

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 1BL

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors have high expectations. Staff are clear about leaders' ambitions and support them well. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school is good.
- Astute use of professional development and support for staff has resulted in good teaching and good leadership.
- Over the past year, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has rapidly improved. Pupils love reading and make exceptional progress. They make good progress in other subjects.
- Teachers plan interesting tasks that engage pupils well. Consequently, pupils make a good contribution to their learning.
- Teachers check pupils' work quickly. They ask skilful questions to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching assistants are managed well. They support pupils very effectively, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils say that they are safe and enjoy school. They are courteous, polite and respectful to each other and adults.
- Children settle quickly into Reception Year. They make good progress because of good leadership and good teaching.
- Leaders track pupils' attainment and progress skilfully. They identify those pupils who might be falling behind. Staff take swift action to strengthen pupils' progress when this occurs.
- Leaders have made sure that high-quality safeguarding procedures are in place to protect pupils.
- The governing body and the academy trust make a good contribution to school leadership. Governors and trustees are ambitious for the pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. There are few opportunities, however, for pupils to have first-hand experiences of other cultures.
- Overall, teachers' expectations are high. Sometimes, however, the work set is not challenging enough for middle-ability pupils and the most able.
- Over time, leaders have not managed to reduce the regular absence of a small number of disadvantaged pupils.
- Attainment in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics. Too few pupils reach the higher standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise standards, particularly in writing, by ensuring that teachers:
 - set challenging work for pupils, especially middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a wide range of subjects
 - promote accurate spelling in all subjects.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to have first-hand experiences of other cultures
 - working more extensively with parents to reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils regularly absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and governors have developed a strong sense of purpose among all staff. They have been very successful in improving the quality of teaching so that pupils make good progress. Morale is high. Staff and parents are giving leaders their full support.
- The headteacher has worked tirelessly to make sure that pupils have consistently good teaching. She has tackled weaknesses in teaching and has smoothed out turbulence in staffing. She has established a very effective leadership team. Senior and middle leaders are playing their part well in providing a good education for pupils.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. The headteacher and other leaders use a wide range of information to check on the quality of teaching thoroughly. Leaders have overcome inconsistencies in teaching. They make sure that staff use the school's teaching policies consistently well.
- Staff work closely with staff from the other primary school in the trust. They share good practice and this has had a very positive effect on teaching and leadership. The headteacher has used expert support to provide targeted professional development for teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, teaching and pupils' progress are good.
- Leaders use sophisticated systems skilfully to track pupils' attainment and progress. They quickly identify pupils who might be falling behind and take swift action to speed up pupils' progress. Leaders are tenacious in following up and checking that actions taken are improving pupils' learning.
- The curriculum includes a wide range of subjects and extensive additional activities. These make a good contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development, behaviour and welfare. Pupils enjoy using the natural environment, within and beyond the school grounds, to develop a wide range of skills such as bush craft. Educational visits and residential opportunities contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development.
- Pupils have a good understanding of democracy, liberty, tolerance and respect. Pupils' charity work for refugees makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers, however, provide too few opportunities for pupils to have direct experience of other cultures. This means that they do not have a deep enough understanding of life in different communities.
- Extra funding for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well. Staff support them in and out of class should they need more help.
- Leaders identify barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. The extra funding for these pupils is used very successfully to overcome them. The deputy headteacher makes sure that staff are clear about the needs of each pupil and checks pupils' work very regularly. She identifies strategies for teaching each pupil and checks on their progress often. Should she notice that progress is slowing, she adjusts support to make it more effective. Subsidised trips and visits help these pupils engage fully in the life of the school.

- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used well. Specialists coach pupils in a range of sports, including karate, badminton, football, gymnastics and dance. Many pupils take part in sport, with disadvantaged pupils participating in high numbers. This is a good example of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all. Pupils are successful in competitive sports such as gymnastics and football.
- The trust holds the headteacher to account very well. It has identified and used high-quality external support to improve leadership and the quality of teaching. Astute use of professional development has led to good leadership that has the capacity to improve the school further. The trust and the headteacher have secured high-quality support for the development of mathematics, reading and writing. This has had a strong influence on the good developments in teaching and pupils' progress.

