

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Burnopfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE16 6NU

Inspection dates

30 September – 1 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is an extremely caring, outward-looking and highly inclusive school, described accurately by one member of staff as 'feeling like a family'.
- The determined and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the skilful assistant headteacher, ensures that an uncompromising drive to continually improve pervades every area of school life.
- The extremely able governing body and leaders at all levels have led a highly successful drive to improve the quality of teaching and assessment, which is now outstanding.
- Governors consistently challenge the school and hold senior leaders to account. They know the school inside out because of the quality of information they receive and because of their widespread involvement in the school's day-to-day life.
- Outcomes for pupils are now outstanding, with sustained high levels of achievement. Pupils clearly enjoy their work, tackling learning with enthusiasm and a sense of fun. Pupils show fluency in writing and high standards of presentation, occasionally let down by weak handwriting.
- Children in the early years quickly develop skills that allow them to learn and play happily together. They make a fast start in their reading, writing and understanding of number.
- Pupils' progress from average starting points in Year 1 is consistently at least good and often outstanding across all year groups in school.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils learn quickly and are able to apply their skills across all subjects. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and create a vibrant, colourful and exciting environment in which pupils thrive.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled in supporting the learning and development of individuals and groups of pupils, and are a vital part of the teaching team.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are always polite, have extremely good manners and display excellent attitudes when working in class.
- Pupils' consideration of others, care for each other and pride in their work and their school ensure that their personal development and welfare are outstanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of pupils' handwriting enables them to always write fluently and legibly in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The highly skilled and talented headteacher has worked tirelessly to eliminate underperformance, accelerate progress and raise standards since the school opened as an academy. The strengthened leadership of the school has energised and inspired staff into becoming a highly effective team. Consequently, teaching has improved and is now outstanding. Exemplary behaviour flourishes and the rates of progress pupils make in their learning have accelerated rapidly and are being sustained.
- Senior leaders and governors have an extremely accurate view of what the school does well as a result of an ongoing, extensive and accurate review of the school's performance. They have clear-cut priorities for areas of the school that could be even better. Despite recent and rapid improvements, leaders continue to be relentless in their pursuit of excellence, communicating a sense of drive and urgency to continue to move forward quickly.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning across the school are highly effective. Leaders and managers are skilful in ensuring that their analysis and interpretation of information about pupils' progress lead to actions that address any areas of concern. These actions include very effective use of the pupil premium funding, ensuring that strong support is given to the very small number of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have not yet, however, secured a consistently high expectation of the quality of pupils' handwriting across the school amongst all staff.
- Staff performance is managed very effectively. Staff have challenging objectives for their own professional development which are linked to the school's action plan and to the progress made by pupils. The school links teachers' pay progression closely to successful performance. Training for staff is a key part of this process and supports their professional development very effectively.
- Pupils benefit from a recently modified curriculum, which is lively, exciting, broad and well planned. It allows scope to follow national and current events, while having regard to pupils' interests. Staff bring themes and topics to life by an exciting range of educational visits and visitors to school, and incorporate an international dimension with links to Zambia and Tanzania. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills across the curriculum. Teachers work together closely to regularly review the curriculum and check that it meets the needs of the pupils in school. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a number of extra-curricular clubs over the year, which enhances their learning. These include drama, dance, choir, cookery, computing, art, maths clubs and a book club.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It reinforces traditional British values, highlighted by a whole-school topic, 'Brilliant Britain,' in which year groups studied different aspects of life in Britain and its heritage. This culminated in a trip for a group of pupils to London to see the Houses of Parliament at work and enact creating a new law.
- The views of all pupils are valued and many have an opportunity to play an active part in the life of the school. There is an active school council, an eco-council, 'Mini Vinnies', playground buddies and monitors for a range of different jobs in each class. The school's highly inclusive and caring approach fosters excellent relationships, and there are extremely high levels of trust and respect between all individuals.
- Links with parents are highly positive, and their views are regularly sought and valued. The school gives them a wealth of information about teaching, learning and their children's progress. They have many opportunities to take part in the life of the school. When talking to the inspector, parents reported that the 'community feel and spirit' of the school was one of its strongest features and that their children are safe. They know that the school gives all pupils equality of opportunity to succeed and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- PE and sport premium for primary schools is used very well to raise staff expertise in the teaching of PE, and provides extensive sporting activities and expert coaching for pupils. Many more pupils are now also able to access swimming lessons. This leads to improved safety and many pupils developing healthier lifestyles.
- The school has benefited from good support from the local authority and from the expertise of staff from the St Thomas More Multi Academy Trust partnership of schools.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is highly effective. It is exceptionally well informed, incisive in its approach to school improvement and analyses in depth all performance information. Leaders and teachers are held

