

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Heys Street, Thornton, Thornton-Cleveleys FY5 4HL

Inspection dates 15–16 March 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher sets high standards and, along with other leaders, has high aspirations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. There is a determination to provide the best education and a wide range of experiences for every pupil.
- Teachers plan interesting tasks and activities which pupils visibly enjoy. This helps them to develop good skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and this leads to their good outcomes.
- Leaders are determined in their work to include all pupils, not least those who need additional help with their learning.
- Pupils receive exemplary care and support.
- Policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are effective and well implemented by all members of staff.
- Pupils benefit from high-quality provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils' academic and personal development through rich learning experiences in and beyond the classroom.
- Governors carry out their duties with vigilance and provide challenge and support in equal measure to school leaders.
- Pupils behave well. They understand and respect the school's core values.
- Children make good progress in the early years as a result of good leadership and teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- A few pupils rely too much on the frequent prompts teachers and other adults give them about completing tasks and activities. They do not therefore develop the self-reliance they need to reach the highest standards.
- Occasionally tasks set for pupils are too easy or too difficult for them, and therefore some of the most- and least-able pupils are not challenged appropriately.
- Some new systems put in place for assessing pupils' progress require time to become fully informative and clear for all who use them, in order to stretch all pupils appropriately.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and learning, so that more of it becomes outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers and other adults in the classroom give pupils just the right amount of support they need when answering questions and completing tasks and activities, so that pupils can develop the resilience they need to meet the highest standards
 - teachers set work that is neither too easy nor too difficult for groups of pupils and individuals in their classes.
- Ensure that new systems for the assessment of pupils' progress are clear, fully informative and used by all teachers to secure appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils, especially for lower-ability pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. This is clearly recognised by senior leaders, governors and staff. Together they have enabled the school to bring about improvements since the previous inspection. Leaders have a clear vision for the school and promote its positive ethos strongly.
- The school's self-evaluation and development plans are accurate and identify priorities to improve pupils' achievement. There are thorough, strong and consistently applied systems for managing behaviour and monitoring pupils' attendance. Leaders systematically check the quality of teaching and learning through regular observations, book checks and meetings to discuss pupils' progress.
- Leaders meet frequently with teachers to review their work. Teachers are provided with a good balance of challenge and support, and receive appropriate training and development. As a result, the quality of teaching is typically good.
- Teachers in charge of subjects or other aspects of the school's work are strong. In this small school, leaders each have several roles which they fulfil effectively. These leaders are dedicated to their work because they are determined to ensure that all pupils benefit from the best teaching. Relationships between leaders and their teams are positive and professional. They are therefore not afraid to challenge as well as support each other in securing necessary improvements.
- Teachers' performance is managed thoroughly and based on whole-school priorities including pupils' progress. Leaders review this and additional staff responsibilities regularly. Effective monitoring ensures that feedback to teachers is consistent, and identifies strengths and weaknesses honestly and clearly.
- The school has responded thoughtfully to new National Curriculum changes and has developed an effective approach to assessing the rates of progress pupils make. The system requires time to be fully implemented across the school and to be fully informative to all who use it, so that all pupils, especially the lower-ability pupils, are provided with appropriate levels of challenge.
- Leaders make good use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make generally good progress. (The pupil premium is additional government funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.) Staff training has enabled teachers and other adults to teach physical education (PE) well, including after-school clubs for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. A particular strength is the Change4Life initiative which targets the least active pupils to engage with after-school activities. The impact of this work is evident in the pupils' overwhelming enthusiasm for sports and their understanding of how it helps them to keep healthy.
- The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. High-quality enrichment is a distinctive feature of the school, and this aspect of the curriculum adds immense value to pupils' all-round development, including their preparedness for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain. Pupils have early aspirations for their future careers and lives.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on spiritual matters across a range of subjects, in assemblies and through displays around the school. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are supportive of each other. They welcome other pupils on visits from neighbouring schools and have many cultural opportunities, for example sampling food cooked by parents of different nationalities. They know that prejudice-based language is wrong and that teachers react strongly towards all forms of discrimination if it occurs.
- The school's strong moral ethos and core values develop pupils' understanding of British values. Pupils learn about democracy, for example, through their membership of the school council.
- The school meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Leaders and governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously. Robust systems are in place to keep pupils safe in school and on visits.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable about the school and members bring a wide range of professional skills to their roles. They update their skills regularly and enthusiastically, which enhances the effective support and challenge they provide to leaders.
 - Governors share the ambition of the headteacher. They have a good and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and know how well children in different year groups are performing.