Governance of the school

- The academy council is making a good contribution to the leadership of the school. Governors are ambitious for pupils and have engaged fully in developing the school's aims and values. They are involved in its development planning. The trust and the local authority have provided support and training for governors to improve their practice. The council has audited governors' skills and appointed new governors to make governance more effective.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They are well informed by leaders and use external advice to confirm their understanding. Governors know that the school has improved pupils' outcomes quickly and that a more stable teaching staff has supported the improvement. Governors visit the school regularly, speak to pupils and are available at parent consultation evenings.
- The academy council keeps a close eye on the finances of the school. Governors know that extra funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well, and is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. They know how the additional funding for physical education and sport is used and how well it is helping to engage pupils. Governors support and challenge leaders well to make sure that they have a comprehensive view of this good school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. High-quality systems ensure that pupils, including the most vulnerable, are safe and protected from harm. A clear ethos across the school sets the safety of pupils as a high priority. Effective systems are in place at the breakfast club and the after-school club to keep children safe. Staff keep meticulous records that reflect the school's commitment to keep all pupils safe. Parents say that their children are well cared for and safe at school.
- Training for staff and governors in child protection means that they are knowledgeable and up to date with the most recent guidance and legislation. Staff are vigilant and know what to do should they have any concerns about a child's welfare. The school works well with external agencies and parents. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that safeguarding matters are followed up thoroughly. Governors make sure that all

checks on staff and volunteers working with children are made and recorded rigorously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The headteacher's relentless focus on resolving frequent changes in staffing and providing very effective training for staff has led to teaching being good.
- Teachers plan interesting work for pupils and this leads to good engagement from pupils. Pupils in key stage 1 enjoyed writing about 'superheroes'. In key stage 2, pupils were writing well about a boy abandoned in a boat with a tiger. Pupils make good progress in their handwriting skills. Pupils present their work well.
- Teachers use skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding and remedy any misconceptions. Teachers use their answers to deepen the knowledge of others in class and make sure that everyone is paying attention. Very occasionally, some least-able pupils are not engaged well enough with their learning.
- Teachers are diligent in checking pupils' work and follow the school's policy consistently. They provide good feedback about how pupils can improve their work and make sure that pupils respond well to this. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Teaching assistants work very well with pupils. They know what they are expected to do in class and on the few occasions when working outside the classroom. Their good skills and knowledge enable them to offer good support to pupils of all abilities, especially those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are using the training they have been given very well indeed and this shows good support for the work of senior leaders.
- Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects. For example, there are good opportunities in science and geography for pupils to use weights and measures. Pupils considered differences in temperature between Sowerby Bridge and other places across the world, for example.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their reading skills. For example, comprehension work about the great white shark showed that pupils had a very clear understanding of what they had read. Teachers use pupils' interest in reading to ensure good progress in writing. Teachers, however, do not ask pupils to write at length in a range of subjects to improve their skills further. Sometimes, teachers do not pick up inaccuracies in spelling quickly enough.
- The pace of learning is usually good because teachers set challenging work. At times, however, the pitch of the work is too low and pupils spend too much time on work that is too easy for them. At these times, the pace of learning slows, particularly for most-able and middle-ability pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are confident and welcome opportunities to speak with adults. They are polite and listen to each other's points of view. They treat each other and adults with respect. Pupils new to the school make friends quickly. Pupils are exceptionally keen to read to adults and said how much they love reading.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoy school and feel safe. They understand how to use the internet safely. Pupils know what to do should a stranger try to contact them by email.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in activities that keep them fit. They enjoy healthy food made at break- and lunchtime. Children in Reception Year are developing good habits of healthy eating and enjoy the fruit that is available at all times.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and work. They are smart in their school uniform. Handwriting and presentation are usually of a good standard. Pupils are keen to improve their work and respond well to teachers' suggestions. Occasionally, some pupils are too content when work is too easy for them. They do not seek greater challenge so that they make faster progress.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use democratic processes by voting for their school council. They are keen to contribute to the local community and have planted many trees in caring for the local environment. Pupils have good opportunities to collect for charity and support those less well off than themselves. They are gaining a good understanding of how to become a good citizen in modern Britain.
- Pupils said that bullying is very rare and that teachers are quick to resolve any issues. Pupils are confident that adults will listen to them and respond appropriately, should they have any problems. School records confirm pupils' views.
- School leaders have excellent systems in place to support pupils' safety and safeguarding, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils enjoy the breakfast club and the after-school club. They play well together and are safe and happy.
- Parents and staff are very confident that pupils are safe and well cared for in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils manage their behaviour well, both inside and outside the classroom. They have played a big part in making rules for good behaviour in their classes. Pupils keep to these rules well and their behaviour is good.
- Pupils get on well together. They conduct themselves well because of the high expectations of adults and the good relationships that exist between pupils and adults.
- Parents support the school well by making sure that their children are punctual. Overall, attendance is average. However, a few disadvantaged pupils are often absent and miss out on the good education provided by the school.
- The school is free from litter because pupils take care of their school environment.
- The school is a calm and purposeful place. Pupils concentrate well on their work. Very occasionally, however, a few pupils lose concentration in class, although they do not

