

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Hart Lane, Hartlepool TS26 8NL

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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 school's systems and procedures to assess pupils' progress require development. Leaders do not have a clear view of the progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.
- Teachers, including those in the early years, do not use their knowledge of pupils' skills and abilities well enough to plan for their next steps in learning. They do not have high enough expectations of the pupils.
- The quality of the curriculum in the foundation subjects, such as geography, history and computing, is inconsistent. The role of the subject leader in school is underdeveloped.
- Writing skills are not developed rapidly in the early years.
- Pupils do not gain phonics and early reading skills rapidly enough. They do not get enough practice reading books which contain the sounds that they have been taught. As a result, they do not become confident readers quickly.
- Governors do not ask for enough information about the standards pupils reach and the progress pupils make. As a result, they do not challenge underperformance with sufficient rigour.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attend school often enough. They miss valuable learning opportunities and do not make as much progress as their peers in school.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the beginning of the academic year, senior leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of mathematics across the school.
- Successful actions to raise the quality of pupils' writing this term have led to an immediate improvement in pupils' writing in key stage 1 and Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils benefit from high-quality physical education (PE), performing arts lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Pupils are proud to attend. They behave well and are kind and courteous to their friends, teachers and visitors.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - establishing effective systems and procedures to assess the progress pupils make and the standards pupils reach
 - increasing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend school every day
 - developing the skills of subject leaders to check and improve standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and consequently pupils' progress in phonics and reading, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - using assessment precisely to ensure pupils progress rapidly through an agreed, whole-school, phonics route
 - ensuring that the books that pupils read contain the sounds that they have been taught.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by:
 - using adults' assessments of children's progress to plan activities which are tailored to their needs
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop early writing skills.

External reviews of the school's use of pupil premium funding and governance should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the school's systems and procedures to assess the progress pupils make and the standards pupils reach are fit for purpose. Currently, leaders do not know which pupils, including those disadvantaged, those with SEND and the most able, are not making sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They have not checked the work in pupils' books thoroughly. In addition, neither of the school's online assessment information systems contains a full suite of data. The newer assessment information system is not yet embedded.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders have not ensured that these pupils attend school often enough. Over time, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is 2% below that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and of all pupils nationally. They miss too much learning and do not catch up to their peers.
- The quality of subject leadership is inconsistent. Some subject leaders have not had the opportunity to evaluate pupils' work or check on teaching and learning in lessons. They are unable to prioritise the actions required to improve the subjects for which they have responsibility. The headteacher has, as she says, 'empowered' the subject leader for mathematics. This leader's work is leading to pupils making much better progress in mathematics during the current academic year than they did in the previous year.
- Insufficient time is allocated for the delivery of some foundation subjects, for example design and technology. As a result, pupils do not acquire subject-specific knowledge and skills rapidly in all areas of the curriculum.
- The leadership of phonics and early reading in the early years and key stage 1 requires immediate development. A large proportion of pupils, 16 from a cohort of 59, did not achieve the standard in the 2018 phonics screening check. Leaders have not ensured that the school's specified scheme of work is followed diligently in all year groups.
- The headteacher, very ably assisted by the new deputy headteacher, is beginning to address a number of issues which led to very disappointing statutory results in 2018. For example, the pupils in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2 have made rapid progress in writing since they started daily writing lessons at the beginning of term.
- Systems and procedures to appraise the performance of teachers have been reviewed. All teachers have compared their own performance against the Department for Education's Teachers Standards. Currently, senior leaders are ensuring that a carefully planned programme of professional development for teachers is delivered.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points. Parents appreciate the school's inclusivity. They feel the provision for SEN pupils exemplifies the school's vision of: 'Together we love – Together we learn – Together we share'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They have a firm moral compass, know right from wrong and understand challenging concepts, such as reconciliation.

