

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111306
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	337660
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Canon Chris Cunningham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Colleen Everett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Selby Street Warrington Cheshire WA5 1NS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 636235
<b>Fax number</b>	01925 230971
<b>Email address</b>	sacredheart_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom examined the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at the data on pupils' performance including their current progress, plans for the future and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. The responses to 59 parents' questionnaires were considered, alongside responses from staff and pupil questionnaires.

- the impact of actions taken to improve standards in mathematics and English
- the impact of the new leadership team and managers at all levels in helping to raise standards and improve teaching quality
- the effectiveness of teachers' planning
- teachers' use of data and how effectively they check to ensure that progress is made by different groups of pupils.

## Information about the school

Sacred Heart is an average-sized primary school situated about half a mile from the centre of Warrington in Cheshire. The large majority of pupils are of White British ethnic background, but an increasing proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds have joined the school since the previous inspection. The proportion of such pupils and those whose first language is not English is now broadly average. The socio-economic circumstances of the areas from which pupils are drawn are diverse, ranging from advantaged to disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. A new headteacher took up her post at the start of the current academic year.

The school has a number of awards, including the Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

**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 is a satisfactory school that is improving. The new headteacher is capitalising on the school's strengths, for example in English, and has rapidly assessed where there are weaknesses to be tackled. There are other strengths, for example in the impact of the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents recognise the improvements in the school and are very supportive of the new leadership team.

During their time in school pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress. From a starting point that is broadly average, standards are in line with the national average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Improvements in the teaching of English have resulted in good achievement and above average standards. Work to address past underachievement in mathematics has been successful and there is now no notable variation between the performance of boys and girls, where previously boys had underachieved. However, standards are lower in mathematics than in English. This is because higher attainers are not challenged sufficiently and there is a lack of consistency in the way problem-solving and calculation skills are taught. There is a weakness in meeting the needs of the highest attainers more generally because the school is at an early stage in identifying its most able pupils and ensuring that teachers plan specifically to meet their needs. Skilled support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language can access the full curriculum. They receive well-targeted support that helps them make satisfactory progress and participate fully in school life. Those considered to be vulnerable are particularly well catered for. Pupils' attendance is broadly average, despite the many initiatives and hard work put in by the school to improve further. While parents are very supportive of the school, there are still too many who take their children on holidays during term time. The satisfactory achievement of pupils, their positive approach to school and the above average attendance of the large majority of pupils prepare them adequately for the future.

Although there is some good teaching, there is much that is no better than satisfactory. Teachers plan the content of their lessons in detail, but too often do not make it clear what they expect pupils of different levels of ability to attain. There has been a recent improvement in the use of assessment data, but there is some way to go before it is fully effective in charting and checking pupils' progress with the necessary precision to set targets that are sufficiently high and guide pupils to their next steps in learning. Middle managers are at an early stage in ensuring that all class teachers use assessment data appropriately to support and guide pupils' learning effectively. Judging the progress pupils make is not yet at the centre of teachers' evaluation of their impact in the

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classroom.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has, in a short time, made a good start to build sound foundations on which the school can grow and flourish. For example, the satisfactory curriculum is being improved to ensure that pupils develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects as they move up through the school. Systems have been established to monitor and evaluate the work of the school regularly and rigorously. In making these significant changes, the headteacher has maintained high morale among staff, while developing their confidence and ambition. It is too early to see the full impact of all this work, but the evidence confirms that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve because self-evaluation is accurate, standards are rising and the school has focused on improving areas of weakness.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
  - - planning a good match in lesson materials to the needs of different ability groups
  - - adopting a more consistent approach throughout the school to teaching problem-solving and calculation skills.
- Raise the proportion of good teaching by:
  - - focusing teachers' attention on ensuring pupils of all levels of ability make good progress in lessons
  - - developing the roles of middle managers so that they are better equipped to monitor teaching and learning and judge the impact this has on raising standards
  - - ensuring that teachers use assessment more precisely so that pupils are clear about the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Challenge the more able pupils by:
  - - ensuring that teachers are clear in their lesson planning about what they expect these pupils to achieve
  - - preparing extended tasks that stretch and stimulate the high attainers so that they produce their best efforts.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils are making satisfactory progress to attain broadly average standards in mathematics and science. In English, pupils make good progress and reach higher than average standards. The school has correctly identified that some of the more able pupils could make better progress if provided with a greater level of challenge and a more stimulating curriculum, and the lessons seen also confirmed this. All pupils are helped to develop an appropriate range of basic academic skills. This includes how to use computers and interactive whiteboards, which has the benefit of making learning more

