

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120215
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339634
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Feeley
Headteacher	Mr P Giorgio
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding and child protection, improvement planning, and the returns from parents, carers, staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage; learning and progress through to the end of Year 2
- how well cross-curricular skills, especially writing, are being developed, and whether there remains a significant difference between the standard of boys' and girls' writing, as identified at the school's previous inspection
- strengths in pupils' personal development which were identified by the school in its self-evaluation
- how well the school's curriculum contributes to pupils' enjoyment of their learning
- the impact of changes in the management structure on the development of leadership in the school and the outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school in an urban setting. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few from ethnic minority groups. Virtually all speak English as their first language and are of the Roman Catholic faith. Children come into the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class from a large number of nursery schools which are often much further afield than the school's immediate locality. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is less than in most schools, as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal.

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

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary is a good school. The headteacher leads the school well and conveys his high expectations of pupils' achievements to staff, parents and children themselves. All have confidence in the school's leadership and are very supportive of it. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All leaders and governors are highly successful in ensuring that the school itself is a very harmonious faith community where everyone is valued. The reasons for this lie in the exceptional care and guidance that staff give to all pupils. This starts in the Reception class and continues throughout the school, particularly at times when they are most vulnerable, such as entering, moving up or leaving the school. Provision for keeping children safe, and all aspects of welfare, is excellent. Parents are particularly appreciative of this; as one wrote, 'Happy, safe, learning; what more could we ask for?' These strengths within the school have yet to be equalled by links across a wider range of national and international communities. The school recognises this as a priority.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well academically and very well in their personal development. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good and often excellent progress in learning from an average starting point. The majority achieve much better than average scores in the goals set for children of this age, but do not maintain this high level throughout Key Stage 1 because progress in Year 1, though satisfactory, is not as fast as it is in Year 2. As a result, targets set for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are not always met, though in general, those who showed themselves to be more able at the end of Reception, maintain their high standard.

In Key Stage 2, progress improves, particularly near the end of the key stage, where it can be outstanding. Attainment in English, mathematics and science shown by school assessments, and past national test results, is at least above average and often well above, particularly in mathematics. The standard of boys' writing has improved as a result of the school's focus on it, and this is most noticeable in Key Stage 2 workbooks, where there is no significant difference between girls' and boys' writing.

Teaching is good, resulting in good progress. Pupils enjoy learning; they say their teachers give them interesting lessons, and some of these were observed by inspectors. The school is committed to making sure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs and to other groups, but are sometimes not used to best effect when teachers speak to the whole class. Recent curriculum changes have had a very positive effect on attendance, which is above average. and on pupils' enjoyment in lessons, with more use of practical

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activities in science, for example. Teachers usually make good use of assessments to plan work for the full range of abilities in their classes, but sometimes, learning objectives are not clearly stated in language that children find easy to understand. As a result, it is not always clear to pupils how well they have done by the end of the lesson. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their effective self-evaluation. Recent changes have had a good effect in distributing responsibilities and allowing monitoring and evaluation duties to be more widely spread. The school has maintained high standards, improved boys' writing and developed better systems for checking pupils' progress since its previous inspection and has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it consistently promotes at least good learning and progress by:
 - making sure that prior attainment in Reception is built on in Year 1 and realistic targets are set for all pupils for the end of Years 1 and 2
 - making sure that lesson objectives are made clear to pupils, in language they can easily understand, so they can see how well they have done by the end of the lesson
 - using teaching assistants more effectively to make sure all pupils are focused when the teacher is talking to the whole class.
 - Widen the school's highly cohesive faith community by developing national and international links across a range of different communities, and evaluating the impact of this on pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of modern British society.

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

Pupils were observed enjoying their lessons and making good progress. For example, in a design and technology lesson where pupils were evaluating models they had made of World War 2 vehicles and buildings, they learnt to question and evaluate their own and others' progress. Several writing sessions were also seen in which both boys and girls made good progress; for example, writing imaginative descriptions in sentences about 'Dark is...'

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. The school's progress tracking data is effective and shows exactly when underachievement occurs and the school makes this a priority for improvement, for example, the better standard of boys' writing observed.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the support they receive. The school's current focus on gifted and talented pupils is giving these pupils more consistent challenge in class and in activities such as mathematics clubs outside the school day. Science standards are high and the school excels in music performance, as observed in the Nativity plays. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to

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live a healthy lifestyle. They eat healthy food at lunchtime. They enjoy very active playtimes, with traditional games such as skipping ably led by the Year 5 sports leaders. Every class enjoys its weekly turn on the very popular adventure playground. Most classes enthusiastically do 'Take Ten' physical activities at some point in the day.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They and their parents agree that any instances of bullying and harassment are very rare and quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils in Year 6 develop confidence and self-esteem by being school council members. These very responsible positions are held in high regard, as the eight holders are also house captains. All pupils learn to take responsibility from an early age by becoming a classroom monitor. Pupils' good academic and very good personal skills prepare them well for life in their next schools.

