

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104641
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	336340
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roland Berndt
Headteacher	Mr Charles Daniels
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school development plan, a wide range of school policies, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of pupils' progress, including individual education plans for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff and pupils in Key Stage 2 completed questionnaires and 52 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also read and analysed.

- pupils' learning and progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language
- improvements in provision since the last inspection and the capacity to maintain improvement
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

Information about the school

This inner city school is slightly smaller than the average of primary schools nationally. Just under half of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is about twice the national average. About two thirds of these speak English as an additional language. The largest minority ethnic group is Asian or Asian British Indian and there are a few Black or Black British African pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 37%, which is well above the national average. Approximately 28% of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is above average for primary schools nationally. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Nursery-aged and Reception-aged children. The school has gained the Basic Skills Award and the local authority's Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education for pupils and has improved since the last inspection, when it was found to be satisfactory. Pupils achieve well and some aspects of their personal development are outstanding. The quality of teaching and of the curriculum are good and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. A key reason for these improvements is the headteacher's effectiveness, in particular the outstanding drive and ambition he has been able to promote. As a result, all staff, governors and pupils share his vision of how the school will help pupils to do their best and the positive contribution it can offer to the local community.

Most children start in the Nursery with limited skills development and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, thanks to the good quality of the provision. This good progress continues in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 6 attainment in English, mathematics and science is average overall. However, in English, progress in writing is not as secure as it is in reading. This is partly because of the higher priority the school has given to improving pupils' achievement in reading in recent years. In addition, progress in mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5 lags behind that in Years 2 and 6. These are key aspects for improvement. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well and some make outstanding progress, achieving good standards by the time they move on to secondary school. The school monitors the performance of pupils from different minority ethnic groups well and takes effective action where necessary through targeted support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of the high-quality support they receive from teachers and support staff.

Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to their work and behave well. Outstanding aspects of their personal development are their understanding of how to stay safe and secure and of how to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community through the school council, pupils who act as advocates and through other roles of responsibility in school.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection as a result of effective action taken to eliminate any unsatisfactory practice. The monitoring of teaching through lesson observations, sampling of teachers' planning and pupils' work is shared among senior leaders and has driven this improvement. Nevertheless, some aspects of teaching, such as how teachers make the most of objectives in lessons, are inconsistent. The curriculum, which was found to lack relevance for pupils at the last inspection, has improved and promotes pupils' knowledge and awareness of other cultures well. Staff know the pupils very well and provide excellent support for the more vulnerable. In particular, the work of the learning mentor is exceptional in these aspects.

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The school has good capacity to improve under the leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff. This is evident in the rising standards, the way that the school has tackled the weaknesses apparent at the last inspection and how it is making a significant contribution to the local community. Parents and carers value the work of the school highly. They are particularly appreciative of the headteacher's efforts to involve them in the life of the school and the education of their children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils in writing in all year groups by:
 - making more use of clear objectives in lessons so that pupils have a better awareness of what is expected of them and how they can check their progress
 - making more use of other subjects in the curriculum to practise writing at length.
- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5 by:
 - making sure recent initiatives to track progress are rigorously used
 - developing targeted support for those pupils at risk of not achieving as well as they could.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

At the start of Year 1, the majority of pupils are still working towards the early years goals in key areas of learning such as communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The curriculum provided by staff in that year group builds on pupils' achievements very well. By the end of Year 2, pupils have achieved well, including those who speak English as an additional language. Achievement in writing is slower than that in reading and mathematics. It is improving, however, thanks to the focus given to weekly lessons that stimulate pupils to write well. As a result of more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, the school is now able to identify strengths and weaknesses. This has enabled staff to identify a weakness in pupils' progress in mathematics in the mixed-aged classes in Key Stage 2, in addition to the slow rate of improvement in writing in all year groups. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds generally do well. Tracking pupils' progress has shown that some of the very few pupils of Black African or Caribbean origin have underachieved in the past. The school is monitoring their progress carefully and providing targeted support effectively. Boys and girls generally perform in a manner similar to boys and girls nationally.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and they have good relationships with staff. Pupils concentrate well so that lessons are purposeful and their learning is secure. They work confidently in small groups and take on responsibilities very well indeed. The school council has been very active in giving its views to the local Safety Forum, which is part of the area's regeneration plan, and has won funding for its efforts. Pupils learn good skills of cooperation and teamwork and have won awards for their work promoting a healthy lifestyle. They are confident that their voice is heard in school. Levels of

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attendance are in line with the national average and compare favourably with schools in similar contexts. The school promotes an ethos in which pupils look out for one another and this helps them to mature socially and morally. The improvements to the wider curriculum mean that pupils gain a good awareness of other cultures in both British society and overseas.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strengths of the teaching include the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and the stimulating way lessons are presented. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use support staff very well, especially in group work in class. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used very well. Since the last inspection, staff have improved pupils' speaking and listening skills. This has been achieved through, for example, improving teachers' questioning, which is probing and wide ranging, and using role play in lessons. An area to improve is the way learning objectives are highlighted in lessons, especially in English. Often these are not focused sufficiently on developing pupils' skills and are not referred to during lessons. Procedures to check how well pupils

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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are doing and the marking of their work have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory. There is some inconsistency in practice and some elements of assessment are recent and are yet to be fully embedded in teachers' practice.

