

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Leigh

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106502
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	336682
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Audrey Ward
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Ahmed
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and saw 14 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies, school development plans and the School Improvement Partner's reports. One hundred and five parents' and carers' questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside questionnaires completed by the pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and achievement of pupils, especially in English
- the use of assessments of pupils' progress in planning work
- the quality of challenge that teachers set for all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of improvement planning in raising achievement.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average and pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The take-up of a free school meal is below average. The majority of pupils are White British with some small groups having a European, African or Asian heritage. Around 7% of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and the school caters for a number of migrant and asylum-seeking families. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Apart from the Reception children, pupils are organised into mixed-age classes but taught in single age groups for English and mathematics.

The school has gained the Activemark, Artsmark and Healthy Schools awards, together with Dyslexia Friendly School status. There has been a period of disruption at the school due to issues with the accommodation. At the time of inspection, staff and pupils were settling into their new school building and some construction work was ongoing.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Sacred Heart provides a satisfactory quality of education. Well-supported by strong links with the church, the school has strengths in pastoral areas. Good care, guidance and support enable pupils to develop well personally. Behaviour is good and harmonious relationships exist between the different age, religious and ethnic groups. There has been a concerted effort to boost pupils' achievement, with improvements made to provision and the assessment of pupils' progress. As a result, learning and progress in mathematics have improved and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage now receive a good start to their education.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Sessions include good opportunities for children to engage in purposeful play and to explore their world. An added emphasis on communication and language work is providing a secure platform in early reading and writing skills. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and there are pockets of good progress, especially for the oldest pupils in mathematics. Standards are broadly average by Year 6, but too few pupils are working at the higher level for their age, especially in writing.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good practice. The school fully recognises that the proportion of good teaching needs to rise in order to achieve its targets. At present, there are some lessons where the more-able pupils are not stretched fully. In some classes, marking is helpful and useful targets have been introduced so that pupils know how they can improve their work. This good practice is not consistent, however, so some pupils have little idea of how well they are doing or how they can focus their efforts. The curriculum is satisfactory. A good programme for personal education ensures that pupils gain a good understanding of their own safety and know how to stay fit and healthy. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory and developing well with access to improved equipment and facilities. Currently, however, opportunities are limited for pupils to write when studying other subjects.

Senior leaders regularly check on pupils' achievement so that the school has an accurate view of its performance. The programme for monitoring teaching and learning has been adversely affected by disruptions to school routines. Currently, systems are not rigorous enough to identify and act upon issues swiftly. As a result, some improvements that have been introduced are not consistently embedded. School leaders have a clear vision and ambition for the future. The capacity for sustained improvement is, therefore, satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve attainment, learning and progress, especially in writing and for the more-able pupils, by:
 - increasing the proportion of good teaching by ensuring that all groups of pupils have good challenge in every lesson
 - including more and varied opportunities for writing across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the guidance and targets given to pupils provide them with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work
 - injecting added rigour into the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that improvements are embedded consistently across all classes.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment is broadly average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but the more-able do not do as well as they could. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are learning English as an additional language, work in small groups. They have targeted support and tasks that build precisely on their prior learning and their progress is good. In addition, some features of pupils' personal development are good.

On entry to Year 1, pupils' attainment is average. Current teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils show improved progress over previous years. Too few of them, however, are doing well for their age in reading and writing. Staff have placed an additional emphasis on learning about sounds and letters, which is helping to boost progress. Too often, however, teachers' expectations of the more-able group are not high enough.

In the most recent national tests for Year 6 pupils, an average proportion reached the expected Level 4, but too few did better than this in English. In Year 6, all groups of pupils have good challenge in mathematics and do well. This is not always the case in English, nor across the other Key Stage 2 classes, where the more-able are not always achieving their potential. In English, pupils learn about grammar and punctuation, but do not have sufficient opportunities for writing. Boys and girls show the same interest in their work and progress at equal rates.

Pupils say they enjoy school and are happy. They have a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy plenty of exercise. Pupils assert that bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly if it occurs. They have a strong awareness of moral and social issues and show respect for cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. Attendance is average. The school works hard to discourage absence and to reduce the incidence of holidays or visits to homelands taken in term-time. Good opportunities exist for pupils to experience responsibility. For example, play leaders and prefects contribute much to the day-to-day running of school and council members represent pupils' views in the process of decision making.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good practice. Managers recognise that the overall quality of teaching needs to improve further. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Many improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, but not all are consistently embedded. More frequent assessments of learning have been introduced and are generally used well to set work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In some cases, for example, in Year 6 mathematics lessons, assessments are also used to set challenging work for the average and more-able pupils. However, across the school, there are occasions when the more-able pupils are not extended enough. Too often, they are required to complete the same tasks as the rest of the class before moving onto extension tasks. This means that they do not move forward quickly enough. A more active approach to learning is being introduced in classes, but there are still some occasions when pupils sit listening to the teacher for too long. Some pupils clearly know how well they are doing and have target sheets to guide them towards the next steps. This practice is not equally effective across all classes. Some targets are written in

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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complicated language that pupils do not fully understand. Teaching assistants provide good, targeted support for groups and individuals who need extra help.

