

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123204
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340306
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marko Madzar
Headteacher	Karen Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. A majority of the time was spent looking at learning, including pupils' work, 13 lessons were observed; all eight teachers were seen teaching; brief discussions were held with some parents outside the school and two groups of pupils were interviewed. One governor was interviewed and meetings were held with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at local authority reports, information about pupils' progress, staff and pupil surveys and safeguarding procedures. Ninety-three returns from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- the use of assessment and target setting to secure progress, especially for more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of teaching and provision in information and communication technology (ICT)
- how well leaders at all levels, including governors, support sustained improvement to outcomes for pupils
- whether care, guidance and support is outstanding as viewed by the school.

Information about the school

Sacred Heart is a broadly average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British with a few from a range of other ethnic groups. A few pupils have a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities, although in some classes the proportion of pupils with such needs is higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class. The school has several awards, including the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark. There is a privately run breakfast club and privately run early years provision on site

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 is a good and delightful primary school where pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their outstanding attendance which improves each year. The main strength of the school is the consistently good teaching and learning. This means that pupils make good progress in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT in all age groups. This is true for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any particular difficulties. When pupils enter the school, their skills are in line with those expected for their age and by the time they leave Year 6, attainment is above average and so achievement is good.

Pupils make equally good progress in developing their personal skills. Their behaviour, for example, is good, with often exemplary behaviour in lessons where pupils show great enthusiasm towards their tasks. Pupils feel and are kept very safe, and unkind behaviour is rare and well dealt with. Outstanding attitudes to leading a healthy life are reflected in the high take-up of sport. Pupils' excellent contribution to the school and local community and their willingness to influence decisions and take on responsibility stands out. They have, among many things, influenced the development of a more creative and outdoor-based curriculum. The school successfully encourages good local community cohesion and relationships within the school are harmonious. Pupils respect those who are different to themselves, but lack a full understanding of the very different lives and cultures of British society nationally.

Strengths in teaching are evident in the wide range of interesting activities, strong subject knowledge and skilled support for those with difficulties or special educational needs. Regular assessment means that teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' attainment levels. The targets which are set using this information do not support individual pupils enough in understanding what they need to do to move to the next level. As a result, some lessons do not always move learning forward with sufficient challenge, especially for more able pupils.

The good curriculum is increasingly active with plenty of enrichment to bring learning to life, supporting personal and academic outcomes well. The extensive residential trips are valued highly by the pupils. Key skills are well supported in most subjects, but planning and target setting in ICT is not sufficiently systematic to ensure that all strands of the subject are taught effectively.

Despite some unavoidable disruption to staffing, good leadership and self-evaluation, particularly by the headteacher, have ensured that attainment, progress and teaching continue to improve well. Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the strengths and

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areas for development for the school which they use effectively to raise standards further. The capacity to improve is good, as evidenced by the large increase in attainment in science. Middle managers and subject leaders have not had time to fully develop their roles. Several are new to the role and do not maintain a strong overview of the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility. This prevents them from regularly directing and managing improvement. Governors bring considerable strengths to their work and are highly committed, but they recognise that their role in overseeing and supporting the work of school improvement is underdeveloped.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is outstanding, from extremely robust procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, through to excellent links with outside agencies to support pupils with a range of different needs, including learning and behaviour difficulties. Pupils feel, as one commented, 'The school prepares us for life very well.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the way pupils' individual targets are set so that:
 - they have a much clearer idea of how to move to the next level
 - lesson planning ensures that all groups have sufficient challenge, especially the more able
 - pupils' skills in ICT are developed securely in all strands of the subject.
- Develop the way leadership is distributed by:
 - ensuring leaders at all levels develop a strong, ongoing overview of provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - enabling middle managers and subject leaders to be involved more regularly in directing improvement
 - strengthening the role of governors in overseeing and supporting the work of school improvement.
- Ensure that community cohesion is supported through greater links with different communities nationally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy and value learning highly which is reflected in the way so many attended even when snow made it very difficult to get to school. This is one reason why they achieve well in their academic and personal development. Good progress is evident as pupils enthusiastically explore how to keep snow from melting in science or generating ideas for lively descriptions in their stories. The good progress made by all the different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, was clear when, in one lesson, they helped each other very effectively to decide whether numbers were greater or less than each other. Attainment for pupils aged from five to seven years of age is rising each year and is consistently above average. For pupils aged from seven to eleven

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years, the strong improvement seen in the work of the 2009 leavers is currently evident in different year and ability groups; progress is consistently good over time and attainment is now above average. A very few more able pupils make less progress in writing and mathematics than they do in reading, where progress is often outstanding. In ICT, pupils' skills in control technology are satisfactory rather than good. However, in lessons, many demonstrate considerable skill in using computers to find out information or display their work.

Pupils take great responsibility towards keeping safe and looking after each other, acting as buddies for example. In many lessons, behaviour is exemplary and pupils show a great sense of responsibility for achieving as well as they can. Many pupils demonstrate their outstanding awareness of healthy living by making sure they eat more fruit and vegetables and they say they feel better for it; they love being outside. Pupils are very keen to contribute to the wider community, collecting litter in Henley for instance or, as strong environmentalists, recycling and conserving wherever possible. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is good with some considerable spiritual strengths arising from the school's religious ethos. Pupils' cultural understanding is satisfactory, because although they enjoy literature and drama, their understanding of the multicultural nature of British society is less well developed.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

The learning environment is very stimulating and welcoming. Many strengths in teaching include good use of technology to aid understanding and motivate pupils. Most teachers use questioning well and enable pupils to explore their ideas and they feel confident to do so. High expectations contribute significantly to pupils' aspirations and achievements. Outstanding care ensures that support in lessons for pupils with additional needs, including learning difficulties, is skilled and effective in helping them do well. Pupils experiencing a range of difficulties often make remarkable progress in their personal and academic work, resulting from high quality access to outside agencies and the welfare support mechanisms provided by the school. Arrangements for moving school or class, so that learning continues without interruption, are exceptionally well organised, which pupils strongly appreciate.

