the wider world, in the United Kingdom and beyond, has yet to be fully implemented. Governance is good. The governing body is deeply committed to ensuring that the federation of which the school is a part is successful. Members are active in supporting the school, ensure fairness and equality for all pupils, and are very aware of the apparent inconsistencies which relatively small cohorts of pupils can bring. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Areas identified for development have been addressed. New initiatives, such as changing the curriculum to ensure that pupils can practise newly learned skills, have been introduced successfully. The school has good capacity to improve further.



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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	3
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	2
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 Catholic Primary School, Rotherham, S63 9JY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were very impressed with your excellent manners, and the very positive way you get on with each other.

We found that Sacred Heart is a good and improving school which has the following strengths.

- The excellent way in which the staff look after each one of you.
- The good progress you make year after year in both your learning and your personal development.
- The very determined and skilful leadership of your headteacher.

However, we also found that Sacred Heart could do better in some other areas, which would help you to make even faster progress. These are:

- make sure all lessons provide opportunities for you to work independently
- ensure that more adults take responsibility for checking on how well you are progressing
- ensure that you have a clearer picture of how people in other parts of the United Kingdom and the world live and work together.

You can help the school to gain these improvements by continuing to work hard in lessons, and by staying the happy, enthusiastic and friendly young people you already are.

Good luck to you all for the future.