

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108262
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	337046
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Morrison
Headteacher	Mrs M Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited four teachers, observed seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan and the latest reports to the governing body from the School Improvement Partner. They also studied the most recent national and school data on attainment and progress, the latest attendance figures and children's work from across the school. In addition, 34 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were analysed, along with those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- the extent to which pupils are performing better in mathematics and science than in English
- whether teaching has improved from satisfactory to good, as the school now believes
- the pupils' knowledge of how well they now know their targets and how to improve and the extent to which marking is helping them move forward
- how lively and exciting is the school's curriculum
- the extent to which leaders and managers are more effective than at the last inspection in driving forward improvement.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school. Most of its intake is drawn from the immediate area, although a few pupils travel from further afield. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic group is much smaller than nationally. Numbers who speak English as an additional language are very small. Fewer children enter and leave the school between Reception and Year 6 than in most other schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is larger than what is typical. The school holds the Healthy Schools and ECO schools bronze awards and has achieved the Active Sportsmark since the last inspection.

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

This is a good school. Pupils make mostly good progress as they move through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils' attainment is average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Attainment in English has been below national levels. However, a focus on driving up standards in English is proving successful in helping to narrow this gap in performance. The school nurtures pupils' all-round development well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with well led assemblies reflecting the school's religious ethos. The school maintains a broad and enriched curriculum and it has made a start in linking subjects together to add relevance and excitement. Nevertheless, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as taught through other subjects, are under-represented. Children in Reception make a satisfactory start to their school life because of sound provision and leadership. However, classroom displays do not give enough attention to the promotion of language skills, some activities lack a clear focus and old resources need replacing.

Good teaching ensures that pupils' learning thrives. Staff give lots of encouragement and relationships between adults and pupils are strong. However, the use of targets, marking and the final part of lessons lack consistency. The school is well led by the headteacher. Morale is high and teamwork is strong. Leadership is proactive in its pursuit of higher standards. Priorities for development are appropriate. The tracking of pupils' progress through the analysis of data is now a real strength. However, the monitoring of the school's work, particularly of the quality of teaching and of pupils' books, is not yet sharply focused on pupils' learning to be of most benefit.

Effective self-evaluation has led to clear improvements. The school has strong features, which help explain its good capacity to improve further. These include:

- good leadership by the headteacher and staff who work hard to drive forward school improvement
- an embedded tracking system which helps teachers check regularly on how well pupils are doing
- pupils' above average attendance and good behaviour which explain their thirst for knowledge
- sharply focused development planning and rigorously pursued priorities
- the good added value for pupils as they move through the school from their well below average starting points over the last three years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Ensure all teaching and progress is as good as the best, by:
 - injecting greater pace into some lessons so that pupils have enough time to work independently
 - always providing opportunities for pupils to share what they have learnt so that teachers can plan and implement effective next steps
 - checking that all pupils know their targets to help steer their learning and that marking clearly indicates what they must do to improve
 - focusing more sharply on learning when checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' books.
- Improve provision for Reception children, by:
 - providing a more language rich environment to help stimulate children's imagination, encourage learning and to improve their literacy skills
 - purchasing additional supplies and replacing older resources to add interest and excitement to children's learning
 - ensuring that all activities have a clear focus and that adults constantly engage with children to help them develop their language skills.
- Increase the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum by planning for their systematic development to help to raise their profile and boost learning.

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

Pupils have good attitudes to their work, which has a positive impact on their achievement. For example, measuring activities in the classroom generated much excitement among younger pupils who were learning to use measuring tools for the first time. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils' attendance is above average. This helps to ensure that pupils make mostly good progress as they move through the school, especially in Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. As a result, attainment is close to average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In English, pupils have performed less well in the recent past, especially in writing. However, the gap between subjects is now narrowing. Pupils are on track to reach standards that are close to the age-related expectations this year. This is because a recent focus on improving writing, especially for boys, is proving successful in helping to raise attainment. Furthermore, senior leaders are becoming increasingly skilled at analysing data, to check on how well pupils are performing so that they can be given extra help if they begin to fall behind. As a result, targets are increasingly challenging and realistic. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, largely because of the good support they receive.

Pupils collaborate well and are given many opportunities in Years 1 to 6 to use speaking and listening skills to improve their understanding, such as when older pupils discuss how to solve number problems. These developing personal and social skills add much to their achievement and to their development as 'well-rounded' individuals, preparing

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them well for their future lives. However, they are not always sure how to improve their work, which at times slows their progress. They are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and energetically either lead or join in the daily 'wake up, shake up' exercises. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community, such as, by running the tuck shop. They take on responsibilities, such as school councillors with maturity and enthusiasm. Their improving skills and confidence ensure that they contribute well to the local community, such as, planting trees and wild flowers in the local area.

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	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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All aspects of provision are good. Strengths in teaching outweigh areas in need of development. The good teaching is founded on secure relationships, which underpin all learning. Teachers' good subject knowledge engages pupils' interest, work is usually set at the right level of challenge and resources are used well to promote understanding. Most teaching assistants add a great deal to the quality of teaching and help to accelerate learning. On some occasions, the pace of learning slows and teachers talk for too long. As a result, pupils have too little time to work independently to make best

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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possible progress. Conclusions to lessons are sometimes too short. Thus, opportunities are missed to review learning and lead pupils towards the next step. Marking varies in quality, but is improving.

