

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Hart Lane, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS26 8NL

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- When children enter they have skills that are just below those typically expected for their age but by the time they leave in Year 6 their attainment is substantially above the national average. This represents outstanding achievement.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are few in number but they do extremely well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make very good progress across the school in line with other pupils.
- Behaviour and safety in the school is outstanding. The attitude that pupils have towards their schoolwork is exemplary.
- Pupils are very friendly and exceptionally well mannered, because from their time in the Nursery they are taught how to behave well and respect others.
- An overwhelming number of parents in both recent surveys think very highly about the school. All pupils responded positively when asked similar questions.
- Teaching is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and many teachers use inspirational ways to capture pupils' interest.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in making the school successful. They work exceedingly well in lessons, as they not only help children of different abilities to succeed, but carefully record pupil progress during lessons.
- In most lessons pupils are set work at the correct level so that they are challenged to do their best. This is not consistently the case when pupils are split into ability sets and the work is not always as closely matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Most lessons go at a brisk pace although occasionally teachers spend too long at the start of lessons explaining things, which cuts down the amount of time pupils have to show what they can do.
- Exceptional leadership and governance has built on and improved previous good work.
- The leadership of the school is outstanding because the headteacher has developed staff to become effective leaders and managers of subject areas.
- All staff feel exceptionally well supported by the senior management. Newly qualified teachers in particular are highly motivated and encouraged to develop their skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 17 different teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and records which show the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- The views of 55 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well the school's own questionnaires, which surveyed 223 parents and 340 pupils. There were also two letters received from parents.
- Twenty-six staff also completed questionnaires about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandy Dixie