- Governors’ links with particular classes and subjects give them a good understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Governors are knowledgeable about the criteria for teachers’ pay progression.
- Governors keep a close eye on the financial stability of the school. They have supported major improvements to the fabric of the school, creating, for example, improved spaces for sports and spiritual reflection. Governors also have a good knowledge of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding arrangements, and are vigilant in ensuring that the school works effectively to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Inspection evidence, strongly supported by the school’s own very detailed monitoring records, confirms that teaching is consistently good. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are rightly proud of their well-organised classrooms and bright displays that extend the curriculum further. Teachers are enthusiastic and have positive relationships with pupils. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities that interest and enthuse their pupils in turn, and promote their good learning and sustained progress.
- Teachers have increasingly high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in writing, as they move up through the school. Pupils express themselves confidently and often movingly in their responses to texts or deep concepts that they encounter in their learning. Nevertheless, work set is sometimes not well matched to the needs of particular groups of pupils, notably the least able.
- The teaching of reading is very effective. Pupils learn to read fluently and accurately during their time in school and, equally importantly, to acquire a love of reading. Pupils were keen to discuss with inspectors the kinds of books that they like to read and what they learn from them.
- Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of number in mathematics and this is ensuring that pupils develop a secure understanding of basic skills. Teachers find imaginative and enjoyable ways of practising such skills, for example the use of tables up to 12 through solving a puzzle.
- Most teachers work effectively with other adults, for example to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. This generally contributes well to the good progress these groups of pupils make. Occasionally, pupils receive too much support to be able to develop the resilience they will need in the next stage of their education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils relish responsibility. For example, some older pupils have been trained as sports leaders, working with infant sports groups and as playground leaders.
- Pupils enjoy the wealth of activities on offer, from unusual sports such as handball to charity fundraising. Through competitive sports and dance competitions, pupils are well linked to their local community. The school’s strong moral ethos and core values develop pupils’ understanding of British values. Pupils learn about democracy, for example, through their membership of the school council.
- Pupils whom inspectors met said that they feel very safe and well cared for in school. Most parents confirm this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. They take pride in their appearance and, on the whole, also in their work.
- There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. On the rare occasions when there are incidents of misbehaviour, pupils told inspectors that they are dealt with appropriately by their teachers and other adults in school who support them.
- A significant number of the 36 parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View,

expressed concerns about bullying but pupils with whom inspectors spoke were confident that bullying is not an issue for them. The school's records show no incidents of bullying over the last year.

- Pupils are aware that if they have any concerns about behaviour or their welfare generally, they can talk confidently to adults in the school. However, senior leaders and governors have recognised that more work is needed to involve parents even more in discussion of issues that concern them, such as bullying.
- Attendance was a recommendation for improvement at the previous inspection. There is now an improving trend and the attendance of almost all year groups this year is above average. The school has worked very hard to achieve this improvement, including a significant reduction in persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- In 2015, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development when they left Reception increased and was above the national average. This represents good progress from their starting points and an improvement on the previous year. This good start secures steadily rising outcomes for pupils by the end of Key Stage 1. In 2015, these outcomes were above the national average overall and in reading. They were in line with outcomes nationally in writing and mathematics.
- In 2015, the proportion of children who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check dipped below the national average. Most pupils who did not reach the expected standard caught up in Year 2.
- Pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 in 2015 were broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The most-able pupils performed better than their peers nationally in these subjects, as well as in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. However, lower-ability pupils could achieve even more if teachers and other adults provided a consistently high level of challenge in the work set for them.
- While the progress of disadvantaged pupils was below the average for other pupils nationally in reading, in 2015 their progress in writing and mathematics was higher and gaps are narrowing quickly.
- The school's assessment information and pupils' work in lessons and in their books, seen during the inspection, show that, on the whole, current pupils make good progress from their starting points. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education.
- The high-quality care and support that the school provides for pupils who have special educational needs or disability ensure that most make good progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is a strength of the school. Its leadership is strong, leading to many improvements since the previous inspection. The leader and her team are enthusiastic and ambitious to improve the provision further so that it quickly becomes outstanding.
- The leader's effective use of the early years pupil premium is seen in the fact that disadvantaged children make similar, and sometimes better, progress than other children nationally. (The early years pupil premium is additional government funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds.)
- Staff are knowledgeable about the needs of young children. This, together with the early forging of close links with parents, secures a smooth transition for children from their early years settings into Reception. Staff are well supported by a recently improved tracking system. This ensures that any problems the children may have are quickly identified and acted on. Children therefore settle quickly into Reception. They make the most of their time there and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children gain the skills to be successful learners because the provision in Reception captures their interest and staff pay good attention to the development of their basic skills, especially in writing. They are happy and curious about their learning in tasks and activities.
- Children quickly develop positive social and emotional skills. They show confidence in making positive relationships with each other and with adults. They are kind and patient with each other and work harmoniously together, sharing resources and listening to the views of others.
- The outside space and resources are much improved since the previous inspection. Children learn in a stimulating and nurturing environment where they feel safe to learn and play, for example exploring the new woodland area. They confidently make their own decisions about what they want to play and learn

next. They follow instructions from all the adults carefully and behave well.

- The safeguarding of the children is the highest priority for the staff. Procedures are extremely rigorous and include the services of paediatric-trained staff on site at all times.
- Children make good progress across all areas of learning because of the seamless teamwork of adults and their skills in asking appropriate questions to move children's learning forward. Scrutiny of the children's work shows their good progress towards further improvements in their achievement of a good level of development and other areas of learning. Most children enter Reception with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Those who have not fully developed these skills and knowledge catch up quickly. This is evident in the increasing proportion of children gaining a good level of development each year.

School details

Unique reference number	119632
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10011052

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Clegg
Headteacher	Mr Paul Eaton
Telephone number	01253 821392
Website	www.sacredheart-primary.co.uk
Email address	head@sacredheart-thornton.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2011

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is also above average.
- The school makes limited use of the local primary pupil referral unit.
- A private provider runs a pre-school group on the school site, which is subject to a separate inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' written work during their observations, and also considered separately a further sample of pupils' written work from a range of classes and subjects.
- Inspectors looked at three responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 36 responses to Parent View. It was not possible to access pupils' responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. Inspectors spoke instead with pupils in formal interviews and lessons and informally at lunchtime and breaktimes. They also considered the school's own surveys of pupils' views.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke by telephone with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a member of staff from the local primary pupil referral unit where a very small number of pupils are currently supported.

Inspection team

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