

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Kingsway, Rochdale, Lancashire OL16 4AW

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time is too variable across the school.
- Some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Some, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have gaps in their skills and knowledge that hold their progress back.
- Teachers do not always challenge the most able pupils sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as much as they can.
- Activities for children in the early years are not always interesting or challenging enough. The teaching of writing is not always good. On occasions, nursery children do not behave well and this affects their ability to learn. The provision and use of books to develop children's learning in the Nursery is variable.
- The school website does not contain all the required information.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching assistants make a skilled and valuable contribution to the success of teaching in the school.
- In some classes children benefit from skilful teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in key stages 1 and 2. They respect the views of others and pupils have a well-developed understanding of Christianity and other religions. They have a good understanding of values such as democracy, liberty and respect.
- Leaders use the school's Christian character well to develop the work of the school.
- Leaders and governors share a clear understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders' recent actions to address weaknesses in teaching and learning are beginning to make a positive difference to the quality of education provided.
- Pupils in Year 1 learn to read successfully.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - making sure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and the most able
 - sharing and developing the skills of staff so that teaching is consistently strong across all classes and subjects.
- Improve the quality of education provided in the early years by:
 - improving how well children in the Nursery manage their own feelings and behaviour
 - improving the quality and use of fiction and non-fiction books provided in the Nursery
 - making sure that all activities in the Nursery Year are worthwhile, interesting and relevant to the children's needs so that they learn as well as they should
 - improving the teaching of writing in Nursery and Reception.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school's Christian ethos is a central focus of the work of the school. Christian values are woven throughout planned learning for pupils, displays on noticeboards and links with the community. They underpin decisions made about the work of staff, governors and leaders.
- In 2016, the drop in standards in key stage 2 was not expected by the school. Thus leaders acted quickly to review the work of all classes from Nursery to Year 6. Leaders challenge themselves, staff and governors to pinpoint the issues that are affecting the quality of teaching, assessment and pupils' outcomes. Precise action plans give a clear focus to the ongoing work of the school. As a result, teaching is improving and standards are rising.
- The newly established leadership team is now much stronger than in the past. Senior leaders have good opportunities to lead and contribute to the improvement of the school. Together with the headteacher, leaders actively check, challenge and support the work of staff. Leaders now have a precise, accurate understanding of what more the school needs to do to re-establish high-quality education at Sacred Heart.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum gives pupils extensive opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils enjoy many valuable opportunities to learn about Christianity and about a wider range of faiths and beliefs. The curriculum strongly promotes skills such as resilience, as well as British values, including respect and democracy. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes toward other people and their views. They have an informed understanding of world events, such as the appointment of the new President of the United States of America.
- Leaders make sure that staff plan activities that make good use of off-site visits, visitors to the school and special celebrations to develop pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils, for example, enjoyed a recent visit to the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. Such opportunities are balanced adequately with extra sports and music activities. The school's recent proposal for an after-school club did not receive enough interest from parents to be viable.
- Funding to promote sport and physical education (PE) is spent carefully and has a positive impact on pupils' confidence and skills. Pupils benefit from a wide range of additional new activities, including tag rugby. Leaders challenge staff about their PE teaching through the school's work towards an external award.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to support disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately to provide extra help for individual pupils. However, funding has a variable impact on diminishing the difference between the achievement of these groups of pupils and their peers.
- The direction of travel set by leaders for improving the school is appropriate. Plans and priorities are honest and accurate about the changes that are necessary. Improvements are led well and occur regularly. Nevertheless, leaders have yet to secure high standards in teaching and pupils' outcomes in all subjects in all classes.

- The school website does not include all the required information about governance, pupil performance, PE and sports funding and the curriculum. The published behaviour policy is not the current version. Leaders are updating the website to address these omissions.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school's current priorities for improvement well. They check what leaders tell them in governors' meetings as well as the written information given to them by leaders about pupils' learning in the school.
- Governors increasingly keep a close eye on issues affecting standards in the school. They ask challenging questions of leaders, for example about what actions are under way to improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors are determined to help the school as much as they can, so they make sure that the governing body has as much relevant, up-to-date expertise as possible.
- Governors manage school finances carefully and link spending closely to school improvement priorities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding pupils throughout the school.
- A wide range of senior staff and governors are trained in how to recruit staff safely. Leaders are trained fully in their responsibilities for leading safeguarding. They understand key risks to pupils, such as neglect. Staff and governors are trained regularly and kept fully up to date about changes to national guidance. Discussions about supporting individual pupils, as well as promoting pupils' safety, take place frequently between leaders and staff.
- Messages about safe behaviour, including when online, and how to share concerns about safeguarding, are highly visible for pupils around the school. There are regular opportunities within school activities for pupils to learn about staying safe.
- Checks made by the school on visitors are thorough. All visitors are expected to read a school safeguarding notice before entry to the premises.
- Leaders record and review safeguarding information carefully. They share any concerns about pupils promptly with other agencies. The work of the school to protect and care for pupils is reviewed in detail. Leaders pursue clear action plans to develop safeguarding arrangements to be in line with good practice. Governors make regular checks on safeguarding, including by asking pupils about their safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Variability in the quality of teaching, in part linked to several changes of staff, has meant that some pupils do not learn well. While leaders have taken steps to increase

