

Sacred Heart Primary School, Battersea

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 131520 |
| Local Authority | Wandsworth |
| Inspection number | 328604 |
| Inspection dates | 13–14 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Raminder Arora |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 446 |
| 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 | Cllr John Hallmark |
| Headteacher | Mr Jared Brading |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 January 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Este Road London SW11 2TD |
| Telephone number | 020 7223 5611 |

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| Age group | 3–11 |
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Fax number

020 7801 0402

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sacred Heart is a large Catholic primary school serving a diverse community. A higher than average proportion of pupils receive free school meals. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those new to learning English are much higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Their difficulties relate mostly to speech and language or moderate learning needs. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at unusual times has increased in the last two years. The school has gained a number of awards including Investors in People and Healthy School. There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children in the two Nursery classes start on a part-time basis, and attend full time in the term before they move to the two Reception classes. The new headteacher has been in post for four terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school is improving rapidly and already has a number of outstanding features. Excellent work from the headteacher, supported by his very committed leadership team, is instrumental in the success of the school. Pupils flourish and mature socially and academically within a supportive and caring learning environment. The school is effective in overcoming potential barriers to learning, such as those faced by the pupils who join and leave the school outside normal times. The outstanding pastoral care and excellent support and guidance systems ensure that all pupils have equal chances to succeed. The vast majority of parents have nothing but praise for the school. One wrote, 'Our children are privileged to be part of Sacred Heart.' Pupils are happy, extremely well behaved and hard-working. This has a positive impact on their academic progress. They fully understand how to lead healthy lives, keep safe and avoid danger. Their well-developed teamwork skills and secure grounding in the basic skills stand them in good stead for their future education.

Pupils' achievement across the school is good. From starting points that are well below those usually found, children make good progress in the EYFS. This continues through the school, with pupils reaching standards that are broadly average by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. The provisional results for 2008 suggest that standards are above average in mathematics, and average in English and science, by the end of Year 6. More pupils than in 2007 have secured higher levels and exceeded the targets set for them, especially in mathematics and science. On entry to Year 3, this cohort of pupils were below the national average, so their standards by Year 6 showed good achievement. The standards have improved since the last inspection due to the much better, good quality of teaching and learning, allied to a good curriculum enriched with an outstanding range of clubs and activities. However, in Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is still relatively low. In Key Stage 2, it is lower in English than in mathematics and science. The school is aware that the improvement in writing has not been as good as in other areas, particularly in raising the proportions of pupils gaining higher levels. The targets set are challenging, and the analysis of pupils' current progress indicates that they are on track to achieve these. Pupils with learning difficulties and those identified as vulnerable make good progress because their needs are carefully identified, and extra support very effectively organised. Pupils learning English as a new language perform in line with their peers. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully and sensitively adapt their methods to support the needs of these pupils.

The improvements above stem from the inspirational leadership of the new headteacher, well assisted by the deputy headteacher and the rest of the management team. Together they ensure that all staff are clearly focused on the learning and progress of each individual. Teachers deliver mainly good and sometimes outstanding lessons that help to promote good learning. Pupils are well involved in assessing their own learning. Teachers carefully track pupils' progress and set appropriate targets for improvement. However, not all teachers focus on individual targets in their marking sufficiently to aid pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

The leadership and management of the school are good; leaders and managers are clearly focused on raising standards and continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding because very positive relationships are established with the parents and different communities, both locally and abroad. Governors play an active role and keep in close touch with the developments.

Considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection and the capacity to improve still further is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

School assessment data show that more than two thirds of children start in the Nursery with levels of skills well below those expected of three-year-olds. An increasing number of children need extra support in language and communication, in mathematical understanding and in developing their social skills. Nevertheless, most children make good progress because teaching is consistently good and well focused on meeting their diverse needs. A warm and welcoming environment stimulates children to learn and make progress. Most children are working at the levels expected of them by the end of Reception, although skills in language and mathematics remain below those expected for children of this age.

Activities are well planned and very well resourced, so that all children have opportunities to explore and to develop their independence. Very good use is made of the outstanding outdoor area to provide children with an exciting range of activities that enables them to work safely, learn to share, and take turns.