The good teaching is enhanced by a well-planned and active curriculum providing pupils with a wealth of skills in organisation, research and in practical understanding. Good information is kept about pupils' progress and pupils commented how 'teachers notice our progress more'. The resulting detailed knowledge of individual pupils and consistently skilled teaching ensures that progress is good for all groups. Nevertheless, the use of this assessment information for setting pupils' individual targets is less well developed. Pupils do not have enough information from their targets to help them know how to improve more rapidly in writing, mathematics and ICT. This results in some slower progress, especially for a few more able pupils in these subjects.

Although pupils do well, the way the ICT curriculum is organised does not ensure that the full range of skills is taught to all groups. Good collaboration with local authority specialists and local schools partnership has resulted in improvements in support for basic skills in all subjects. The increase in outside learning, such as the 'igloo' being built recently with real snow, is much appreciated by the pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a strong ambition for the pupils of the school. She is well supported by a highly committed and skilled group of teachers who seek to secure

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continued improvement. This has resulted for example in the greatly improved provision and outcomes in science and improved progress throughout the school. Good leadership of teaching and robust and regular monitoring of pupils' progress supports the now consistently good teaching. Due to recent and unavoidable staff changes, leadership is not currently fully distributed and key roles are still evolving. For this reason, the headteacher has taken on considerable responsibility for many aspects of the school's work in order to maintain quality. Middle managers and subject leaders do not monitor short-term provision or outcomes regularly enough to direct ongoing improvement and bring strengths in leadership to all levels of the school. In addition, the recently restructured and partially new governing body recognises shortcomings in its role of holding the school to account and providing sufficient challenge to support school improvement.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are outstanding with exceptional care being taken by governors and staff to monitor compliance and keep pupils safe. Equality of opportunity for all pupils is outstanding, based upon careful, regular analysis of the performance of different groups and swift intervention. One recent result has been the closing of the gap between girls' and boys' performance. Despite some good work to encourage pupils' appreciation and respect for people who are different to themselves, the school's links at a national level to increase pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity in Britain are underdeveloped.

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	3
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	1
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

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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A warm and welcoming environment and wide range of stimulating activities give children a good start to their education. When children join Reception, although mainly typical for their age, their skills are below in literacy and numeracy. Children make at least good progress in all the required skills and by the time they join Year 1 their attainment in literacy and numeracy is broadly average and often above in other areas. Strong links with parents and pre-school providers ensure that children settle into school quickly. Children work and play amicably with each other, showing increasing independence, and their relationships with staff are very positive. Children's work is carefully assessed and the information used to support different groups, but not to highlight any targets for individuals. This means that when staff engage with children during activities, some opportunities to move learning forward at a faster rate are missed. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities and children finding out things for themselves. Children's good behaviour enables them to focus on exploring and learning. For example, when learning about the three bears, they quickly grasped how to build a big, medium and small bear and had lots of fun in the process. Good leadership is effective in driving improvement; for example, a focus on using letters and sounds has led to improved literacy skills, especially for boys. This was used well by children sounding out which letters to use when, as 'Goldilocks', they wrote to the three bears to apologise for eating the porridge and breaking a chair.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate how safe their children are, their child's progress and their enjoyment of school. Several parents and carers wrote positive comments, mentioning the strong leadership and communication with parents, typically stating that, 'My child loves attending Sacred Heart.' A very small minority of parents and carers expressed different concerns which were followed through and, where supported by inspection findings, are reflected in the report.

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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	68	30	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	74	25	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	59	36	39	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	46	43	47	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	50	44	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	54	40	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	59	35	38	1	1	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)	49	53	30	33	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	47	45	49	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	54	45	49	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	40	49	53	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	74	24	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	71	25	27	2	2	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.



14 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1SL

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Sacred Heart is a good school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Senior staff, especially your headteacher, work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, your work is getting better each year. The school has now been asked to improve the leadership skills of more staff so that the work of running the school is increasingly shared.

Skilful teaching ensures that you make good progress in your lessons. As a result, you do well, particularly in reading and science. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons fun and interesting. We have, however, asked them to make sure that the targets they set you will cover more of the skills that you need to develop and to make it clear how you can move to the next level. This is so that you all have sufficient challenge, especially those of you who learn quickly. You suggested that you would like this to happen and so we are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas. Staff have also been asked to plan ICT more carefully so that you make good progress in all the skills needed including control technology.

The very wide range of activities provide many opportunities for you to make an outstanding contribution to school life and the community. The responsibilities that you take on are heartening; for example the way you look after each other, act as buddies in the playground and contribute your ideas to how you should learn, influencing outside learning. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you very safe and looks after you very well. It is, therefore, very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking a great deal of exercise and eating such a healthy diet. Your behaviour is good, especially in the way you value learning and play such an active part in lessons. You show a very considerate and mature understanding and respect for others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living. We think that this, alongside your outstanding attendance, helps you to be well prepared for your next school and future lives.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

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