their support to staff, too many inconsistencies in teaching remain in key stages 1 and 2.

- Not enough is done to strengthen the teaching of the most able pupils. Planned teaching does not always give enough consideration to deepening their thinking or making sure that they master their knowledge and apply their skills in different subjects.
- Not all teaching for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good enough. While leaders and staff are giving this matter renewed attention, it is too soon to see the impact of recent changes.
- The high-quality fiction and non-fiction books and cosy reading areas show the heightened profile that reading now has throughout key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' vocabulary is growing well. There are early signs that group teaching of older pupils is improving their reading skills more quickly.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils in key stage 2 in 2016 were not always accurate enough to spot when pupils were behind in their learning. As a result, leaders now work determinedly to improve the knowledge of staff about assessment. Leaders have completely reorganised arrangements within the school to assess pupils' progress. Assessments are now becoming much more accurate and used appropriately by staff to identify the extra help that pupils require.
- A close focus on developing staff's understanding of mathematics is leading to improvements in the expectations of staff for pupils' learning across the school. In some classes, for example Year 6, mathematics teaching is now skilful and teachers challenge pupils to explain how they solve complex problems.
- Recent work to improve the teaching of science is beginning to have a positive impact. As a result of extra training and advice, staff now teach pupils to measure, predict and plan their science work. No longer is science teaching in the school limited only to learning facts.
- In most cases, teaching assistants are deployed well in classes and are making a difference to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Staff celebrate pupils' learning in well-considered displays on the walls of the dining hall, corridors and classrooms. Staff and pupils make good use of displayed information in activities.

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 keen to learn. They are confident in their own abilities. They understand the importance of teamwork, collaboration and problem-solving for their education.
- Pupils know that their views matter. They understand that how they feel about themselves, their families and their education is important to staff, leaders and governors.

- Pupils have a deep knowledge of their Christian faith. For example, they understand the Christian belief of why Jesus died on the cross. They have a detailed understanding of the role and importance of prayer in the Christian way of life. Pupils are well informed about other faiths, for example about Judaism. Pupils' knowledge is enhancing their respect for the views and beliefs of other people.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to be successful citizens. For example, they are well informed about issues such as how to help the homeless and about the needs of refugees.
- The school takes many steps to keep pupils safe and promote their well-being. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of staying safe, including when online. Pupils feel safe at school.
- Pupils say that staff would respond positively and promptly to tackle bullying if it happened.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct around the school is consistently positive. They move sensibly between classrooms, they play together well outdoors and they use the dining hall respectfully. Pupils show good self-discipline. They are polite and inquisitive when meeting visitors. They listen well to instructions from staff.
- While pupils told inspectors that there have been past instances of low-level disruption in classes, this was not observed during the inspection. Pupils apply themselves very well to activities, even when teaching is not very engaging. Pupils act maturely and show genuine care towards one another and their classrooms.
- Leaders review and respond carefully to any issues about pupils' behaviour. They make sure that all necessary steps are taken to help pupils and to create a positive climate throughout the school. Pupils who find managing their own feelings and behaviour difficult benefit from sensitive, helpful support from their peers, as well as staff. Older pupils have a well-informed understanding of why and how some pupils push against set boundaries for behaviour.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders address this issue with determination and tenacity. They are unafraid to challenge families where necessary. Overall attendance is broadly average. While the number of pupils who were persistently absent was high in 2016, it is decreasing quickly because of the concerted actions of staff and leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over recent years, pupils in key stage 2 at Sacred Heart have achieved as much as, or better than, other pupils nationally. Raised national expectations and changes to assessment arrangements mean that 2016 information is not directly comparable with that for previous years. Nevertheless, pupils in key stage 2 at the school in 2016 did poorly in their reading, writing and mathematics.

