

# Sacred Heart RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134479
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	341477
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Hewlett

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John McManus
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Suzanne Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Knutsford Road Gorton Manchester M18 7NJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and minutes of governors' meetings. They also scrutinised 22 questionnaires returned by parents as well as 26 questionnaires from staff and 26 from Year 6 pupils.

- the success of the school in raising pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science
- how well leadership and management are bringing about sustained improvement
- present attainment, progress and learning of different groups of pupils, with particular emphasis on reading and writing and the needs of boys and more able pupils
- the consistency of teaching and how well adults ensure pupils have a good enough understanding of their own learning
- how well current partnerships with parents and other agencies and organisations, as well as community cohesion initiatives, support pupils' academic learning and personal development.

## Information about the school

This average size school draws pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is almost three times the national average. A larger than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has many external awards, including Healthy Schools, International School and the National Sports Award.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and Reception class with 30 pupils in each. The school runs a daily breakfast club.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Through its rigorous and honest self-evaluation it has rapidly addressed the issues which caused previous underachievement. Improvements have been made in standards, achievement and attendance. There is convincing evidence to show that the school's capacity to sustain momentum and improve still further is good. This is a highly caring and supportive school. Among its strengths are the good quality pastoral care, guidance and support and its safeguarding procedures which ensure that pupils feel very safe and are highly valued. Pupils are confident, very polite, behave well and have commendably positive attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to contribute to their community. They take their responsibilities seriously and care well for each other. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and this has helped to create a very positive and purposeful atmosphere. This is further helped by the way in which staff have successfully created a bright and lively learning environment.

The majority of children enter the school with well below average starting points, but because of good support and provision throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make good progress. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress and, although standards have been low in English, mathematics and science in the past, attainment has improved considerably with pupils now reaching the national average in all of these subjects. However, pupils' ability to write confidently still lags behind their reading skills and so raising standards in writing must be key priority. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write independently across the curriculum.

Pupils' achievement has also improved because of the strong leadership shown, especially by the headteacher, which has led to improvements in teaching and assessment. In a very small minority of lessons, there remains a lack of pace, and more-able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged, particularly in mathematics and writing. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not always well enough used to support and extend the learning on these lessons. There are effective systems in place to give guidance to pupils about their work and to assess their understanding in lessons.

Rigorous monitoring and high expectations have resulted in a cohesive and committed approach towards improving the school. The vast majority who responded to the staff survey indicated a wholehearted support for the direction that the school is taking, and morale is high.

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

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- Raise attainment in writing throughout the school by:
- - ensuring teachers provide greater levels of challenge in activities, particularly for the more-able pupils
- - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to write independently across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the school's best practice is reflected throughout by:
- - ensuring the pace of lessons is brisk and all pupils are on task
- - making consistently good use of ICT to support learning.

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

Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. They value the good support they receive and enjoy their lessons. When the work planned for them is challenging and well matched to their differing abilities, pupils work with sustained concentration. In a very small minority of lessons, more-able pupils do not make as much progress as they could because the tasks set do not provide sufficient challenge. In these lessons, pupils' concentration can wander and the pace of learning slows. A telling example of the school's effective self-evaluation and its good capacity to improve is its success in closing the gender gap, so that by Year 6, boys are now doing equally as well as girls in most areas of the curriculum.

Standards are rising and are now broadly average. In 2009, pupils met the very challenging targets that had been set for them in their national tests. Pupils achieve well and there are clear indications that progress is accelerating, although less so in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few who do not speak English as their first language make good progress relative to their starting points. This is because the school has high expectations, pupils benefit from regular and specialist teaching, and support is very well focused on their individual needs. As a result, most achieve or exceed their targets.

Pupils behave well in lessons, on the playground and around the school, with older pupils taking good care of younger ones and helping them to join in games such as football. Pupils say they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents agree that this is the case. Pupils have a good understanding of how to ensure their own safety and are considerate of the safety and well-being of others. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy physical activities, taking part enthusiastically in the wide range of sporting opportunities provided for them. They also choose the healthy options in the school canteen. Pupils play an active part in the school community, for example, as school councillors and 'playground buddies'. There are some good examples of improvements initiated by the school council, such as new playground equipment, coned areas for younger children and 'safeguarding buddies'. Pupils say their playtimes are much more enjoyable now that these improvements have been made. Greatly helped by the good pastoral support of the school-based family worker, attendance has risen. From a low level in 2008, the school is meeting its local authority target and attendance is currently close to the national average. Pupils develop

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satisfactory workplace skills through working both in teams and independently. They understand the importance of regular attendance and of being punctual. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show many of the necessary skills and personal qualities required to live and work together successfully within both their own and the wider community.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and this helps to explain why pupils achieve well. At its best, and in most lessons, inspectors observed teaching that was well prepared, planned and resourced to meet the needs of all the pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. Their questioning of pupils is clear and insightful and helps to accurately assess pupils' understanding. The pace of these lessons is lively and brisk and pupils enjoyed their learning. For example, in one science lesson, pupils were actively involved in discussing the properties of the solar system. Working in groups on the playground, they were then asked to demonstrate to their classmates how the planets orbited the sun. As a result of tackling the subject in such an interesting and

<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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challenging way, pupils' understanding of the topic and their ability to explain their knowledge to others increased markedly.

