

Sacred Heart Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135029
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	341602
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Kerrone
Headteacher	Melanie Gee
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed, taught by five teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff and, informally, with a number of parents. The inspectors observed the school's work by sampling pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, tracking and assessment data. They also analysed questionnaires from 17 parents and carers, 53 pupils and 16 staff.

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

- the use made of the provision for the outdoor curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- any variations in rates of progress across the school
- the effectiveness of the school's tracking and assessment systems.

Information about the school

This school is a smaller than average school. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is twice the national average. All pupils in the school are from minority ethnic groups, mostly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. About 95% of pupils are learning English as an additional language and the large majority begin school with little or no English. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average although there is a higher proportion than average of pupils with significant physical disabilities in the school. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, the Quality Mark and the Active Mark.

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 improving school. The headteacher, strongly supported by all the staff team, provides a clear sense of direction, which is linked well to school improvement. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'I think Sacred Heart is a very good school - my other children will certainly be coming here as well.'

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that typically found, particularly in communication and language skills and personal skills. Provision for the youngest children is good overall although there are currently insufficient opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their independent learning skills by accessing the outdoor curriculum. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. As a result, attainment by Year 6 is in line with the national average.

Because excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support, pupils' personal development has many strengths. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. Although the great majority of pupils really enjoy school and attend regularly, overall levels of attendance are only broadly satisfactory due to the extended holidays taken by a small minority of families. Pupils, who are from a range of different ethnic groups, get on very well with one another. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and the need for healthy lifestyles. A strong moral code is implicit in the school's ethos and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour. This in turn has a positive effect on the good progress pupils make in most lessons. They work hard and conscientiously, both independently and co-operatively, without the need for constant adult intervention. Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and the quality of teaching is good in most lessons as a result. However, in a small number of lessons teachers do not ensure that all pupils fully understand the task they are expected to undertake and, as a result, the pace of learning is reduced. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are able to learn and develop confidence, regardless of their individual circumstances. The school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of its work and its aspirations are understood and acted upon consistently at all levels. Pupils are tracked carefully and data analysed rigorously to ensure any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support is provided. The school is highly committed to working in partnership and takes a leading role in a range of activities. Staff have a good understanding of how well the

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school is doing and what needs to be done next. The school has improved well since the last inspection and has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop children's independent learning skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage by improving resources and accommodation to enable children to have free access to a good range of activities in the outdoor area.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are at the level of the best.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school's data demonstrates clearly that pupils achieve well in their time in the school, progressing steadily from well below average standards on entry to the school to broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils make particularly good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Standards of teaching in lessons and work in books confirm this good progress. In one particularly effective lesson on letters and their sounds, the teacher skilfully used questioning to gauge and extend pupils' learning. Progress was further consolidated by good teamwork with skilled teaching assistants who supported less able pupils well and challenged the more able pupils to do more, with the result that all pupils made good progress in the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and sometimes excellent, progress because of the strong support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and Year 6 pupils stated that although they were excited about moving to their new school, they would be really sorry to leave Sacred Heart in the summer. Pupils understand what constitutes an unsafe situation and are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the good progress that they make in most lessons. They behave considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. Pupils are interested in the school's health promotion strategies and understand the main threats to their health and how they can be avoided. They willingly take on responsibility and, through the school council, play a constructive role and have a positive influence on decisions about school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are curious about the world around them and embrace new experiences which broaden their understanding. Pupils have a developing insight into similarities and differences between their own and others' cultures, and are learning to appreciate cultural diversity and challenge racism.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use to enthuse and challenge their pupils and this contributes to their good rates of progress. Most lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and adults and there is a very positive atmosphere for learning across the school. Good use is made of resources, including new technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Support by skilled teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning in most lessons. As a result of the school's good assessment procedures, teachers plan well to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities of pupils in each class. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers did not ensure all pupils fully understood their allotted tasks and the pace of lessons slowed as a result. In most cases, however, teachers and teaching assistants listen to, observe and question groups of pupils well during lessons in order to improve learning. Marking is up to date and, in the best cases, provides pupils with clear guidance about how well they have done and what they could do to improve.