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meaningful and so improving pupils' enjoyment and engagement and helping to prepare them for the next phase of their education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at the same rate as their peers and benefit in their personal development from good pastoral care and guidance given by their teachers and experienced teaching assistants.

In most lessons pupils' satisfactory and often good behaviour ensures that learning can take place without undue interruption. Pupils are taught to live healthily and safely. However, many do not follow what they are taught and there is too much unhealthy eating during breaks and at lunchtime. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to cross the road safely, how to be safe when they are near water, what to do if they hear the fire alarm at school and the importance of not talking to strangers. The school provides a limited range of sporting activities, but, where they are organised, activities such as the dance club attract enthusiastic followers. The school council plays a role in putting forward ideas and all pupils are given the opportunity to take part. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and they are open, welcoming and confident with visitors.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Relationships in lessons between adults and pupils are good and help to engender good relationships between pupils in the classroom. This helps to ensure that pupils work well on their own and in groups. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The consistency with which staff manage pupils' behaviour is a common strength within lessons. Teachers demonstrate that they have adequate knowledge of subjects and have a good understanding of how to help pupils to develop basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. Where teaching is good, such as in a mathematics lesson in Year 4, lessons are planned to ensure that pupils and staff are clear about what pupils of all different ability levels are expected to achieve. Here, the teacher was able to check pupils' understanding and progress at regular intervals and could be sure that all were working at pace and were being appropriately challenged. This is not consistently the case across the school and an area acknowledged by senior and middle managers as needing improvement. Although most teaching observed was satisfactory, there were some common weaknesses. Too many teachers still talk at length while pupils sit passively for too long. The quality of planning lacks detail about exactly what teachers expect pupils of different abilities to learn. Extension activities are not regularly used to challenge and so extend the skills and understanding in the subject being taught. Leaders and managers are working with staff to highlight the importance of using assessment strategies, but these are still not being used consistently well by all staff. While pupils know their targets for improvement, they are not as clear about where they stand in relation to the targets or how to take the next steps towards improving their work.

There are sound links between the school and outside specialists to ensure satisfactory levels of pastoral care, guidance and support, and some good support for the most vulnerable pupils. The school is in the process of modifying and improving its curriculum and recognises that the use of literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum is not yet sufficiently developed. The school is currently utilising curricular plans which have been modified from published schemes. However, not all plans detail clearly enough the next steps in learning, nor do they always indicate how to meet the differing needs of pupils according to their ability levels. The school provides an adequate range of after-school clubs and a residential experience for older pupils. These, along with the visits to places of interest and visitors to the school make a satisfactory contribution to enriching the curriculum.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<p><b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<b>3</b>
	3
<p><b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b></p>	<b>3</b>

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<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>
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## How effective are leadership and management?

Staff and governors are well motivated and united in their commitment to helping the school to improve. The budget is used efficiently and the school ensures satisfactory value for money. However, their success in effecting improvement has been variable. Governors support the school well, but do not provide sufficient challenge. The work of middle managers is still not focused sharply enough on the progress made by different groups of learners and on raising standards. The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. These weaknesses are recognised by all concerned and currently serve as a spur to embed ambition and ensure further improvements. The new headteacher's drive and vision are welcomed by governors and teacher colleagues and there is a common purpose to improve.

New systems have been put in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. It is too soon for their impact to be apparent, but they are adding rigour to the judgements the school makes about its performance. Some middle managers have helped to improve the quality of teaching in targeted areas such as writing and aspects of mathematics. However, managers have not been well-enough equipped to make the most of observing colleagues in the classroom or to judge the impact of the changes they make.