Additional Inspector

Barbara Hudson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart is a much larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of girls is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which in this school is the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, but the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the time of the previous inspection.
- Government floor standards, which relate to pupils' attainment and progress, were met in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching further by ensuring that:
 - all teachers adapt pupils' work so that is always matched to the learning tasks
 - teachers spend less time talking to the whole class so that pupils have more time to show what they can do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From entry to the school to leaving at the end of Year 6, many pupils make far more progress from their starting points than is normally the case, which represents outstanding achievement.
- Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys in English, but boys do better in mathematics. In both cases the differences are small and both genders do far better in the school than pupils elsewhere.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is more than a year ahead of pupils nationally in English and mathematics.
- Exciting and demanding lessons encourage outstanding progress. In an inspirational science lesson the pupils were eager to learn because the lesson was well planned and well resourced and pupils were given a practical challenge to sort and sift objects.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium do extremely well in national tests. In the last two years pupils eligible for free school meals have, in some cases, made more progress and reached higher levels of attainment than other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do as well as other pupils because of the very good support they are given in lessons.
- Reading through the school is very good because the school makes sure that pupils learn the sounds that letters make extremely well. In a recent reading screening test, Year 1 scored well above similar pupils nationally. Pupils read widely at school and often at home, because the school promotes reading very effectively.
- The vast majority of parents are confident that their children are happy and make good progress in the school. Almost all pupils also supported this view.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because in all lessons the work is designed to be very challenging. Teachers expect extremely high standards and the pupils respond with work of a very high quality in lessons, leading to excellent achievement.
- Lessons, pupils say, are interesting and learning is made fun. In the Reception class, the children were more involved in the lesson because the teacher stimulated their interest by dressing up in a diver's wet suit to find treasure. This led to the successful teaching of three-dimensional shapes. Good planning and very enthusiastic teaching is to be seen across all year groups.
- Writing has been a focus for the school and evidence of exceptional progress in this is seen in Year 3. Progress over the year shows pupils are now writing far more exciting and complex sentences than before. There are also noticeable improvements in handwriting and presentation.
- All children have specific, easy to understand, targets to achieve and they quickly point to these when asked. Older pupils have national curriculum targets, which they work towards. Their books have lots of information on what needs to be done to achieve different levels.
- Pupils regularly assess their own and other pupils' work, which helps them to understand how well they are doing. Many teachers use mini whiteboards effectively during lessons so that they can easily establish what the pupils understand and see what the next steps in learning are.
- Teaching assistants work extremely well so that pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make very good progress. They encourage pupils by skilful questioning rather than doing things for them. They regularly, and meticulously, record how well the pupils are learning.
- Teachers plan work which closely matches pupils' abilities in most lessons, but in a few it was less well adapted, particularly in classes split into ability sets. In a small number of lessons, the time spent by the teacher on the introduction and in explanations slows down pupil progress, as it does not allow them enough time to demonstrate what they can do.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are friendly and cooperative. They are exceptionally polite and well mannered. They need very little encouragement to work extremely well in class.
- In Nursery some of the very youngest pupils applauded their classmates successfully counting items on a washing line. This is because teachers actively teach good behaviour patterns.
- Staff encourage pupils to have confidence in themselves and so they are always willing to try new things. The school production of the 'Jungle Book' as a result was a tremendous success and was seen by several hundred parents and family members.
- The spiritual development of pupils is exceptionally strong in the school because the school ethos is to provide the highest quality of education for all children and their social and moral development forms an important part of this.
- Pupils listen attentively in lessons; they follow instructions carefully and are very willing to help and cooperate with others. In a science lesson where the teaching was outstanding children were divided into groups to separate objects. They had different roles within the group, such as the 'communications officer' who had to record evidence. Only by very effective cooperation could they solve the problem they had been given.
- There have been no racist incidents in the school and no exclusions for well over three years.
- Pupils' attendance is average but the proportion of pupils who are absent for prolonged periods has been below average for three years.
- Pupils say that behaviour is very good both in lessons and at social times on the schoolyard. They are extremely confident that any incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be handled very quickly and effectively by the staff.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take and are very well informed about the dangers associated with social networking sites. The school is developing its own closely monitored web site, dedicated to its own pupils, where pupils can send each other messages.
- Pupils feel extremely safe because, 'We are surrounded by people who care.' meaning not just staff but fellow pupils.
- A Year 6 pupil said, 'If I have children I want them to come here.' Pupils are very happy in school and most say there is nothing that needs changing because it is 'perfect'.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is extremely well led. Managers at all levels have not relaxed since the previous report but have improved teaching and learning across the school. The very effective school management is the result of an excellent head-teacher and talented, hardworking senior managers. The entire staff work successfully together as a team.
- Teaching, the school's comprehensive records show, has improved and the school maintains very high pupil achievement. Teachers' performance is exceptionally well managed and teachers have to meet strict targets, such as increased pupil progress, which are checked each term.
- Teachers' professional development opportunities are very good. Newly qualified teachers feel extremely well catered for and feel that the school could not do any more to help them improve their teaching. Aspiring leaders are encouraged to improve so that the school benefits from their new skills.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. The religious ethos underpins all that the school does so pupils behave exceptionally well. They show respect for others and understand other peoples' views. The school is very successful in promoting positive relations with pupils with no hint of discrimination.
- The curriculum is good and is enhanced by residential and educational visits, such as to Ormesby Hall, and a wide range of after school clubs, including music, sports and art.
- The school has extremely positive relationships with parents. Their feedback on how well it is doing is overwhelmingly positive. They are very involved with the school in parent evenings and

attend school performances in large numbers.

- The local authority supports this successful school, particularly with joint lesson observations with the headteacher and senior staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is effective because all governors are passionate about the school. By studying school information on pupils' progress, they are aware of the school's strengths, as well as areas for further development. They have regular discussions on the targets teachers are trying to achieve. The governing body know how well pupils are taught. They give excellent support as well as appropriate challenge to the headteacher on staffing issues and are aware of the need to link salaries and promotion to teacher performance. They have good knowledge, not only about how the funding for pupil premium is spent, for example, on extra staff, but also on the impact that it is having.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 111691 |
| Local authority | Hartlepool |
| Inspection number | 403159 |

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

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| 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 | 415 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Elizabeth Hume |
| Headteacher | Jeffrey Cook |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 September 2007 |
| Telephone number | 01429 272684 |
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