

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Springfield Road, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 7RH

Inspection dates

24–25 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is variable across classes and in different subjects. Weak teaching has been eradicated but there is still much which requires improvement.
- In some cases, teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics is not strong enough to skilfully adapt learning when it is necessary.
- Not all teachers use the different forms of assessment information to pitch lessons at the right level to secure good progress.
- Pupils' achievement has improved but progress is variable and still requires improvement. This is directly linked to the quality of teaching.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length or use their improving skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar across all subjects.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent. A small number of parents do not take their responsibility seriously enough to make sure their children attend school regularly.
- Not all subject leaders are contributing to school improvement in their subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has renewed the vision for the school and knows exactly the action needed to make this school good.
- Children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly, welcoming, polite and increasingly confident.
- Governance is strong. The governing body is united with the headteacher in their determination to improve the school. They have not shirked difficult decisions in their quest to provide the very best for pupils.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, and thereby outcomes for all groups of pupils, by:
 - using the strong teaching in the school to model effective practice
 - increasing teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of the new schemes in English and mathematics so that they are confident to adapt learning when necessary
 - strengthening teachers' use of assessment techniques so that they can challenge pupils more or intervene when a pupil misunderstands
 - making sure that teachers help pupils to transfer their improving basic skills to sustained and extended pieces of writing across all subjects
 - embedding the changes to the curriculum so that teaching in other subjects is robust and pupils make good progress.

- Further develop the skills and knowledge of leaders of all subjects so that they are confident and competent to check on the effectiveness of their subjects and drive improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement within their area of responsibility.

- Improve pupils' rate of attendance by:
 - strengthening relationships further with the number of parents who do not send their children to school regularly so that they understand the role they must play in securing good learning
 - continuing to utilise all powers available to school leaders to encourage parents to bring their children to school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Visitors are welcomed to Sacred Heart by the sign 'I have called you by your name, you are mine', which captures the ethos of this school. Parents, staff and pupils consider they are listened to and valued under the leadership of the new headteacher.
- A calm, gritty determination, a love of children and a passionate commitment to making sure the school community provides the very best care and education for their pupils characterise the headteacher's leadership. The whole community has 'caught' this vision as the new headteacher has established a calm and nurturing atmosphere. Furthermore, she has moved from the role of headteacher of a local outstanding school while supporting another school in its journey out of special measures; consequently she has credibility and an established track record of securing improvement.
- She has built on the firm foundations set by the executive headteacher so that the school has emerged from special measures and is ready to go forward.
- At the time of the previous inspection, procedures to manage the performance of staff had only just been introduced and staff absence was very high. Governors, together with school leaders, have worked successfully to embed these procedures. The cycle for setting teachers' targets, observing class practice, analysing pupils' progress and scrutiny of their workbooks is an established process. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated.
- Expectations are high. Staff are relishing the whole-school and individual training which is making them better practitioners. Similarly, they are pleased that the new headteacher has recognised their individual expertise and skills and is coaching them to use these strengths for the benefit of the whole school.
- The senior leadership have complementary skills which knot together well to provide a clear, systematic direction for school improvement. The new headteacher has used all available information to make an accurate analysis of the overall effectiveness of the school. Consequently, self-evaluation is secure, albeit cautious in a couple of judgements. Such a candid assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses has enabled leaders to create a clear, systematic plan for further improvement.
- New programmes have been introduced to promote good-quality English and mathematics teaching and learning. Staff are still getting used to these schemes but there is now a more structured approach to the teaching of these subjects. The impact can be seen in pupils' improved achievement at Year 6 in 2015. Despite this, there is still some work to do to make sure teachers use these schemes as effectively as possible.
- Subject leaders are gaining in confidence and competence. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed so that subject leaders are now leading specific subjects. The new headteacher has coached several leaders in monitoring and evaluating techniques and they are starting to use these skills to check on the teaching and learning in their subjects. Some are further along than others, but all share ambition and enthusiasm to put their subject 'on the map'. Nevertheless, there is still work to do to ensure that these leaders contribute fully to the continuing improvement of the school.
- Staff have successfully planned an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum which covers all areas of the national curriculum and takes into account pupils' interests. Pupils are enjoying different subjects and quickly start learning with the 'wow' starters, pre-learning activities, visits and visitors which bring these subjects to life. Leaders are keeping the curriculum under review to ensure that teaching strengthens in all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities such as dance, cross-country running and residential visits.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding to more effectively promote learning by employing more learning assistants who deliver bespoke support to pupils. This enables these pupils to access learning equally as well as their peers. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 in 2015 disadvantaged pupils' progress was better than that of their peers.
- Leadership of special educational needs and disabilities has greatly improved. Pupils who need support are now effectively identified and matched to the correct programmes so that they are generally achieving as well as their peers.
- Leaders use the school sports funding very effectively to ensure that pupils learn and take part in a wide range of sports. Boys and girls have equal access to these activities. Additionally, teachers' skills in a wide variety of sports have increased as a result of training from visiting coaches.
- Tolerance and respect is promoted well through assemblies and the curriculum. The introduction of a

school council provided pupils with a positive experience of the process of democracy. Pupils raise money for different charities. Older pupils can talk about the Prime Minister, how laws are passed and what happens if you break the law. The school is preparing pupils effectively to take their place as citizens of modern Britain although their understanding of other faiths is superficial.

- Relationships with parents are good. Parents feel increasingly involved in their children's learning.
- The school is poised to improve. In musical terms, it has an excellent conductor supported by two lead musicians, who are starting to bring the orchestra of the school together to play in harmony. Some members are still tuning up while others are playing well, but all are in the right place and playing with the right instrument.
- **The governance of the school**
 - At the time of the previous inspection, governance was not effective. Immediately after that inspection the governors instigated an external review of their work and an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding.
 - Governance is stronger now. Governors care passionately about the school and have been unwavering in their support for leaders. Each governor has specific responsibility for an aspect within the school improvement plan and meets with the relevant staff member to discuss developments. This is an effective tool to check the progress of improvements.
 - Members have worked with senior leaders to ensure that arrangements to check on the quality of teaching are rigorous. Members have not flinched from taking difficult decisions.
 - Governors take their responsibilities seriously and know the school well. This knowledge is deepening as they make focused visits to the school to find out for themselves the impact of their decisions and to challenge school leaders.
 - Governors receive clear information on pupils' progress which enables them to check on the effectiveness of pupil premium expenditure.
 - The school's website is compliant.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Secure procedures and relevant training for staff mean that everyone understands their responsibility to protect pupils from harm and carry out these responsibilities with rigour. Staff are confident to raise any concerns with leaders if they spot any signs of abuse or neglect.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is variable across the school and in different subjects. Staff attendance has improved significantly and weak teaching has finally been eradicated. Despite this, there remains much teaching which requires further improvement. This is directly linked to the improving skills and knowledge of each teacher.
- Leaders have challenged underperformance and as a result there are now several teacher vacancies which are being filled by temporary staff. Leaders have robust plans to appoint strong staff to fill these vacancies from September.
- Recently introduced schemes for the teaching of English and mathematics have improved teachers' subject knowledge. These have led to a whole-school approach to teaching in these subjects as teachers have the tools to plan sequences of learning. This is a vast improvement from 2014 when staff chose the content of lessons independently of other teachers.
- Teachers in each year group plan learning activities together so that all pupils in one year group are taught the same content. However, the more skilful teachers adapt the content so that it more accurately suits the learning stage of the pupil, while others are not so adept at this and so miss opportunities to deepen learning or pick up on any misunderstandings. This is particularly so in writing, where there are limited chances for pupils to write at length and use skills of spelling and punctuation.
- Similarly, teachers' use of the different techniques to check pupils' progress such as 'over the shoulder' marking, checking on learning during a lesson and the formal assessment activities, as per school guidance, are variable. This means that not all teachers are using information to pitch lessons at the right level and so secure good progress and improved standards.
- Teachers' knowledge is still growing in other subjects. They are just starting to use opportunities for writing at length in, for example, history and geography. Additionally, the expectations of presentation and correct grammar and spelling are not as high across all subjects

- Staff have received a significant amount of training to improve their practice. For example, staff have received training in the teaching of letters and sounds which has led to good, lively teaching and accelerated progress for pupils. The consequence of this is seen in the increased number of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) check in 2015, which is now average.
- Not all of the current staff have been involved in all training opportunities, so teachers' practice is at different levels of improvement. Nevertheless, morale is high and staff are working together as a team, learning from each other and sharing ideas.
- Staff work with a consortium of local schools to check that the assessment of pupils work is accurate. Teachers have joined with year group teachers from these other schools to make sure that their assessments are correct for writing. This has renewed their competence in assessing pupils' attainment and their confidence in setting high targets for their pupils. Leaders know that this is an ongoing activity so that all teachers can be secure in their judgements of pupils' work in all subjects.
- There is some good-quality teaching. This is characterised by high expectations, ability to use all assessment information to pitch lessons at the right level, and the skill to use the schemes creatively so that full use can be made of them. As a result, pupils make good progress. This is particularly evident in Year 6.
- Teaching assistants have gone from strength to strength. Each individual is allocated to support a pupil or group of pupils based on their own specific skill and the need of the pupil; they are included in pupil progress meetings with the teacher and senior leaders. Their contribution to pupils' progress is valued and appreciated as their evaluations are considered equally to the teacher's during these meetings. Communication between the teacher and the teaching assistants is well established so that both know how well pupils are learning. Consequently, there is a rich check on pupils' progress so that any underachievement can be identified quickly and support programmes adapted.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All areas of the school, inside and outside, have been decluttered, with resources sorted and organised. It gives the impression that the school is waking up from a long sleep. Classrooms are vibrantly decorated and the walls are covered with displays which support pupils learning. Pupils' work is tastefully displayed so that they recognise that their efforts are rewarded.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said they all enjoyed school as their teachers care for them and keep them safe. This view was echoed by the parents spoken to, who expressed satisfaction with many aspects of the work of the school and particularly channels of communication which keep them in touch with their children's care and education.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through assemblies, the curriculum and visitors. They know that it is not safe to post personal details on the internet and what to do if they receive strange message on their mobile phones. They know exactly who to go to if they have any worries and spoke highly of the children and families support worker, who is 'lovely'.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that adults take action to sort it out, including the use of any derogatory language such as racist or homophobic name-calling. This has improved well since the previous inspection.
- Representatives of outside agencies, such as the police and the fire brigade, visit the school to give talks to pupils to remind them of possible risks. These links are fruitful as pupils learn about civic institutions and learn how to be law-abiding citizens.
- Pupils feel valued and are delighted when the headteacher walks around the school, calls them by their name and shows interest in what they are doing.
- Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have already drawn up plans for reorganising the playground so that younger pupils will have equipment to play with over breaktimes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly underpins the school. Assemblies are thought-provoking; the 'big questions' raise discussions about a variety of topics such as voting, democracy and having confidence to express their views, which are all explored back in class. Pupils learn about other faiths through, for example, visiting other places of worship, but were unable to talk more deeply about other faiths. Consequently, their appreciation of the diversity of life is rather restricted.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of the pupils is good.
- Smartly dressed pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion, showing courtesy and good manners to each other and visitors.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection. They consider that their work is not interrupted by any low-level disruption. They showed mature empathy towards pupils in their classes who experience problems with their behaviour.
- Pupils understand the school rules and enjoy receiving 'hearts' when they have behaved well. No one likes the idea of losing 'golden time' because they have misbehaved. They feel that teachers use the behaviour systems consistently and fairly.
- Leaders have taken action to improve attendance but overall attendance dropped last year. On further analysis this was caused by, in part, to absence due to medical needs. It is clear that most pupils attend well and arrive punctually each morning, ready to start learning.
- However, there is a small minority of families who do not take their responsibilities seriously enough regarding getting their children to school and on time. More urgent action to improve this situation has been taken since September 2015. The children and families support worker has sought out families who have issues and worked tirelessly to solve problems. Pupils say that they receive work to complete at home if they are sick and teachers help them to catch up on learning when they return. The attendance governor regularly meets with leaders to check on pupils' attendance and leaders have used the powers they have to encourage parents to bring their children to school more regularly. As a result, attendance rates have improved, in some cases significantly, over the last seven months.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning; they want to learn. Such positive attitudes contribute to pupils' improving progress. Most concentrate well in lessons and persevere with tasks. This is not the case, on rare occasions when teaching is not pitched appropriately or when they do not know what is expected of them next.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- At the time of the previous inspection in 2014, the progress that pupils made during their time at Sacred Heart was inadequate and standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average. This is no longer the case; standards are rising and progress overall is improving.
- Inspection evidence shows that attainment and progress are variable across classes and subjects; a direct link to the quality of teaching. Pupils' workbooks, observations of learning in classrooms and an evaluation of the information the school holds on pupils' achievement show that in some classes pupils are making good progress in some subjects while in others progress requires improvement. This is also linked to gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills due to previous weak teaching.
- Pupils understand the benefits of learning and want to please their teachers by trying their best. They appreciate the different subjects they now learn.
- The school did very well for Year 6 pupils in 2015. Action taken by the school ensured that this group of pupils was ready for the next stage of education at secondary school. Pupils reached above-average standards in reading and mathematics, and average in writing and punctuation, grammar and spelling. Pupils made good progress from their starting points. Almost all pupils made expected progress in mathematics and all made expected progress in reading and writing, with high numbers making better than expected progress.
- The number of pupils from Year 1 reaching the expected level in the phonics check has risen over the last three years and a large majority of pupils reached an average standard in 2015. This means that these young pupils have a much better understanding of the relationship between sounds and letters and are ready to read and write well.
- Overall standards for pupils in Year 2 in 2015 remained below average, with a drop in writing. Leaders investigated the reasons for this dip and have taken action to remedy the situation. Nonetheless, this year group of pupils made reasonable progress from low starting points.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is mixed, but better than at the time of the previous inspection. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils from Year 6 made good progress, slightly more than others in their class.
- Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are still mixed, but they are narrowing when

compared with others nationally. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind other pupils nationally in writing, only one term behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and less than a term behind in reading.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability made good progress in Year 6 in 2015, especially the few pupils with a statement of educational needs or education, health and care plan. This is because pupils are now correctly identified as having special educational needs and support packages are targeted at their precise need to enable them to access learning and succeed.
- The most-able pupils in Year 6 in 2015 made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics but not all reached the higher levels of which they are capable. Inspection evidence shows that the progress of this group mirrors that of other groups; in several classes most-able pupils are made to think very deeply and make good progress, but this is not always the case.

Early years provision

is good

- Children are well cared for so they feel safe, secure and gain confidence. Behaviour is good. Children play imaginatively, happily share equipment and help each other. They stick with tasks as they are enjoying their learning.
- One Nursery boy took delight in making tea and cakes for himself, his friend and for the inspector. He persevered at the task, learning to balance the cup on a saucer and the cake on the plate. His wide smile showed his contentment with his success and sense of achievement. Additionally, a little girl concentrated very hard as she wrote a letter to her mummy and little brother, folding the letter and sliding it in the envelope, then writing the address on the front.
- Lively practice of letters and the sounds that they make kept Reception children engrossed as they practised skills ready to read and write. Children know the routines and quickly start learning. They successfully sound out known letters and have a go at new ones. Many used the displays to find letters and all practised writing the words. Appropriate praise is used by the teacher to encourage children to work hard.
- When children start the Nursery, what they know and can do is below that typical for their age. That means that they are not ready to do the types of activities other children are able to do at their age. From their different starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress. The proportion of children ready for the start of Year 1 has improved markedly over the last three years, moving from significantly below average in 2013 to average in 2015.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use group-focused sessions well. For example, a group of children shared a book with an adult in the library area to learn about page-turning and rhyming words. This is balanced well with time for children to follow their own curiosity.
- Good leadership has focused significantly on improving provision this year. A review of the learning environment has led to well-organised, defined areas so that children can use the equipment and resources to support their curiosity and learn well. Opportunities for mark-making, early writing, early reading and early mathematics work are planned well.
- Staff use a newly introduced assessment tool to check on children's progress and use this information to plan activities that capture children's interest and move them on in their learning.
- Parents are very satisfied with the care and attention their children receive in the early years. Parents have attended workshops held by the school so that they know how the school teaches letters and sounds, and so support their children at home.
- Due to an overhaul of learning resources, leaders have recognised that the outside area lacks sufficient equipment for children to learn. They have drawn up plans to tackle this issue and have allocated funds to increase equipment.
- Themed role-play areas invite children to dress up and take on different characters. Leaders recognise that there is an opportunity for this to be used more imaginatively to extend children's expressive and creative development.
- Early years provision is judged to be better than the overall effectiveness of the school for several reasons. The quality of teaching is good; adults have a secure understanding of early years provision and can use assessment information skilfully to plan learning which motivates and encourages children to learn.

School details

Unique reference number	106461
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10005412

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Gaskell
Headteacher	Chris Mason
Telephone number	01942 231478
Website	www.sacredheartprimary.org.uk/
Email address	enquiries@admin.sacredheart.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2014

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is almost twice the size of the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support the educational achievement of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the leadership of the school. At the time of the previous inspection an executive headteacher was leading the school for three days per week, with the deputy headteacher taking responsibility for the remaining two days per week. In September 2015, a substantive headteacher joined the school; she has considerable credibility being an experienced headteacher of an outstanding local school and supporting another school on its journey out of special measures.
- There have been substantial changes to the staffing profile. Currently there are three full-time and two temporary teaching positions.
- Two new members have joined the governing body: one the headteacher of the local high school and one a diocesan officer. There are no vacancies.
- The school is a member of the Wigan Primary School Consortium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in all classes. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher observed jointly with each member of the inspection team. Her Majesty's Inspector also observed small-group sessions taken by teaching assistants.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, a group of other teachers and a group of teaching assistants. Meetings were also held with three governors and the local authority officer. The diocesan officer joined this group for the final feedback meeting.
- At the time of the inspection, there were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, but inspectors did consider the school's own survey of parents' views and also canvassed views of many parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour records, minutes of the governing body meetings and a selection of policies, especially those relating to safeguarding and information on pupils' current progress and attainment.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks, observed pupils moving around the school building, in the dining hall and outside at break and lunchtimes. In addition inspectors spoke to many pupils, three specific groups of pupils and all members of the school council.

Inspection team

Eileen Mulgrew, Lead inspector

Jennie Platt

Maureen Hints

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