disrupt others. Pupils are keen to learn and make a good contribution to their learning. They have good attitudes and respond well to their teachers and other adults.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the past year or so, staffing has been much more stable. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching through very effective training. Consequently, pupils have quickly made faster progress. Progress is now good throughout the school.
- Pupils are now making much faster progress by the end of key stage 2. The pupils leaving school at the end of Year 6 in 2015 and 2016 made slow progress through key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, pupils at the end of Year 6 made well above average progress in reading, better than average progress in mathematics and broadly average progress in writing.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading, attainment was much higher than average, including the proportion of pupils attaining the highest scores. At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment improved considerably on the previous year's to be average. These pupils made good progress from their starting points.
- These fast improvements in progress are being sustained throughout the school. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics, writing and a wide range of other subjects. High-quality teaching means that they are making excellent progress in reading. Current pupils' work shows that attainment in writing is improving. Not enough pupils, however, reach high levels of skill in writing.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress. Overall, they attain as well as similar pupils nationally. Along with middle-ability pupils, too few write at greater depth and reach high standards in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils read very well indeed and are attaining as well as others nationally. Progress for disadvantaged pupils is increasing and an analysis of their work shows diminishing gaps in attainment when compared with that of others nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities show good gains in learning. Leaders make sure that teachers and teaching assistants are well informed of the needs of these pupils. Skilful support helps these pupils to make good progress.
- Those joining the school at other than the usual times settle into school quickly. An analysis of their work showed that they are making good progress.
- Reading is promoted exceptionally well across the school. Leaders have made sure that the library is well stocked with interesting books that promote a love of reading. Training has ensured that staff, including teaching assistants, are highly skilled in the teaching of reading. Right from early years, phonics skills are being used well. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reaching the expected standard in the check for reading by the end of Year 1 is well above average.
- Pupils become engrossed in the high-quality texts used in reading sessions in their class. They are exceptionally keen to read to adults and read regularly, both at home and in school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what they are reading. They are very proud of the high scores they achieve when using computer systems to check

their understanding. Teachers have made each pupil well aware of their standard of reading and of suitable books to choose. This has given pupils great independence in selecting books from the library. They enjoy the freedom to choose for themselves.

Early years provision

Good

- Children, including disadvantaged children, make good progress in Reception Year. Secure procedures and good links with parents mean that they are safe and happy.
- Children's skills vary considerably when entering Reception Year. Generally, a large majority of children join the school with skills that are below those typical for their age. Others have skills that are typical or above those typical for their age.
- Adults identify children's skills quickly and accurately. They focus on the development of children's speech and language skills because these skills are least well developed on joining the school. Adults use good questioning skills and well-planned activities to develop children's speech and language skills quickly.
- The early years leader and other adults have high expectations. These support children's good development. Attainment has been improving over time. From below-typical starting points, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development has been above average.
- At the end of the school year in 2017, attainment dipped as many more children than usual joined the school with skills that were considerably below those typical for their age. These children, now in Year 1, were prepared well for learning in Year 1 and are making good progress.
- Good leadership makes sure that there are strong links between home and school. Parents are very positive about the new learning journals that record children's learning online. They access this information and make contributions to their own child's learning journal. Teachers use information from parents to help plan activities that interest their children. Adults help children to develop independence very quickly. Children are curious about learning and cooperate well. They can choose from a wide range of activities.
- The curriculum contributes well to children's good learning and their good personal development, behaviour and welfare. Children follow routines well and are very active. They play well together and adults support them well to develop good language and mathematical skills. Children are confident in this safe and well-managed environment. A wide range of activities includes art and construction.
- Adults seize opportunities to help children to learn. For example, on a very frosty morning during the inspection, children wrote about 'Jack Frost'. Outdoors, they experienced how slippery frost can be on different types of surface, such as wood or tarmac. This is a good example of the natural environment being used to support learning. Children are excited by the opportunities they have to learn about nature and the environment, in and out of school. Children enjoyed making trees from clay and decorating them with faces, and were rightly proud of them.
- All the appropriate welfare and safeguarding requirements are met in early years.

School details

Unique reference number	141479
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10037697

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Patricia Stabler (academy council)
Headteacher	Sue McManamin
Telephone number	01422 831360
Website	www.sacredheart.calderdale.sch.uk
Email address	admin@sacredheart.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. Almost four out of 10 pupils are disadvantaged.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for SEN and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the usual times is well above average.
- The school manages a breakfast club and an after-school club.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the Blessed Peter Snow Academy Trust. It converted to become an academy on 1 October 2014. Its local governing body is known as the academy council. When its predecessor school, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2012, it was judged to be good.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning throughout the school. One occasion was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- During the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety. They also spoke with parents.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- An inspector held a meeting with four governors. A meeting was held with the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plans, a number of school policies and the minutes of meetings of the academy council. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) posted during the inspection. They also considered eight responses to a staff questionnaire presented by the school.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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