The school is successful in engaging with its parents. Through well-founded local networks and support programmes, the school reaches out to a wide range of parents. Partnerships with other schools are satisfactory. The school has a comprehensive range of policies in place that are reviewed at regular intervals. High among the priorities is a continued emphasis on ensuring safeguarding procedures are effective. With the support of the governing body, the school's leaders ensure that all arrangements and policies relating to keeping children safe are in place. The school is assiduous in tackling any form of discrimination. There are good procedures to ensure pupils experience equal opportunities in all aspects of their school life and the school is determined to ensure that any inequality in pupil progress is swiftly eliminated. These factors and the satisfactory provision for community cohesion have their impact on the ways pupils of very different backgrounds interact positively. This contributes well to the safe, happy and caring atmosphere which is evident throughout the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The good links with parents as well as the good level of attention given to children's welfare help children to settle quickly and happily when they begin in the Reception class. They make sound overall progress, and where there are initial weaknesses in literacy and language skills, these are being effectively tackled. For example, children linked their phonics activities in the classroom with later outside play where they drew large letters using chalk.

Additional adults provide good support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and this ensures that all children participate fully in activities.

Overall, outcomes are satisfactory. Policies are in place to support children's well-being and ensure their safeguarding. Children feel safe and reflect this in their confident approach with adults. Children like coming to school and separate confidently from their parents or carers. Children enjoy being together, participating in joint activities and interacting with adults in the classroom and outside. Children are learning to use ICT from this early age, and new technology is used well as a tool to support and extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. The school has made good progress in the use of the outdoor area as a part of the whole learning environment, but the area is drab and does not always provide an exciting environment for learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has ensured that there are some opportunities for children to make choices, and that daily activities include both adult and child-initiated activities. However, children do not always have the opportunity to determine their own learning through play.

The coordinator is new to post. She is working closely with the local authority and benefiting greatly from the link. At this stage, leadership and management are satisfactory, but the impact of improvements is starting to be seen and the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is an improving feature. The curriculum is well structured and builds learning systematically. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and based on a developing knowledge of how young children learn. Planning ensures positive learning experiences through which children acquire and develop many new skills and add to their knowledge. Assessment data have not always been sufficiently accurate or reliable to plan for the next steps in children's progress. However, the information recorded

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about children is now more helpful, and the new leadership has rightly identified this as a priority in improving provision along with improvements to the outdoor learning area.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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 are very supportive of the school. They find teachers to be open and approachable and they feel that they are involved in school life. As a result, parents say they are helped to support their children's learning both in school and at home and are given the support they need to enable them to do this. While a minority expressed some concern about the standards pupils reach, most were more positive. When interviewed, parents said they are aware of their children's progress and their targets and were satisfied with their children's achievement. Parents appreciate the safe and secure environment of the school where their children are happy and bullying is not an issue. They feel that any poor behaviour is dealt with immediately and, as one parent said, 'Everybody is treated with respect'. Parents praise the school and its staff for the ways they help children enjoy school and learn how to respect other people and other cultures.

The inspection confirmed that the school works hard to engage parents and has good systems in place, both formally and informally for parents to meet with staff.

## 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 inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 199 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	59	23	39	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	54	26	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	37	35	59	0	0	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	34	29	49	8	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	36	34	58	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	31	36	61	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	31	37	63	2	3	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)	20	34	31	53	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	27	38	64	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	32	30	51	4	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	31	35	59	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	36	31	53	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	42	29	49	2	3	1	2

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



13 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Warrington, WA5 1NS

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for talking to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. We particularly enjoyed your singing during assembly.

I was impressed in how kind you are towards each other, whether in the classrooms or out in the playgrounds. I like the way you take responsibility, and how well you are taught to take a pride in your surroundings. I saw this in the good quality displays in your classrooms that make them interesting places to be in. I appreciate how your school helps you in learning to live safely and healthily. You obviously enjoy your time in school and you are made ready to progress to the next stage of your education.

I found that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education, because of the teaching you receive and the curriculum you study. This means that you make satisfactory progress and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Your enjoyment of school and your regard for your teachers shows in your positive behaviour in and around the school. To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help all of you to raise your standards and make even better progress, especially in mathematics. They can do this by improving teaching further and by being even clearer about what they expect from all of you. I have also suggested that they assess you carefully and keep a careful record of the progress you make. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bernard Jones

Lead inspector

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