The school has thorough and effective systems to assess and track the progress of pupils over time. Assessment data is used well to identify challenging targets for pupils in English and mathematics, and pupils are aware of these. Ongoing assessment in lessons is very effective in all classes, with well established procedures to check pupils' understanding of what they are learning. Similarly, there are good systems in place to mark pupils' work, which involve them in assessing their own work and which provide clear indications of how they can improve. This weakness from the last inspection has been comprehensively addressed.

The curriculum is well balanced and provides a good coverage of the range of subjects. There has been a whole-school review which has resulted in an emphasis on making the curriculum more relevant to the pupils' needs. For example, humanities is now organised around a series of themes and topics which provide a broad range of interesting cross-curricular experiences. Each topic is enhanced by visits or visitors to the school. Whilst this approach is still new, there is strong evidence that it is already having a positive effect on some aspects of literacy, such as reading and oracy. However, this has not impacted fully on improving pupils' writing skills. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with specific learning and social needs and is further enriched by a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Pupils benefit from good quality of pastoral support, care and guidance. The school works extremely well with outside agencies and it has established excellent links with, and support for, families and pupils facing challenging circumstances. For example, through its appointment of a family support worker and by providing a well run breakfast club. Staff strive hard to ensure that parents and carers have a clear understanding of how they can support their children, and transition arrangements at all ages are exemplary.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The highly effective headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior team, has established an ethos which is single-mindedly determined to overcome past under-performance. Discussions with staff and their questionnaires clearly demonstrate the enthusiasm of staff and their wholehearted support for this approach.

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The governors are very well trained and led. They provide effective challenge and support the school through, for example, regularly meeting with the headteacher and staff and by closely monitoring performance.

The headteacher and governors have a clear view of what works well in the school and what needs to improve. This is reflected in their accurate self-evaluation and pertinent priorities for development. The targets the school has set itself are very challenging and these have been instrumental in raising standards and accelerating progress. Since the last inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are more precise.

The school effectively engages with parents, particularly those who are hard to reach, and works well with outside agencies to promote learning and pupils' well-being.

Resources are well managed and deployed. Sacred Heart is an inclusive school and actively promotes equality of opportunity so that the performance of some previously underachieving groups has improved. Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and found that they are of good quality and are consistently applied. Safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Within the school community itself and at a local level, there are some outstanding elements, for example through the support and inclusion of pupils and families who are new to the area and to the parish. In addition, there are strong links with other communities within Britain as well as the long established links with schools and organisations in Peru and Spain.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**



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

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Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, either in the Nursery or Reception classes, with skills and understanding well below average. They make good progress, relative to their starting points, in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. However, most do not achieve expected goals by the time they transfer to Year 1.

The quality of the provision is good. Children are given many opportunities to work independently and to take responsibility, for example at 'tidying up' time. Behaviour is good and children work and play well together because routines are quickly established and children are involved in agreeing the class rules. Many opportunities are given to develop vocabulary through directed play and experimentation. Children also revel in the responsibilities they are given soon after they arrive, such as taking the register to the school office. As one child explained proudly leading the line to the dining room, 'Did you know I'm at the front because I am so good?' Adults are well qualified and provide good teaching, support, care and guidance. Learning is well planned and very good use is made of both inside and outside areas. Indeed, the high quality provision outside complements the visually stimulating classrooms. As a result, children are very keen to come to school. One parent commented that her child 'wants to come at the weekends'. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The team leader has a good understanding of the needs of children of this age and rigorously monitors the provision, giving her a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Strategic planning to overcome weaknesses is good. A particular strength is the strong links with parents and carers both before and during their children's time in school. Safeguarding is viewed as a priority and is highly effective.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Twenty two parents responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of those who returned the form expressed satisfaction with the school. However, a very small minority indicated that they felt that their children's special needs were not being met and that the school did not take account of their concerns. Inspectors do not agree with these views. One parent captured the views of others with the comment, 'My child has made fantastic progress, especially in literacy. There is a family atmosphere around school'.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sacred Heart RC 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 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	74	12	22	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	67	16	30	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	70	16	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	78	12	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	72	13	24	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	78	12	22	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	64	18	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	57	21	39	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	65	16	30	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	59	18	33	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	63	20	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	77	12	23	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 pupils' 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.**



Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Manchester,  
M18 7NJ

Thank you for making the other inspector and me so welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed chatting to you and the grown-ups, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

I am sure that you are keen to hear what we thought about your school. We think Sacred Heart has improved a lot since the last inspection and is providing a good standard of education for all of you.

These are the things that were good about your school:

- the way that you are cared for and kept safe. Many of you that we spoke to said how safe you felt and your parents agree
- you behave well and know how to keep yourselves healthy
- you enjoy coming to school and are given interesting and exciting things to learn and do
- the people in charge of your school do a really good job, especially the headteacher. Everyone has been really successful in making things better.

To help it improve even more, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to do the following:

- to give you more opportunities to practise and improve your writing
- to make sure that those of you who find your work easier than most are always challenged to do even better, especially in writing and mathematics
- to make more of your lessons as good as the best ones.

You can help by listening carefully in class and attending school every day.

Good luck in the future!

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