Staff have successfully developed a curriculum that is relevant to pupils and that links areas of study to key skills. Curricular plans include reference to pupils' own backgrounds and experiences. A strength is the way in which it is continually adapted after staff and pupils have evaluated how successful projects have been. Some of these improvements are still in the process of development and not yet fully embedded. For instance, teachers are not yet making full use of subjects across the curriculum to promote pupils' writing. There is a good international dimension to the curriculum that includes links with Spain. A recent outstanding development is the establishment of a fitness suite, from which not only pupils are benefiting but which will also become available to parents and carers, and staff.

Excellent aspects of the care, guidance and support the school provides include the partnerships with outside agencies to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the highly effective programmes to support pupils who have difficulties reading. These are led by well-qualified, specialist support teachers and teaching assistants.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

In addition to driving the school forward very successfully, governors and senior staff have a good awareness of the strengths of the school and areas to improve. The school's self-evaluation is robust and the views of governors and senior staff match closely the findings of this inspection. They have introduced effective support programmes of work to tackle underachievement and promote equal opportunities for all. The school is effective in tackling discrimination and all matters of safeguarding, including risk assessments and the safe recruitment of staff, are good. The influence of staff on strategic issues has improved because leadership and management have been shared among several staff and all feel fully involved in school improvement. Governors, through their varied backgrounds and expertise, help the school's commitment to promoting community cohesion well. The school is taking a central role in a regeneration programme locally. It promotes understanding about the various faiths represented in the school as well as links with schools internationally. It has good partnerships with

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parents and carers, and other schools, such as specialist high schools in the area. Funding has been used well to back programmes that improve pupils' achievement. A particular feature is the way the accommodation has been enhanced, including a new library, a fitness suite, computer suite and the enlargement of classrooms.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage setting, which has plenty of space, both indoors and outside, and is fully used. Nursery children mix well with older Reception-aged children and this helps them to settle in quickly. At the time of the inspection, they were already becoming confident learners, playing cooperatively, helping one another and responding well to adults' instructions. Many children start with limited skills of communication and language. Though they are still working towards the learning goals in these aspects by the time they join Year 1, they have nevertheless made good progress. This is because adults interact very well with the children, promoting conversations at every opportunity and becoming immersed in children's imaginative play. This was very evident, for example, when adults were enthusiastically helping to build a house outside for one of the pigs in the story *Three Little Pigs*.

Children's progress is best in personal, social and emotional development and physical development because the welfare and progress of children are carefully monitored and supported. All safeguarding requirements are met. Teachers plan the curriculum well and assessments are regularly carried out by all adults. The linking of planning to assessments of the children's development, however, is an area for improvement. The

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key stage leader is aware of this. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and children who speak English as an additional language make great strides in acquiring English, helped by regular specialist support. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. There are very good links between the key stage leader and the Year 1 teacher. They plan a very varied curriculum for the children that helps the transition into Key Stage 1 extremely well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just under one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and a very large majority of these expressed great support for the school. Only a few added written comments to the questionnaire and one parent spoke to an inspector. Most commented very favourably on the developments in school in recent years and how well the school is contributing to the community. Inspectors agree strongly with the positive views of parents and carers. The very few negative comments were discussed by inspectors with the headteacher, for example whether parents and carers are helped to support their children's learning enough. These issues are not upheld by inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 184 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	77	22	21	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	51	32	46	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	62	60	36	35	4	4	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	67	30	29	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	65	34	33	0	0	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	60	32	31	10	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	63	36	35	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	62	60	40	38	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	51	44	43	2	2	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	60	34	33	0	0	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	41	54	52	2	2	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	70	67	32	31	0	0	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	69	30	29	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



It was a pleasure to inspect your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how much you enjoy learning. I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with a good education. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, you have achieved well in English, mathematics and science. The great majority of you reach the levels expected of all pupils by the end of Year 6. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you work hard.

You behave well and look after each other. You know a great deal about how to stay safe and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. You told us you are really looking forward to making full use of the new fitness suite! Your school council is doing an excellent job making suggestions about life in school and outside in the community. You take on responsibilities exceptionally well. Your teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you all and make sure that you all feel safe and secure. Your headteacher is doing an excellent job of driving the school forward and improving things for you all.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There are two things to do and you can help.

- We want the staff to improve your skills of writing. You can help by making sure you know the lesson objectives – these list what the teacher wants you to learn in lessons. Doing this will help you to make your work better.
- We want the staff in Years 3, 4 and 5 to help you to make better progress in mathematics. So please continue to work hard and always ask for help if you get stuck.

I send you all my best wishes for the future.

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