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are some good features. Links with the local high school provide varied opportunities, for example, in sport and the use of the computer suite, to enrich learning. A good selection of after-school clubs encourages pupils to try out new interests and an interesting range of visits expands pupils' experiences.

Links between subjects are developing. An over-use of worksheets means that pupils are often only required to give a brief written response and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length when studying subjects such as history or geography. Planning for gifted or talented pupils is not sufficiently developed to stretch them to the full.

The school takes good care of its pupils and has 'tried and tested' welfare systems in place. The majority of pupils agree that 'adults in school care about me'. Staff go to good lengths to secure specialist support, for example, from social and educational agencies, to meet individual needs. A good system of rewards encourages positive behaviour and effort, while assemblies encourage pupils to be kind and considerate. The buildings and grounds are secure and there is a safe hand-over of younger pupils to parents and carers at the end of the day. Children have a smooth induction from the Reception class into Year 1 and pupils are well supported in the transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear direction for the school and staff and governors share her challenging agenda for long-term improvement. The school works well with a range of partners, including local businesses. There is no discrimination in the school and all groups of pupils have full and equal access to all activities. The more- able, however, do not consistently have the challenge they need in all lessons, so the promotion of full equality is only satisfactory. The senior management team is driving through improvements in provision and pockets of better progress are emerging. The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory in providing an overview of performance. However, the checking of teachers' planning, pupils' books and lessons is not carried out frequently enough throughout the year to ensure that new initiatives are consistently

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implemented, or to quickly identify any issues. The school is a welcoming place and generates a sense of belonging among staff and pupils. Community cohesion is good. Pupils study their local area and are aware of national issues that might affect them. They engage with people around the world, through residential visits abroad and video-conferencing links. They also show empathy for those less fortunate through their fund-raising efforts for charities.

Value for money is satisfactory; funds have been intelligently directed to provide a bright, pleasant environment for learning. Safeguarding measures are good. Staff are well-trained in child protection procedures and lessons ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Governors successfully carry out their statutory duties. They have a secure overview of standards, pastoral care and safeguarding. The Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body are actively involved in school on a regular basis and very well known to staff, parents and pupils. Several new members have recently joined the governing body and are embarking on training programmes to equip them for their new roles and responsibilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly and their needs are accurately assessed. This assessment process continues throughout Reception and enables staff to provide very effectively for the interests and abilities of all children. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy their work; their behaviour and personal skills are

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good.

Children's development at entry to the Reception class is below expectations for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Teaching is good and planning takes account of children's interests in order to keep them well motivated. Throughout the day, children have short, focused group sessions with an adult and then are free to choose from an interesting range of activities where they practise and consolidate their new learning. This promotes good progress. The majority of children are working at average levels across all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Leadership and management are good. Welfare arrangements are good, the accommodation is secure and resources are well-chosen to meet the needs of this age group. Parents and carers are encouraged to be partners in the early learning process and work alongside their children through the 'inspire' and flying start' projects. Because of the construction work on site, only part of the outdoor area is accessible at present. This restricts the range of opportunities for purposeful play and exploration in the outdoors, but leaders have exciting plans to develop this aspect, once work is complete.

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

Parents and carers have a positive view of the school. The vast majority of those who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children's experience of school is a happy one. They feel that their children are safe, are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles and are well prepared for the next step in their education. Inspectors agree with their views. In their responses and written comments, several parents and carers raised issues about the quality of communication between home and school and feel that their views and concerns are not always taken into account. Inspectors found these areas to be satisfactory. Leaders had been made aware of these issues through a previous, school-generated survey and are in the process of reviewing policies and practice.

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 Leigh 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 inspection team received 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 285 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	53	45	43	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	49	50	48	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	28	64	61	7	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	36	57	54	3	3	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	40	38	58	55	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	31	62	59	8	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	36	60	57	5	5	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)	34	32	61	58	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	30	65	62	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	28	68	65	3	3	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	24	63	60	9	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	35	58	55	5	5	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	46	50	48	5	5	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.



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Leigh, WN7 1UX

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the smiles and help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

Sacred Heart is a safe and happy school that provides you with a satisfactory education. I would like to say thank you to the pupils who filled in a questionnaire and those who chatted with the inspectors. You like your new building and improved facilities. I think those of you on the school council and others with responsibilities do a good job in helping to ensure the school day runs smoothly and in making decisions. It is good to see how you make your opinions known and that you are keen to work with your teachers to overcome a few teething problems in your new building.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Those of you in Reception are learning to be independent and beginning to write. Well done! In Years 1 to 6 you have improved your work. I think you can do even better, especially those of you who find your work easier than most. I have, therefore, asked your teachers to:

- make sure that all of you have plenty of challenges in lessons
- provide more opportunities for writing in different subjects
- provide you all with good advice on how to improve your work
- carry out checks to make sure that any improvements they make are working.

You can help by continuing to try hard and completing your homework. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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