

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119606
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339480
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Crowe
Headteacher	Mrs Carole Seagraves
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2007
School address	Poulton Street Ashton Preston PR2 2SA
Telephone number	01772 726937
Fax number	01772 516203
Email address	head@sacredheart.lancs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons and observed four teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and three members of the governing body and a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' books and files, monitoring and assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement planning, and curriculum and lesson plans. Fifty four completed questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed, together with 54 from pupils and eight from staff.

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

- pupils' current progress in English and mathematics and their ability to use their basic skills flexibly across subjects
- the accuracy of assessments and their use to ensure that learning activities are suitably challenging for all groups
- the effectiveness of care, guidance and support in helping pupils overcome any barriers to their learning and personal development
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels to bring about improvements in pupils' personal and academic development.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, few of whom speak English as an additional language. There are a few pupils who join the school partway through their primary education. The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools award and an Activemark.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: standards of attainment and the levels at which pupils achieve; the pace of learning and progress across the school; pupils' preparation for the next stage in their learning; and the quality of provision, leadership and management and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school provides inadequate value for money.

Attainment is low and pupils' achievement in relation to their below-average starting points is inadequate. This is so for all groups, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The pace at which pupils are learning and making progress, although satisfactory, is not sufficiently rapid to reverse the underachievement of the past. This is especially the case in writing where standards remain low. The exception is in mathematics where progress is accelerating and attainment improving. Many pupils lack confidence when speaking to others, especially in large groups. They have difficulty applying their basic skills of numeracy and literacy within other subjects. Overall, pupils are inadequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and know what constitutes unsafe situations. They understand how to keep fit and well. They eat healthily and take full advantage of a range of different sporting activities. Many of the older pupils support the younger ones during break and lunchtimes and all pupils are involved in local community activities. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is good; their social and cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory, with very few incidents of bullying. The school council is active in many ways, for example, in raising money for people in need in other countries and coming forward with suggestions for improving play facilities.

While teachers set high expectations and use appropriate classroom management routines, there are inconsistencies in the way they provide work at sufficiently challenging levels for pupils; their use of questioning and marking, and the way independent learning is developed. The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for investigative and practical work or enable pupils to use their basic skills across all subjects. The learning and emotional needs of many of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not always met.

Leaders, managers and the governing body are ambitious to improve the school.

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Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and the school has a clear picture of the way ahead. This is evident in the improvements being made. The headteacher has introduced a new behaviour management policy which is effectively meeting the needs of those pupils who have difficulty adjusting to school routines. She is improving the accuracy of assessments and has implemented a rigorous monitoring and tracking system. These changes are showing benefits but it is too soon to evaluate how secure they are. The school's capacity to sustain improvements is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the pace of pupils' learning and progress from satisfactory to good by:
 - ensuring that lessons are varied and suitably challenging for all groups
 - developing the range and rigour of teachers' questioning skills
 - ensuring consistency in teachers' marking so that it guides pupils to set out their thinking and tells them how to improve
 - promoting independent learning through extending opportunities for investigative and practical work.
- By January 2011, improve provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing extensive opportunities for independent learning and collaborative play outdoors
 - ensuring consistency in the way adults meet the emotional, social and language needs of children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons. They work well in groups and listen attentively. Many pupils said how much they enjoy learning because the adults in class are helpful. Although overall achievement is inadequate, progress is improving and is now satisfactory. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is low but is rising, especially in mathematics, and in this subject pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, pupils make inadequate progress in English and are not on target to reach average levels of attainment in writing in the near future. In both subjects a minority of pupils fail to set out their thinking logically, clearly and at length. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number from minority ethnic backgrounds participate fully in school activities and gain in confidence and self-esteem. The pace of their learning is improving because of accurate and timely assessment of need and appropriate support. Basic skills in numeracy and the use of information and communication technology are satisfactory but many pupils are unable to adapt their writing to different purposes.

Pupils enjoy school. They know right from wrong and they are aware of the consequences of their actions. Pupils have a good understanding of the religious

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diversity of British society and this, together with their links with the church and their creative art work and their music, does much for their spiritual development. The social skills of most pupils are evident from their ease in working collaboratively in school but a minority find it difficult to resolve issues between one another easily. Attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There are several strengths in teaching including teachers' good subject knowledge and the effective use of a wide range of appropriate resources to capture pupils' interest and extend their learning. Teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons well through observation and by listening and talking to them. There is consistency in the way pupils are supported to behave well and as a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Although assessments are accurate, they are not always used to provide appropriately challenging learning activities for all groups, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. Questioning usually seeks to elicit factual recall and does not challenge pupils to explain the 'how' and 'why' of their answers. Although some very good marking

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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was seen which showed pupils how to set out their work and how to improve it, this practice is not consistent throughout the school.