The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of interesting and engaging activities, which promote enjoyment and sometimes excitement. Class 'question trees' provide imaginative representation of the many questions asked by pupils to help steer their learning. Art and design, and ICT are strong features. German lessons add further enrichment and all pupils from Years 3 and 4 learn to play the guitar. A varied range of after-school clubs, such as dance, football and chess are well attended by pupils. Themed events, such as a 'Famous Friday Day' and visits, including a residential visit to Castleton, help to broaden pupils' horizons. However, the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, through other subjects, is not given enough attention.

Staff know pupils well and give much time to their care and support. Pupils thrive as a result of this positive climate. The school creates strong partnerships with outside agencies and parents which help to ensure that the small number of vulnerable pupils have the support they need to make good progress, both academically and personally. Parents and carers comment very favourably on how the staff and children make them and their children feel welcome. Attendance is promoted extremely well, such as through the '100% Attendance Club' resulting in above average outcomes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a shared vision of how the school is to develop and the experienced staff contribute well to decision making. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and the right priorities for development are pursued rigorously to help secure further improvement. Nevertheless, the regular monitoring undertaken does not always focus sharply enough on the rate at which pupils learn to be of most benefit. External partnerships, such as, with the parish church, Featherstone Rovers, the local Catholic high school and the Children's Centre are good. The school is successful in promoting positive links with parents and carers, almost all of whom comment favourably on the school's work, its 'lovely community spirit' and its 'friendly, family atmosphere'. The school has improved from satisfactory at the last inspection to good. It provides good value for money. Equal opportunities are embedded well into the school's way of life. Discrimination is not tolerated; pupils are helped very well to understand how to treat others.

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The promotion of community cohesion is strong, especially within the school and local community. Pupils' understanding of worldwide issues and faiths and cultures beyond the immediate locality are addressed well through the curriculum and 'circle time' discussions. Nevertheless, links with a school in Malawi to further deepen pupils' understanding are still at the planning stage. The supportive and well-informed governing body knows what are the strengths and areas for development. As a result, it is heavily involved in setting the school's direction and holding it to account for what it achieves. Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements. The school acts promptly on any issues brought to its attention. Good systems are established to keep pupils safe from harm. All are alert to health and safety risks.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	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 start the school in the joint Reception/Year 1 class with skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. Welcoming staff ensure that children settle quickly into established routines and become receptive learners. All adults are very caring and ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fully met. Vulnerable children are quickly identified and are well supported. There is an appropriate balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. Teaching is satisfactory enabling children to make sound progress as they move through their Reception Year. Some activities are carefully chosen so that they capture children's interest and imagination, such as when the teacher used a puppet to help reinforce understanding of 'under', 'over' and 'through'. However, some activities are not focused well enough nor is the

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pace of some teaching sufficiently brisk to enable children to make the best possible progress. Moreover, some displays are not challenging enough or contain enough language prompts to promote interest, encourage talk, stimulate children's imagination and to help to boost learning. The outside area is used for much of the day to help children make progress. However, the range of resources is too narrow and old equipment does not encourage their use. Parents and carers appreciate the sensitive care provided for their children. Leadership is satisfactory with evidence of development in important areas. For example, systems to monitor children's progress have been sharpened to help more effectively build on what they know.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the way their children are educated and nurtured in school. Only a very small number of negative responses were received with no pattern emerging. All parents and carers feel that their children are kept safe and that a healthy lifestyle is promoted. Almost all say their children enjoy school. Inspectors agree with all the positive comments expressed by parents and carers, including the view held by many that this is a good school.

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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	62	12	35	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	71	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	53	14	41	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	44	18	53	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	56	14	41	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	44	18	53	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	41	19	56	0	0	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)	14	41	18	53	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	38	21	62	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	32	23	68	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	47	17	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	62	11	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	71	8	24	0	0	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.



25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Pontefract, WF9 4LJ

Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors when we visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We really enjoyed listening to what you had to say. We agree with you about the many good things in your school.

- We like the friendly atmosphere and the way staff take good care of you.
- We are pleased that most of you come to school every day and arrive on time.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school and work hard.
- You know about the importance of keeping safe and staying healthy and really enjoy your 'wake up, shake up' activities at the start of each day.
- We judge that most teaching is good, which helps you make good progress.
- You clearly enjoy the many activities the school provides to help you learn.
- We found out that the school has improved since the last inspection.

We have found just a few things that your headteacher and teachers could do to make your school even better than it is now.

- I have asked them to make all teaching good and I have given them some ways to help them achieve this.
- Your teachers should make sure that you know your targets and what you must do to improve.
- I have asked them to improve the classroom surroundings, resources and some activities for Reception children to help them make better progress.
- I agree with your teachers that you should have more opportunities to use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

I was pleased by the way your headteacher and all school staff work hard to give you a good education. It was really good to find you are happy and doing well.

Yours sincerely

Mr Derek Pattinson

Lead inspector

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