The curriculum is adjusted effectively to meet the needs of different ages and ability groups. The emphasis is firmly on developing pupils' skills, but in such a way as to promote enjoyment and enthusiastic participation. Extra-curricular enrichment opportunities are varied and are much enjoyed by pupils. Pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Links with extended services support the development of the wider curriculum very well. The school's outstanding arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute significantly to their

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good personal development and well-being and support their learning very well.

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?

The headteacher provides strong leadership for a very well-motivated staff team who demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to continuing to improve provision. The headteacher has identified, and successfully tackled, areas requiring improvement and, as a result, most aspects of the school are now good or better. New subject co-ordinators are steadily developing their skills and improving their role of overseeing their subjects across the school. The recently reformed governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and is becoming more involved in evaluating its work. As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching is good overall across the school. The school's very positive relationship with parents and carers and its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in all the school's work. As a result, the school is a happy, harmonious community in which to work and learn. The small size of the school ensures that all pupils and families are known very well by staff. Through rigorous analysis of the school's regular and accurate data on pupils' progress, staff are constantly alert to any variation in achievement and are proactive in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. Systems for the safeguarding of pupils are good and there is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the governors and staff at all levels. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively and has recently formed excellent relationships with a school in a contrasting area in the United Kingdom. It is aware, however, of the need to strengthen recently formed links with organisations or schools outside the country to give pupils better knowledge and understanding of communities other than their own.

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

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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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the Nursery, children's skills are well below those typically found. Most need considerable help to ensure that they learn how to be independent and work and play together. There is a good focus on helping children with their speaking skills and ensuring that they develop an ability to work with others in a friendly and purposeful way. As children move through the Nursery and Reception classes they make good progress because teaching and learning are good overall. Despite this good progress, however, standards remain below average when children enter Year 1. Teachers and support staff carefully observe and record children's achievements on a day-to-day basis and use this information effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Happy and caring relationships are established and children settle quickly. Children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. They clearly enjoy school and play happily with others or individually. Staff work hard to achieve a strong partnership with parents and carers. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective and help the children to be safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities, in the best cases allowing children to work on things that they choose themselves as well as by taking part in more formal group-work activities with adults. However, opportunities for children to explore their learning independently in the secure outdoor areas are currently limited and this hampers the development of their independent learning skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, very well-supported and integrated well into all activities. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements of very young children and use national guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage well to support children's learning.

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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

Although a smaller percentage of parents than is typical responded to the questionnaire, the parents who did respond declared themselves extremely satisfied with the school. With only one exception, all parents strongly agreed or agreed with the 13 statements in the questionnaire and were unanimous in feeling, for example, that their child enjoys school, that the school is led and managed effectively, that their child is making enough progress at the school and that the school makes sure that their child is kept safe.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sacred Heart 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 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	71	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	76	3	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	76	3	18	1	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	65	6	35	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)	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	65	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	88	1	6	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	76	4	24	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

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.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sacred Heart Primary School, West Midlands, DY4 8SW

Thank you so much for helping me and my colleague when we came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed meeting so many of you and observing you at work and at play. You made me feel very welcome and made my short visit very enjoyable. Together with your parents, you think Sacred Heart is a good school and I agree with you.

You clearly enjoy learning and taking part in many activities. You make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards. Your behaviour is good and I was very impressed with your good manners. You have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you feel very safe and cared for in school. It was good to hear from the school councillors about how you are helping to improve Sacred Heart. You told us that you really enjoy school and are proud to attend. Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. All the adults take excellent care of you. Your school is well led and managed and is continually improving.

To help you to make even better progress, we have asked the school to:

- help the youngest children to further develop their independent learning skills by improving opportunities for them to have free access to a good range of outdoor activities
- ensure you make even better progress by ensuring all lessons are at least good across the school.

You can help by always doing your best and making sure you know your targets.

Thank you again for making me so welcome. I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

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