

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Lodge Lane, Hindsford, Atherton, Manchester M46 9BN

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2022

Outcome

Sacred Heart RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sacred Heart is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils said that they enjoy coming to school because they have lots of friends and everyone looks out for each other. They said that they feel safe because adults look after them well. They are confident about talking with adults regarding any concerns that they may have.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They have organised an ambitious curriculum which helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils to achieve well.

Staff have high expectations for pupils in terms of their behaviour. Pupils said that, mostly, everyone lives up to these expectations. They said that if pupils misbehave, adults will sort it out quickly. As a result, the school is calm and orderly. Pupils said that bullying is rare and that, if it does happen, adults will put a stop to it quickly.

Pupils access a range of opportunities beyond the classroom. They enjoy holding responsibilities such as being school councillors, or being history or geography ambassadors. They appreciate the activities available after school, such as dance and baking. Pupils enjoy trips to support their learning, including visits to local museums and galleries.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects their ambition for all pupils, including those with SEND. As a result, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of learning.

In most subjects, leaders have carefully considered the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn. In these subjects, leaders have ordered learning thoughtfully so that pupils build on what they know already. That said, in a minority of subjects, the curriculum is not as well organised. In these subjects, teachers are not as clear about

how pupils' learning builds on what they already know. This hinders teachers in their efforts to plan work that supports pupils to build on and deepen their knowledge.

Leaders have ensured that teachers have a strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Mostly, teachers revisit previous learning as a matter of routine. This ensures that pupils' earlier learning is secure, and that they can deepen their understanding of subjects over time. During lessons, staff check on how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Teachers address misconceptions quickly, and give support to pupils when needed.

Ensuring that pupils become confident and fluent readers remains a key priority for leaders. As soon as children arrive in the early years, they begin to learn how to recognise letters and sounds. Pupils, including children in the Reception class, practise their reading regularly with knowledgeable adults. Staff ensure that pupils read books that carefully match the sounds they are learning in class. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and develop their reading fluency. Those pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and supported well by staff, to help them to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading and they know why it is important. They benefit from listening to their teachers read carefully chosen texts. Pupils are proud to gain the weekly 'reading champion' award.

Leaders have ensured that there are systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Leaders have trained staff so that appropriate support is put in place to help these pupils both academically and socially. When necessary, leaders work closely with a range of external agencies, alongside parents and carers, to ensure that pupils with SEND benefit from the appropriate help.

Leaders think carefully about promoting pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures, such as Judaism and Hinduism. They understand the meaning of words such as 'democracy' and 'equality', and know why they are important. Pupils are proud of their work to support a range of charities including a local food bank. They value being rewarded for their personal achievements, such as being named on the class recognition board or receiving a 'golden ticket' for going 'above and beyond'.

Children settle into the early years quickly and happily. They are keen to learn and behave well. Similarly, pupils across the school generally display positive attitudes to their learning. If pupils lose concentration, adults calmly bring them back onto task. At lunchtime, pupils eat and play sensibly together.

Staff feel that they are supported well by leaders. They said that leaders consider their well-being and workload when making decisions. Members of the governing body have a suitable range of expertise and experience. This enables them to provide leaders with an appropriate level of support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that procedures to keep pupils safe are secure. Staff are trained well and they remain vigilant. They follow school policies, and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's well-being. They log concerns appropriately, so that these are followed up thoroughly. When necessary, leaders work effectively with outside agencies to support pupils and their families.

Pupils know how to stay safe. Through the curriculum they learn about how to stay safe online and using social media. They also learn from visiting speakers, such as representatives of the police service.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking. This means that teachers are not clear enough about the knowledge that leaders want pupils to know and remember. This hinders teachers in their efforts to design learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers have clarity on what pupils should be learning and when this learning should take place in these subjects, including the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should understand.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	106499
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10211118
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Josie Carter
Headteacher	Ian McDermott
Website	www.athertonsacredheart.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection was in January 2017.
- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic and has taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with two members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other staff. The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

- The inspector spoke with pupils to gather their views about the school. They spoke with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View.
- The inspector checked on safeguarding procedures and related documentation. They observed pupils' behaviour around school, and considered information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector considered a range of other school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement.
- The inspector completed deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. As part of this work, the inspector visited lessons and spoke with subject leaders and teachers about the curriculum. The inspector reviewed pupils' work and spoke with them about their learning. The inspector also observed pupils read to a trusted adult.

Inspection team

Gary Bevin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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