- The PE and sports funding for primary schools is used very effectively in the school. All Year 6 pupils reach the Department for Education's minimum standards for swimming. A large proportion of pupils attend extra-curricular sporting activities and participate in competitive sports. Many sporting cups and shields are displayed in the school's entrance hall. Pupils, parents and staff take pride in the school's sporting achievements.
- Officers from the local authority have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Hartlepool Borough Council's assistant director for education, learning and skills visited the school in September 2018 to talk to the staff about the 2018 statutory results. Since then, the local authority's teaching and learning adviser has worked with the leaders for mathematics and English to improve provision in the school. This work is having a positive impact on pupils' progress, especially in mathematics and writing.

Governance of the school

- Governors carry out their support role conscientiously. However, they have not carried out their challenge role with enough rigour. Governors find it difficult to evaluate the success of leaders' actions to improve the school, because the school's improvement plans lack precise targets against which to judge success.
- Members of the governing body do not request sufficient information from the headteacher about the standards pupils reach and the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors have not held the headteacher and other senior leaders to account incisively for their use of pupil premium funding.
- Similarly, although governors understand that pupils behave well in school, they have not asked for information about any trends in pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leaders attend refresher training regularly. They update staff on a weekly basis and deliver formal training in September annually. All staff understand their duty to protect pupils from harm.
- The school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are strong. The central record of safe recruitment checks is compliant with requirements.
- The designated and deputy safeguarding leads work well with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils at risk of harm have access to the support they need in a timely manner. Case studies show that vulnerable pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. Their needs are met well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school, between subjects and within key stages. For example, in science, the Year 4 pupils

carry out and learn from investigations and practical work on a regular basis. This is not the case in Years 3 and 6.

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils, especially the most able pupils.
- Teachers' ability to plan lessons which build on pupils' previous learning is hampered by poor assessment systems and procedures. For example, teachers in the upper school do not know what their pupils' Year 2 starting points are in reading, writing and mathematics. These teachers can judge the progress their pupils have made since the beginning of the academic year, but not from the beginning of the key stage.
- A bespoke package of training in mathematics, which was delivered throughout the autumn term of 2018, has led to better teaching and improved pupils' progress.
- A renewed focus on pupils' writing since the beginning of the spring term 2019 is leading to better outcomes in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2. These pupils are using a wider range of vocabulary and more sophisticated punctuation to write both long and short sentences. They are also completing much longer pieces of writing. Their productivity has increased.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading is hampered by a lack of consistency throughout the school. Some teachers use one phonics scheme while other teachers use a different scheme. Some pupils are given books to read which are not closely matched to the sounds they have learned. This does not help these pupils to grow in confidence as readers. By contrast, carefully targeted teaching in Year 2 leads to all pupils reaching the phonics standard by the time they enter key stage 2.
- Pupils' learning is enriched through educational visits which are linked to learning in the foundation subjects. Pupils have recently visited Shildon Railway Museum, Sunderland Glass Works and Eden Camp. They make good use of the knowledge they gain during educational visits throughout their topic-related work.
- Expert practitioners, such as those delivering PE and the performing arts, use their deep subject knowledge to make lessons and learning interesting and exciting. Pupils make excellent progress in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Members of the democratically elected school council take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They created the posters which are on display in the corridors, reminding pupils to be quiet when travelling around the school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when working online. They do not give out any personal information and know how to report any suspicious incidents. Pupils told an inspector that they always 'Think, Think, Click'. They also told inspectors that there is no bullying in the school and said they would know what to do, and who to tell, if bullying did occur.

- Charitable work is securely embedded in the life of the school. Pupils raise money willingly for local, national and international charities. These include the Alice House Hospice in Hartlepool, Macmillan Cancer Support and WaterAid respectively.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons. However, sometimes they sit back and listen but do not engage fully, being overly passive. On other occasions, especially when their work is not sufficiently challenging, they exhibit some off-task behaviours. These pupils do not have a real thirst for learning and knowledge.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and during the less-structured times of the school day. They socialise harmoniously in the dining hall and look after each other on the playground. Pupils support and help each other in lessons very well.
- Pupils welcome each other, their teachers and visitors to the school warmly. They are polite, courteous and respectful. Pupils were wonderful ambassadors for their school during the inspection.
- Attendance, apart from the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, is in line with the national average. Due to an initiative undertaken by the headteacher, the number of pupils who are late for school has halved this academic year when compared to the same period last year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Not enough pupils, only 43 from 59, achieved the standard in the 2018 Year 1 phonics screening check. Consequently, more than a quarter of the pupils were not well prepared for reading in Year 2. Pupils' progress in phonics continues to be an issue in the current academic year.
- The whole school community was disappointed by the outcomes for key stage 2 pupils in 2018. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching and exceeding the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. In reading, the progress made by pupils from their starting points at the end of key stage 1 was below average. It was significantly below average in writing and mathematics. These pupils were not prepared well for life at secondary school.
- The Year 2 pupils at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 reached the expected standard in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. Not enough of the most able pupils achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018.
- Disadvantaged pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 underperformed in 2018. They did not make the progress of which they were capable.
- Currently, pupils are making much better progress in writing and mathematics. This includes pupils with SEND. However, disadvantaged pupils are still not making good progress.
- Outcomes in foundation subjects are inconsistent. They are very strong in PE and the performing arts but weaker in subjects such as history, geography, art and design, and design and technology.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years has decreased year on year. Fewer children reached a good level of development in 2018 at the school than nationally.
- Over time, leaders have gathered information about children’s skills and abilities in reading, writing and mathematics on entry to the Nursery Class as a matter of course. They have recently started to assess such areas as physical development in this way too.
- In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants record children’s achievements and identify their next steps in learning. However, teachers do not use the identified next steps to plan well for future learning. Consequently, children are sometimes taught the same content over and over again.
- The provision for phonics requires further development in the early years. One phonics scheme is used to plan learning for the Nursery children, while a second scheme is used in the Reception class, and some Reception children are given books to read from a third scheme. Children’s confidence is knocked when they are given books to read which contain too many sounds that they have not been taught.
- Children’s writing does not develop rapidly in the early years. During the inspection, the writing materials in the outdoor environment were ignored while children and adults worked in other areas. Pre-writing skills are not taught well. For example, the tools in the construction area have no working parts for children to manipulate and improve their dexterity. Many of the children in the Reception class do not hold their pencil correctly and find it difficult to form letters properly.
- Children’s welfare requirements are met well by adults in the early years. Relationships between children and adults are caring and strong. The children are very content and settled in the environment. Some skip between activities. Parents are very happy with the provision. They appreciate the way in which teachers share their children’s work online.
- Adults are very adept at helping children develop the social skills necessary to succeed in life. For example, inspectors saw an adult spend a long time during lunchtime teaching a four-year-old child to eat with a knife and fork. This was time well spent. The children are friendly, polite and respectful.

School details

Unique reference number	111691
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10086830

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	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Collins
Headteacher	Amanda Howell
Telephone number	01429272684
Website	www.sacredhearthartlepool.co.uk
Email address	admin@hpoonsacredheart.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND and who receive support is above average. The proportion with education, health and care plans is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is well below average.
- Most pupils, approximately nine-tenths, speak English as their first language.
- The school is of Roman Catholic religious character. The last diocesan inspection, a section 48 inspection, took place on 13–14 June 2018.
- The headteacher took up post in February 2018. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects in the early years and key stages 1 and 2. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Formal meetings were held with a group of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6, a group of disadvantaged pupils and a group of pupils who have SEND.
- The lead inspector discussed the school's effectiveness with a senior school improvement advisor and a teaching and learning primary advisor, from Hartlepool local authority.
- Inspectors also held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader, the data assessment leader, subject leaders, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisory assistants.
- The lead inspector read with pupils from the Reception class and Years 1 and 2.
- Members of the inspection team observed the work of the school more broadly and looked at a range of documentation. This included policies, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plans, safeguarding records and information about pupils' attendance, attainment and progress.
- Inspectors considered 56 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, alongside the school's most recent parental survey. Team members also talked to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- An inspector evaluated the support plans for the small number of pupils who have SEND, checked the extent to which plans are put in place in lessons and talked to some of these pupils' parents by telephone.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew James	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Humble	Ofsted Inspector

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