There have been improvements in the way the curriculum provides for pupils' personal development and the use of visitors and visits to broaden their education. Opportunities for problem-solving and for learning through practical activities and from mistakes are limited, as is the provision for cross-curricular working to hone basic skills. Staff know their pupils well and show concern for their needs. The recently improved tracking system enables pastoral care and learning support to be targeted in Key Stage 1 and 2 at the areas of greatest need, particularly for those pupils who are potentially vulnerable. It is too soon to assess how well these changes will improve overall progress.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and governors show an increasing drive to improve based on a broadly accurate view of where the school is and what is needed to take it forward. Recently introduced changes have improved the rigour in assessment, monitoring and evaluation. Forward planning is now leading to the correct development priorities to tackle low attainment and inadequate achievement. This demonstrates the school's improving commitment to provide an equal opportunity for every pupil.

Partnerships with outside agencies and other schools support pupils in their personal development and learning. Satisfactory links with parents and carers ensure they are informed about their children's progress. There are appropriate channels to resolve any problems speedily. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It is a harmonious working community where diversity is valued. Its influence stretches into the local community through pupils' music and sport, and through their involvement in environmental projects. The school has yet to formalise its plans to extend and evaluate this influence. The governing body is supportive and closely involved in the day-to-day life of the school. Its members are now asking the right questions about progress and learning. Safeguarding is satisfactory and all requirements are met. Child protection procedures are in place. The school does not provide satisfactory value for money because of the inadequate outcomes.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they start in the Reception class, the level of children's skills varies but overall is below what is expected for their age. The learning environment is secure and well supervised. Children know how to work and play safely but sometimes need timely reminders. Although in a few areas of learning children reach the expected level, overall attainment by the time children start in Year 1 remains below average, especially in the areas of emotional and social development and communication skills. Scope for children to make choices about the activities they engage in is restricted by inadequate outdoor facilities. Adults are not consistent in the care and support they give. Some approaches are too firm for this young age. Instances were seen of children being unsettled, resulting in displays of unacceptable behaviour. Learning activities occasionally do nothing to promote children's development, for example when only a paintbrush and water, but no paint, were provided for children to produce art work. Some of the books they were given to promote their reading skills were too difficult for them. Recent improvements in the accuracy of assessments and in the recording of children's progress are not yet securing sufficient progress in all areas of learning. Leaders and managers have not been sufficiently rigorous in tackling the shortcomings which have been apparent for some time.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. A few concerns were raised about behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's communication with home about children's progress. The inspection found that there is a minority of pupils who find it difficult to adjust to school routines but, because of the recently introduced behaviour policy, they are managed well and make the same satisfactory progress as others. There are appropriate channels in place to keep parents informed and the school states that it responds quickly if parents have worries.

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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	39	30	56	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	35	32	59	3	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	37	28	52	6	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	22	32	59	6	11	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	18	33	26	48	7	13	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	30	30	56	4	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	22	34	63	5	9	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)	11	20	29	54	4	7	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	22	34	63	6	11	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	31	27	50	4	7	5	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	24	35	65	3	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	33	27	50	3	6	4	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	39	25	46	6	11	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Preston, PR2 2SA

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school. We had an interesting two days and were impressed by your courtesy and your willingness to talk openly about your work and progress.

You have many good personal qualities. You are courteous to visitors, helpful to each other and contribute to the school's development in several ways. You are sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than yourselves and help them through your fund-raising activities. You are keen to do well in your work.

In terms of academic standards, we found that your school requires significant improvement because they are too low. Teaching sometimes helps you to think through problems for yourselves and to take greater responsibility for your own learning, but this doesn't happen often enough. We have asked that you are given more challenging lessons so you can work on your own and solve problems for yourselves. We have also asked that you are told more clearly how to improve your work. Teachers are also going to help you answer their questions in a way that improves your understanding of the topics being taught.

The outdoor facilities for the younger children are not adequate and we have asked that they be improved. Also the learning activities the children are given are to be made more suitable for their age and that they are always encouraged in a supportive way.

There have been significant improvements in your school recently, for example in the way teachers see how well you are learning and knowing when you find the work too difficult. You can contribute by learning to work on your own as well as together. Thank you for the contribution you made to the inspection. Our best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Lead inspector

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