The staff team is well led by the recently appointed EYFS leader, who has been the driving force behind the rapid changes taking place. Many parents wrote to express their appreciation of the good start to their children's life in school. Children clearly enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and at ease, and good induction procedures ensure they settle quickly to class routines. Groups of children are carefully organised and allocated key workers, who support and guide them effectively. All adults place a strong emphasis on developing social and emotional skills that foster very good relationships between children themselves and all adults.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in Years 2 and 6, particularly in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching through better use of individual targets in marking to enable pupils to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good across both key stages. Standards have risen, and the overall results clearly mark a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Standards for both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. Results for Year 2 in 2008 show girls outperforming boys, but there is evidence from books, lessons and assessment data that the action taken to improve boys' performance is having a good impact. Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in mathematics. Achievement is good in Key Stage 2 in relation to pupils' starting points of below average when they entered Year 3. The unvalidated results show marked improvement, particularly in the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in mathematics and science. However, there are still not enough pupils gaining the higher levels in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, fewer pupils attain higher levels in English. There is a continual focus on standards in writing across the school, and effective measures are in place to enable the higher-attaining pupils to gain more higher levels. All different groups of pupils achieve well. This is because their needs are carefully identified and very well provided for.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The various aspects of spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils are outstanding because they respond exceptionally well to the strong values the school promotes. This can be seen in pupils' very positive attitudes and strong relationships at all levels. Pupils contribute very well to a happy and harmonious community. They respect the cultural backgrounds and beliefs of others and enjoy learning about different countries and customs. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and this reflects their immense enjoyment of school. They understand how to stay safe and know who to go to if they have any concerns. Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities around the school and conscientiously carry out their duties as members of the school council and as playground buddies. One commented, 'Our job is to make every child happy.' Pupils also contribute well to the wider community, for example through supporting local and international charities and taking part in community events such as Fire Station Fayre. Pupils are very proud of their work in raising funds for charity. Sacred Heart's Healthy School award reflects pupils' excellent understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle. As one young pupil said, 'Fruit makes you healthy inside and exercise develops your muscles.' Pupils' excellent personal qualities, coupled with the good progress they make in basic skills, ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Although the majority of teaching is good, and a minority of lessons are outstanding, the quality does vary. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high and the pace of work is good, which means that pupils learn quickly. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable, and planned well to meet pupils' individual needs. The teaching assistants provide very effective extra support to those who need it. Relationships are strong, and pupils are well motivated to work hard as a result. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves and talk about their learning, which helps their understanding. In one lesson observed, the excellent opportunities provided for speaking and listening through discussion and role play were readily taken as pupils engaged in preparation for a stimulating task of writing a letter in order to win a competition. In a small minority of lessons, however, the pace of learning is sometimes slow and the work not fully matched to ability. Nearly all lessons provide well-planned opportunities for pupils' self-evaluation. However, teachers do not make enough use of pupils' individual targets in marking to tell them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum serves pupils well in meeting their needs. It makes a strong contribution to the personal development of pupils, and extends their learning experiences. The curriculum is adapted well to ensure relevance to pupils' interests and backgrounds. Good links between literacy and subjects such as history enable pupils to develop their skills in a wide variety of contexts. Staff make creative use of links between subjects, but this approach is not consistent. Focus weeks, such as mathematics week, enable pupils to extend and apply their skills in a range of contexts. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance learning, and good use is made of specialists teaching music, physical education and Italian. The extensive

range of extra-curricular activities, particularly the sports and music clubs, and enrichment through participation in projects such as the Royal Ballet, further enlivens pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is a strongly inclusive school. Many parents wrote to express their appreciation of the outstanding ways in which the school cares for their children. As one put it, 'We couldn't wish for anything better.' The school meets all requirements to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. The very effective systems in place are rigorously applied to cover health and safety, child protection and safeguarding of pupils. Racial harmony is well promoted. The needs of pupils who are vulnerable, or who have difficulties with their learning or behaviour, are carefully identified. They are skilfully supported by the learning mentor. Highly productive links with a wide range of agencies support pupils with learning difficulties. The inclusion manager, the special needs leader and the teacher supporting pupils in early stages of learning English, play a strong role in supporting these pupils to ensure that they make progress that is as good as others. Excellent systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress. Most pupils know their targets for English and mathematics and what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team provides a clear vision for the improvement of the school. There is a strong emphasis on developing the whole child as well as on raising academic achievement and standards. Central to the success of the school is the strong leadership of the headteacher, supported by a committed team of senior and middle managers, and the governors. Staff with responsibilities for subjects lead them well, although a few who are new to their roles are still developing their expertise. All staff work well together as a team and are eager to provide the best for all pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum are thorough, and this enables the school to have a clear view of what it does well and to bring about further improvements. For example, the quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved, and more support is provided for parents to enable them to help their children. Although some of the school's assessments of its performance are overgenerous, the information is acted on well and all issues identified at the last inspection have been fully addressed. The school's work as part of Investors in People, the outstanding links established with many educational organisations, and the local authority have proved extremely beneficial to the work of the school.

Governance is good. Governors take their role seriously and participate in all appropriate training. The governing body is strengthening its capacity to act as a critical friend to the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| 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? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 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? | 1 |

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 | 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 | 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

26 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Primary School, Battersea, London, SW11 2TD

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school recently and talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school. We were impressed with your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school.

Your school gives you a good standard of education, and some things about your school are outstanding. Your headteacher has made important changes to improve your school. You told us that you like your school very much and that you get on well together. You enjoy your lessons a lot and want to do your best. You have an excellent understanding of how to be fit and healthy, and you are extremely sensible about being safe. You said that adults in school really care about you and are always ready to help you. We also know that you like helping in school very much, and some of you take special responsibilities like acting as school councillors or buddies very seriously.

We have suggested two things that could make your school even better.

- Your test results in writing could be improved by more of you working on higher levels.
- Your teachers could link the marking of your work to the targets they set for you even better, so that you always have a clear idea of how well you are doing and how you can improve your work.

You too can play your part by continuing to work hard in lessons.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector