

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Knutsford Road, Gorton, Manchester, M18 7NJ

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This school meets the needs of all of its pupils exceptionally well. As a result, pupils make excellent progress across all of the year groups in English and mathematics and their achievement is outstanding.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader, strongly supported by governors and staff. The school's effectiveness has improved from good to outstanding since its last inspection and a relentless drive for further improvement is ongoing.
- Pupils feel entirely safe and secure in school. Their behaviour is exemplary and they enjoy trusting relationships with all of the adults in school. Their attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Teaching is outstanding. It is constantly adjusted to meet the varied and changing learning needs of pupils. Excellent assessment and marking ensure that pupils make the best progress.
- Children make rapid progress in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage, often from very low starting points.
- There are excellent systems in place for checking the school's work. Outstanding planning and staff training ensure that the school maintains high quality teaching and pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Most pupils reach nationally expected standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Increasing numbers are reaching the higher standards in English and mathematics, reflecting the success of the school's work to support its most able pupils to achieve as well as possible.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve higher standards in English and mathematics than similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress from their various starting points.
- Although all of the different groups of pupils do well, girls have done a little better than boys in tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in recent years. The school is fully aware of this slight imbalance and is developing a range of ways to address it.
- Governors are actively involved in all aspects of the school's work. They hold the school to account exceptionally well.
- Parents express great confidence in the school and its leaders and staff. The successful partnership between home and school is reflected in attendance figures that are well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. They listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- The inspectors met with seven members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders, with pastoral staff and with a group of pupils. An inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account 11 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector met with a group of parents during the inspection to hear their views about the school and inspectors also took into account the school's most recent survey of parents' views.
- The views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed were also taken into account.
- In observing the school's work, inspectors looked at and evaluated the work in pupils' books, including books from the last school year as well as their latest books from this term. They also reviewed a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school development plan, records of pupils' attainment and progress and documents related to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keefe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. Although most pupils speak English as their home language, a few pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is considerably above average and constitutes a majority of the pupils in school. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club each day.
- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up his post in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop teaching strategies to support boys' learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's razor-sharp focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is shared and understood by everyone. Staff and governors are fully committed in their support for the drive for the highest levels of achievement and personal development for every pupil. Teamwork is outstanding, everyone's contribution is valued and morale is high.
- The senior leadership team is currently being restructured and this will not be complete until the new deputy headteacher arrives in January. Two acting assistant headteachers have helped to manage the interim period smoothly and have made extremely effective contributions to the school's development. Like the headteacher, they are positive role models, leading by example.
- Local authority support for the school has been light touch since the previous inspection.
- Support for teaching is outstanding, with excellent systems in place to check on the quality and impact of teaching. Able and experienced middle leaders contribute very well to this process through lesson observations and very regular analysis of pupils' progress and work.
- Additional funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils and of vulnerable pupils has been used very wisely, as shown by their excellent achievement.
- Staff performance management targets are challenging, reflecting the school's shared high expectations of everyone. They are supported by high quality training and are linked closely to the school's priorities, as set out in its well-crafted development plan. This exemplary practice has a very positive impact on improving pupils' progress.
- The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. It takes full account of the skills and knowledge pupils need to learn. There is a clear focus on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Activities to promote pupils' personal, social and health education are of outstanding quality and this results in an exceptionally positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them very well for their future lives in modern Britain.
- The school uses its additional funding for school sport to very good effect. The range of activities on offer to all age groups has been extended and there are now many more opportunities for pupils to access sport and physical education opportunities after school and to take part in local competitions. The school's analysis of the impact of this shows increased levels of participation, skills and awareness of health issues amongst pupils and greatly enhanced staff skills.

The governance of the school:

- Governors have helped to ensure ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching over the period since the school's last inspection. They have worked closely with the headteacher in checking and reviewing the quality and impact of teaching and have taken prompt, decisive actions to challenge and address any areas of underperformance. This has resulted in outstanding teaching over time in the school.
- Governors are very well informed. They have an excellent understanding of national performance information and they receive regular, accurate and comprehensive reports on pupils' progress and on the quality of teaching from senior and middle leaders. They hold the school rigorously to account.
- Governors make sure that the checks of staff performance are thorough and that leaders and staff are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and school priorities.
- Governors make sure that safeguarding policy and procedures are fully in place. They are fully informed on how the pupil premium funding is spent and the difference it is making to this group of pupils. They ensure that primary school sport funding is spent wisely and make regular checks on the impact of the expenditure for pupils in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. They say how much they enjoy coming to school and they show care and consideration for others.
- The very positive attitudes shown by pupils of all ages make a significant contribution to their learning and progress. They know and understand the routines and they respond to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. They are becoming increasingly adept at organising themselves in class, with older pupils,

in particular, needing only minimal direction from their teachers. They listen well to instructions and work productively with a partner or in a group.

- Pupils take a real pride in their work. Their workbooks show they take great care always to do the best work they can do and to present it well.
- Pupils report that learning is never interrupted by poor behaviour and this illustrates the school's success in fostering positive relationships.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils describe trusting relationships with the adults in school and parents express great confidence in the care the school provides for their children.
- Pupils have an impressive understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They say that bullying incidents are almost unheard of and that when pupils fall out with each other staff always help them to sort matters out quickly.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and to contribute to making the school a happy and safe place for everyone. The school council is influential and pupils say it represents their views very well. They feel that the adults in school really care about what they think and listen to what they say, citing their involvement in drawing up the behaviour policy as an example of this. Older pupils act as play leaders, reading buddies, eco leaders and junior road safety officers.
- All necessary checks on adults are carried out and staff are well trained in child protection. Site security is monitored carefully and the school takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously.
- The care and support provided for potentially vulnerable pupils is of exceptional quality. Parents spoke movingly to an inspector about their high regard for the work of the school's Parent Liaison Officer, saying that the school 'goes the extra mile' to support and encourage families who may be going through difficult times and to work with parents to address any barriers to learning that pupils sometimes encounter.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress across the school because the quality of teaching is consistently at least good, and very often outstanding, as they move up through the classes in every year group.
- Teachers know the pupils very well and understand how they learn most successfully. They use a varied selection of methods and resources to challenge pupils in different ways and at the correct levels. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, for example, all of the pupils successfully added new clauses to improve the sentences they had written because they were given the time and support they needed to digest and understand their teacher's advice and suggestions. Through skilful organisation of the time and resources at her disposal, the class teacher ensured that pupils of all abilities met their learning targets in this lesson.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure. This is further enhanced by their use of technology, including interactive whiteboards, in lessons, adding interest and motivation for pupils.
- Teaching of reading is particularly effective. Year 2 pupils who read to an inspector were confident and enthusiastic readers. They used their knowledge of the sounds that letters represent to work out unfamiliar words and they read with interest and expression.
- The work in pupils' books shows that teachers create plentiful opportunities for pupils to write within a range of subjects and for different purposes. This has contributed to a significant rise in pupils' attainment in writing over the period since the school's last inspection.
- Teachers give clear and effective feedback to pupils through marking which points them to the 'next steps' in continuing to improve. This good marking generates targets for pupils to work towards. They know and understand these targets and are eager to achieve them.
- Pupils who require extra support, such as pupils with special educational needs, some disadvantaged pupils or some of those with English as an additional language, are supported very effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. Additional support is provided by very well-trained staff for pupils who need it and this ensures that they make excellent progress.
- Teaching supports the learning and progress of the most able pupils very well by ensuring high levels of challenge in the activities that are planned for them. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, with increasing numbers of pupils across the school working above the expected standards for their age.

The achievement of pupils**is outstanding**

- All of the various groups of pupils in school make excellent progress from their starting points. This includes disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils, pupils with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- Although both boys and girls achieved extremely well overall, girls reached standards in both English and mathematics that were a little higher than those reached by boys at the end of Year 6 in 2013.
- The proportions of pupils in Key Stage 2 who made more than expected progress in English and in mathematics were greater than the national proportions in 2013.
- Disadvantaged pupils are a majority group in the school and so their overall achievement is similar to the overall achievement figures for all pupils. In 2013, the proportions of disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress were greater than the national proportions for all pupils in reading and writing, but not as great in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils did not attain as high standards as non-disadvantaged pupils in the school or nationally in 2013. They were about two terms behind in reading, writing and mathematics, although this gap is narrowing year on year. Disadvantaged pupils in the school reached higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than similar pupils nationally; they were approximately a term ahead.
- Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen steadily over the past three years. The school's unvalidated data show that almost all pupils reached at least the expected standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 in 2014. A broadly average proportion reached the higher standards, representing an improvement on the previous year, when the proportions for both subjects at the higher standard had been a little below average.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, most pupils reached the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics and a broadly average proportion reach the higher standards. This represents excellent progress from their starting points on entry to Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Successful teaching of phonics ensures that a large majority of pupils achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics test. Pupils of all ages show a genuine interest in books and enjoy reading. By the end of Year 6 most can read at the expected standard for their age, with an increasing number of mature and capable readers.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress from their starting points and achieve extremely well. Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in relation to their individual starting points.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Children thrive and progress rapidly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle in quickly and are soon happy and secure and ready to learn. Starting points are often exceptionally low. A large majority of children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typical of their age group. A significant minority have identified learning difficulties and a few children are at the very early stages of learning English. The school's comprehensive and accurate assessment data and inspection evidence show that children make excellent progress from these starting points.
- The majority of children reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception class in 2013 and in 2014, showing consistently outstanding achievement over time. This is the result of first-rate teaching and care combined with carefully planned activities which are interesting and fun for the children and which support their learning extremely well.
- Outstanding leadership ensures that children enjoy school and make excellent progress. Excellent assessment procedures are in place to ensure that all groups of children achieve equally well.
- The home visits made by staff prior to children starting nursery ensure that they know the children and their parents well and plan for particular needs, so that children make the best possible start in their learning. Mutually supportive links between home and school are established at this point and prevail as children move up through the school. Parents spoke very appreciatively of the support the school provides to help them get involved in their children's learning, including the well-attended workshops on reading and number and the homework activity packs.
- Teamwork is strong and effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff plan and review together each week to ensure that activities are well matched to children's ever-changing needs and interests. A vibrant environment, indoors and out, supports children's learning and progress extremely effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	134479
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	444150

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paddy Devlin
Headteacher	Suzanne Walker
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2009
Telephone number	0161 223 0231
Fax number	0161 223 0367
Email address	s.walker@sacredheart-jun.manchester.sch.uk

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