- In mathematics in key stage 2 the progress of girls and boys was weak in 2016. There is evidence to suggest that due to subsequent improvements in teaching, the mathematics skills and understanding of current pupils are beginning to improve quickly. Nevertheless, this is not the case in every class.
- The inconsistent quality of teaching in the school holds some pupils back from achieving as well as they should. For example, some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not receive enough help to make good progress from their starting points.
- Some most-able pupils, including the disadvantaged most able, do not make good progress in key stage 1 and 2. This is because staff do not always challenge them enough in each class and subject.
- Extra funding through the pupil premium is not having enough impact on pupils' outcomes. Some disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not achieving well. Even so, disadvantaged pupils are becoming more settled and confident in their learning at school due to the extra support they now receive.
- Pupils' attainment in writing in key stage 1 in 2016 was above average. Girls in particular are becoming highly skilled writers. Current key stage 1 pupils continue to develop the skills and passion needed to write well. Improvements in the teaching of writing in key stage 2 are improving the quality of older pupils' writing quickly. Pupils across the school are becoming keen writers. They take care when writing in subjects other than English.
- The overall attainment of key stage 1 pupils in mathematics in 2016 was only average, but more of the most able pupils attained at greater depth in their mathematics than had been expected.
- While pupils leaving the school in 2016 were not prepared fully for secondary school, pupils in Year 6 this year are learning much more successfully across subjects. They are developing the self-confidence and enjoyment of learning needed to help them this year and in the future.
- Pupils' enjoyment of science and their ability to solve scientific problems for themselves are improving across the school. This is because of a concerted focus by staff and leaders.
- The attainment and progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good in writing, reading and mathematics.
- The skills of Year 1 pupils in reading unfamiliar words in the phonics screening check was above the national average in each of the last three years. The reading ability of disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 is also above average and rising. Pupils' good phonics skills reflect the increased success of Reception and Year 1 staff in teaching pupils songs, rhymes and the sounds that letters make. The successful focus on reading continues in Year 2, where pupils attained above the national average in assessments of their reading in 2016.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2016 was above the national average. Over time, the proportion of children attaining well in mathematics, writing and reading has risen to above the national average. This means that many children move to Year 1 ready for school. However, current weaknesses in teaching stop some children from achieving as much as they should.
- On occasion, some children in Nursery behave poorly. This holds some children back from learning well. In Reception, children are well behaved and staff give good support to enable children to adapt to school routines and expectations. Throughout the early years, almost all children are polite, friendly and keen to learn.
- Staff do not give enough attention to inspiring children to write in Nursery and Reception. Some activities aiming to develop children's writing do not arouse children's interest or challenge them fully.
- In Nursery, some planned activities involve limited opportunities for children to use their existing skills and knowledge and to learn well. This results in some activities being of low interest and of limited value to children's development. Activities in Reception are much better suited to children's needs and abilities.
- In sharp contrast to the rest of the school, the quality and range of fiction and non-fiction books provided for children in Nursery is limited. Although the book area is cosy, it is not always used well to teach children early reading behaviours.
- Opportunities for children to learn outdoors, including those to develop children's mathematical skills and knowledge, are planned and supported well by staff.
- Teamwork among staff is good throughout the Nursery and Reception classes. However, the support which leaders give to some staff to improve their teaching is not having the expected impact.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception is skilful and children learn to read successfully.
- Across Nursery and Reception, children have many opportunities to play, explore and to make friends. Relationships between children and staff are good.

School details

Unique reference number	105828
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10002574

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Kierans
Headteacher	Pamela Dungworth
Telephone number	01706 649 981
Website	www.sacred-heart-school.org.uk
Email address	head@sacredheartrc.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 May 2007

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic group is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the government's pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.

- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is new since the previous inspection, as are some other leaders and staff.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the physical education and sports premium, the curriculum, pupil performance data, governance or its behaviour policy on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. The lead inspector made several observations jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and heard some pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school on both days of the inspection. Inspectors considered 16 responses from parents to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in classrooms about their learning. Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils at lunch in the dining hall, as well as outdoors. The lead inspector held a meeting with eight pupils chosen at random from Years 2, 3, 5 and 6. Inspectors met separately with pupils from the school's 'Pupil Voice' group.
- The inspectors considered a range of information, including: information about the achievement of current pupils; reviews of how well the school is doing; targets for teachers; leaders' plans for the future; minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own reviews of the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors checked a sample of policies including those about behaviour, child protection and e-safety.
- The inspectors met with four representatives of the governing body, including the chair and an associate governor, a range of staff and an officer from Rochdale local authority.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Parker	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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