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	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain things clearly, often making good use of interactive whiteboards to support pupils' learning. Teaching is good and ensures that pupils learn well. Relationships are often excellent between pupils and teachers,

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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and among pupils themselves. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning in most lessons and make good progress. Teachers' questions often challenge pupils to think for themselves. Teachers recognise differences in pupils' abilities and their learning potential from competent use of assessment information and generally plan tasks to meet the full range of ability. Most teachers make special efforts to address the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well taught and make good progress. They receive helpful individual and small-group support from teaching assistants, who work closely with class teachers for this, but not always to make sure that all pupils listen carefully when the teacher is talking to the whole class. There is regular and generally helpful marking of pupils' work. Comments almost always give encouragement, but practical advice to help pupils advance their learning is sometimes less evident though does occur in some classes.

The curriculum contributes well to the good academic outcomes achieved by pupils across the full range of their subject entitlement. It is coherent in content across all year groups, and ensures continuity in learning. Cross-curricular work ensures good support to develop essential skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils have extensive - opportunities to enhance their information and communications technology skills in the whole curriculum, being particularly skilled in control technology. There are particular strengths in science and music.

The good range of learning opportunities enables pupils to understand the importance of personal health and safety. Many activities encourage their sense of community responsibility. For example, the curriculum is enriched by many sports and music activities, lunchtime clubs, visits and theme days.

The care, guidance and support given to pupils and their families is an outstanding feature of the school's work; a view endorsed by pupils and parents. All aspects of pastoral care are exemplary. Pupils and their families are given outstanding advice and support as they enter school, move from one key stage to another, and leave for secondary education.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior and middle leaders fully share the headteacher's high expectations of the school's performance, and his ambition for further improvement. There are examples of innovative practice initiated by leaders, for example, curricular changes to enrich pupils'

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learning. Monitoring of teaching is thorough and leads to improving practice. The school identifies and meets pupils' needs well. Any group that seems not to reach the high targets set is rapidly identified and remedial steps are taken.

The school's planning for change is detailed and identifies the right priorities. The evaluation of objectives is thorough, but sometimes it is not clear how successfully priorities are achieved. Links with parents are outstanding. They are strongly engaged with their children's learning and supportive of the school's work. There is regularly 100% attendance at parents' evenings. The parents' association has recently raised money for the very popular adventure playground.

Governors give the school good support. They visit regularly to judge the quality of education for themselves so as to hold the school to account if necessary. Partnerships with other institutions are very strong, including local schools, colleges and the diocese. This helps provide activities the school could not easily provide alone, for example, extra sport and music provision. Safeguarding is outstanding; practice to ensure pupils' safety and well-being is exemplary. Procedures are constantly updated. Staff and governors receive regular training on safeguarding, particularly child protection.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make an excellent start to their school life because of the high quality phased introduction they receive. In this, children from the 25 or so feeder nurseries bond together in small and gradually larger groups; all the while becoming more and more accustomed to the

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routines of school life. They are very well cared for, relationships are very good and all welfare requirements are in place. Children feel safe and secure in this setting and behave well at all times. Adults have very high expectations of children's conduct and this sets the scene for the outstanding behaviour seen in the rest of the school. Children quickly gain in confidence and independence as they come into class and settle themselves on the carpet each morning. The teacher then loses no opportunity to further their social, language and early mathematical skills.

Children enjoy their time in the Reception class. Children make excellent progress in their learning because of the high quality of teaching and a varied range of activities that engage their interest and stimulate their curiosity. They are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for own and others' learning, often in small projects of their own devising. They regularly become 'art critics' when painting in the style of Seurat or Picasso, and were observed very confidently performing their Nativity play in front of their families.

Parents are involved very well in the work of the class; they are delighted with their children's progress and the help that staff give them to make sure they get the best from their first year at school. Leadership and management are excellent. The leader has outstanding knowledge and understanding of the needs of this age group. The two adults work extremely well together as a team and their planning is very good. Assessment information is used very well to plan the next steps of learning to meet children's individual needs.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires expressed their complete satisfaction with the school. Reception parents were particularly pleased with their children's induction to school and the way the school involves them in their children's learning. A very small number expressed negative views. These were mainly about behaviour, the amount of sport and school dinners, but inspectors agree with the views expressed by the vast majority.

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, Loughborough 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	73	18	25	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	58	79	13	18	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	51	33	45	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	49	30	41	4	5	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	44	60	24	33	1	1	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	51	31	42	2	3	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	56	26	36	6	8	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	47	30	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	49	28	38	4	5	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	53	27	37	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	48	32	44	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	56	11	41	0	0	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	60	27	37	0	0	1	4

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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Loughborough, LE11 2BG

Thank you for being so friendly, well mannered and helpful when inspectors visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed the time we spent with you and seeing you in your lessons working hard. We agree with you and your parents and carers that yours is a good school.

These are some of the things we found to be really good in your school:

- your headteacher and other leaders do a good job
- all the adults give you excellent care; you are very well looked after and you always have somebody to talk to if you are troubled
- you are very keen to learn and do well; your behaviour is excellent and you all get on well with each other
- you take on lots of responsibility in the school and there is a good community spirit
- you get an excellent start in Reception.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen I have asked them to:

- help you to make the most of your excellent start in Reception and make sure it continues right up the school, by seeing if your learning targets help you to understand what you have learnt in lessons and make sure everyone listens carefully when the teacher is talking to the whole class
- make links with different school communities in this country and abroad so that you learn more about how people from different cultures live.

I am sure you want to be better too, so please make sure you work hard and do your best all the time.

I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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