to account for the quality of teaching and learning in the school and their impact on pupils' progress. Performance management procedures are robust and rigorous.

- Governors make a meaningful contribution to the way in which leaders check the effectiveness of the school's performance, participating in analysis of work in pupils' books and visiting lessons to see teaching. They are adept at helping to set priorities for development. They manage finances effectively, checking on the impact of the pupil premium.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective, with excellent practice seen in the day-to-day running of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The consistently high quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure that the pace of learning and level of challenge enable pupils to concentrate and be fully involved in their learning. The impact of teaching on learning, including in literacy, reading and mathematics, is reflected in pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully and regularly check their knowledge and understanding. There are many opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in a variety of ways and in a number of subjects. The rapid pace of learning allows pupils to make significant gains in their knowledge and understanding, and the demands made by teachers are appropriately challenging of all pupils.
- In mathematics, basic skills are taught very well and consolidated regularly. Pupils in Year 2 successfully separated numbers into tens and units using practical apparatus while solving addition calculations. In Year 1, pupils were able to count 'Minions' money using replica coins.
- Pupils write enthusiastically and with imagination. This is because teachers have excellent subject knowledge, such as in Year 6, where pupils used post-it notes to identify key features of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* prior to writing their own opening to the play. Teachers often use exciting and innovative resources. They design, create and choose slides for the interactive whiteboard carefully to inspire pupils' imagination and secure their engagement.
- The younger children make an excellent start in their early reading because of a systematic and rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) in order to make sense of words. Pupils continue to enjoy and make progress in their reading, which is increasingly fluent and expressive. Many read extensively at home.
- Marking of work is thorough and regular, and consistently of a high standard across the school in all subjects. Pupils clearly understand the 'edit and improve' strategy, as staff use green and pink highlighters to show what is good and what needs to be improved. Pupils are given time to read and respond to feedback given by staff. This moves their learning and understanding forward significantly.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work extremely well together to give timely and constructive advice to pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The quality of support is high, which results in significant gains in pupils' academic progress, as well as their social and emotional development.
- The quality of some pupils' handwriting can prevent them from writing fluently and legibly, because some adults in school do not yet model high-quality handwriting for pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident, sociable and extremely caring for each other in school, but also for those less fortunate than themselves, both in the local community and further afield and abroad.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They strive to succeed, are engaged and motivated to learn, and value the contribution of their classmates.
- Pupils report feeling very safe at school at all times. They value the playground buddy system which makes breaktimes an enjoyable and happy experience, and use the 'worry boxes' when they occasionally feel upset or ill at ease.

- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying they may encounter, including cyberbullying. They know how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when online. They are confident that, should any minor instances of misbehaviour occur, staff will resolve these quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Staff set high standards to which pupils respond well. Older pupils show genuine care and friendship for younger pupils. The school is a happy, welcoming and harmonious place, committed to success for all its pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall, in breakfast club and as they move around school is exemplary. They are polite and courteous and have excellent manners at all times. There is hardly any mean or unkind behaviour.
- Pupils respond well to vibrant learning environments. The school is tidy, well ordered, and high-quality displays of pupils' work and school information adorn nearly every wall.
- The school has worked extremely hard to raise levels of attendance. It is a high priority, reflected by a large display in the school hall. As a result, rates of attendance have risen and are now average.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Progress and attainment have gone up considerably at each key stage since the school opened as an academy. Assessment information, the school's own tracking data and work in books clearly indicate that current pupils are making outstanding progress in every year group. This is the case in English and mathematics, but also in all subjects across the curriculum. Work in topic books and in science books is of the same high standard as that found in English and mathematics books.
- Pupils now start Key Stage 1 with skills that are above average, but this was not the case in the past. The pupils who were in Year 2 last year, for example, started Year 1 with much lower standards. All pupils make at least good, and often outstanding, progress from their individual starting points as they move through school. Achievement has significantly improved since the school opened, and this rapid progress has been sustained. Information on pupils' attainment shows that they make quick gains in their learning and the proportion of pupils reaching a good standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is slightly above average. This represents rapid progress in the light of their starting points.
- Progress continues to accelerate across Key Stage 2. Evidence from the inspection demonstrates that all pupils make at least good progress, with many making extremely rapid progress. Pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary school by the end of Year 6, both in terms of their achievement and in their knowledge of how to be a successful learner.
- The most able pupils make similarly outstanding progress as their classmates.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff then make effective provision for them. This includes pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. These pupils all make very good progress because teachers give them activities well matched to their individual ability and needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together to provide pupils with effective support. Their achievement is outstanding.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is too small to make any reliable statistical comparisons between their progress and achievement and that of their classmates. As a result of effective use of the pupil premium funding, this small number of pupils make excellent progress and achieve very well, sometimes outperforming their classmates.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make an excellent start to their education at Sacred Heart. Most start the Reception class with knowledge and skills broadly typical for their age, but some children are below this level. As a result of outstanding teaching, excellent provision and a vibrant and safe learning environment, children make excellent progress. The proportion of pupils who leave the Reception class with a good level of development is now above average and children are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children quickly learn essential social and emotional skills. They are able to share, take turns and behave very well. This underpins their excellent progress in all areas of learning. There are highly positive

relationships between staff, children and parents. This helps children to quickly become confident learners and have a positive attitude to school. During the inspection, children worked happily and cooperatively together.

- Staff encourage children to experiment and become independent through well-established and consistent routines. Activities are organised so that there is an effective balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by the children to explore and practise the skills as they play. Children especially enjoyed showing the inspector their mud kitchen.
- Interactions between adults and children are excellent and help to develop children's speaking and listening skills. A range of thoughtful questioning designed to extend children's vocabulary and responses was observed as adults worked and played alongside children to extend their learning.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are promoted very effectively. Children enjoyed measuring their own height against a chart outside, while the whole class counted to 10 and sorted apple trees by which had more or fewer apples.
- All groups of children make outstanding progress in the early years, including the most able, disabled children and those with special educational needs. The work and activities provided for children are exciting and interesting, sparking imagination and excitement.
- All children are kept extremely safe and secure in the early years setting and their behaviour is excellent.
- Links between home and school are exceptionally strong. Parents are actively involved with their children's learning and receive a wealth of information, including information on how to support their child at home and how to understand the early years curriculum.
- The leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. Staff are constantly refining their practice in order to maintain high standards of provision for the children. They accurately measure the progress children make, and have well thought-through plans to make further improvements. Staff are passionate to secure the very best outcomes for all children.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140638 |
| Local authority | Gateshead |
| Inspection number | 10002128 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 136 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs T Rice |
| Headteacher | Mr P Naughton |
| Telephone number | 01207 270396 |
| Website | www.sacredheartgateshead.org |
| Email address | sacredheart@gateshead.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 9–10 January 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in March 2014 and is part of the St Thomas More Partnership of schools.
- Sacred Heart is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language are well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is a little below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is well below average. (This is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.)
- Early years provision is full time for the Reception class.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club each day for its pupils.
- The Little Hearts Pre-School, located on the site but not managed by the governing body, is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own report, which will be published on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is part of the Northern Lights Teaching Schools' Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons, including one jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, he listened to some pupils read and reviewed a sample of their work alongside the headteacher and assistant headteacher. He made a number of short visits to lessons to check the quality of provision for pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with different groups of people involved with the school. These groups included pupils, a number of governors, the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, other members of the teaching staff, the executive headteacher, the school improvement partner and a small number of parents.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievements, the school's data on current and recent progress and attainment and the school's view of how well it is doing. He also viewed the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) including freetext responses, and nine responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Mr Philip Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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