

# Sacred Heart Catholic Nursery and Primary School

Cecil Road, Paignton, Torbay, TQ3 2SH

**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This school has continued the rapid pace of improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection and pupils now achieve well.
- Sacred Heart is a very inclusive school that provides a high level of care that keeps pupils safe and promotes their good behaviour.
- Typically, teaching is good across the school. It is particularly successful in developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills and in developing pupils' love of books and enjoyment in reading.
- Children in the Nursery, Reception and Year 6 classes respond extremely well to calm, very clear teaching and stimulating learning activities that encourage pupils to commit themselves fully to their learning.
- Staff treat pupils as unique individuals and strongly support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as others from minority ethnic backgrounds, who often join the school later than the normal time of entry.
- The most able pupils also achieve well and, like other pupils, benefit from the teachers' consistent expectations that pupils should explain their ideas, share and check them with each other to bring improvement.
- The well respected headteacher, strongly supported by senior staff and governors, sustains a determined commitment to continued improvement. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that high quality adult support underpins pupils' increasing confidence in learning and good progress as pupils move through the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, lesson introductions continue for too long, constraining the time available for pupils to work more effectively at their own level.
- The pupils' handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills are not always developed quickly enough, especially through Years 1 and 2.
- At times, a few pupils become too dependent on close adult support and do not contribute enough to their own learning in lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons and were accompanied by the headteacher during almost half of these observations.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupil members of the school council, and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The inspectors also met with governors, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese, and spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior and middle managers.
- The inspectors also consulted 12 parents' and carers' responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection, and examined 15 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Marriott

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is below average in size.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs also matches the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is comprised of one Nursery and one Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is no alternative provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - enabling pupils to move more quickly into the variety of learning activities planned for them in lessons, so that they can work and progress more rapidly
  - making sure that the additional support given to pupils also develops their independence in learning.
- Quicken the rate of pupils' progress in writing, especially in Years 1 and 2, by teachers:
  - devoting more attention to developing good handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills
  - more specifically identifying these basic writing skills during marking and when talking to the pupils, so that pupils can also improve these skills for themselves every time they write.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry into the Nursery and Reception classes are mostly below those normally expected, especially in communication and language skills, and in personal, social and emotional development. A large proportion of the increasing number of pupils joining other year groups, also have lower than expected skills in these aspects.
- Pupils are warmly welcomed and effectively supported and so they settle quickly and make good progress. For example, children in Nursery and Reception classes thoroughly enjoy, and fully engage in, the plentiful practical learning opportunities provided for them. Pupils in other years, across the range of needs, including those with English as an additional language, also benefit from a substantial amount of additional adult support, reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- This is especially the case for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils supported through pupil premium funding, who progress as well as their peers because of high quality, often individual, support. At times, a few pupils rely too much on adults and their progress slows when left to work to their own.
- Nevertheless, improved teaching ensures that pupils are now making better progress across the school than at the time of the previous inspection and are achieving well. For example, pupils love listening to stories, are enthusiastic about reading and progress well in reading because of strengthened teaching of how letters sound (phonics).
- In the national assessments earlier this year, pupils at the end of Year 6 attained levels that broadly matched national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to improve on these levels and are already demonstrating above average speaking and listening skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, a group of pupils confidently reported their investigations of the cost of providing a meal for 30 people back to the rest of the class.
- Observations of lessons, checks of pupils' work and school assessments of pupils' progress show that the number of pupils meeting and exceeding expected rates of progress compares well with the national picture.
- This is especially evident in pupils' improved speaking and listening skills and vocabulary that have lifted their ability to write expressively. However, pupils' handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills are less well developed, especially by the end of Year 2.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Almost all teachers strongly encourage pupils to think about and check their own learning and share their ideas with other pupils. This underpins the good and sometimes outstanding teaching evident through the school.
- The joyful learning seen in Nursery and Reception classes reflects the good relationships between adults and children that lift children's confidence. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through topics that link subjects together, such as Advent for example, which also promote the school's Christian ethos.
- The teachers often use questioning well to check pupils' thinking and to develop new learning from the pupils' responses. Questioning is at its best as in mathematics in Year 2 and English in Year 3, when teachers ensured that pupils knew the intended learning outcomes and what was expected of them.
- Occasionally, teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and this stops pupils from moving quickly into the variety of learning activities planned for them. Similarly, questioning sometimes continues for too long, preventing pupils who already understand from getting on with their own learning.
- Teachers plan well for the range of pupils' abilities and promote their good behaviour effectively.

Teachers use teaching assistants well to help pupils, especially those with disabilities and special educational needs, to feel secure and make good progress. The needs of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding are also well met and they learn effectively as a result.

- On a few occasions in Year 1, there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' independence, especially for some of the pupils with emotional needs. Consequently, they can become too dependent on adults and their learning slows.
- Across the school, the teaching of pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills is a strength. This is advancing pupils' enjoyment of books and their vocabulary, as well as their ability to write with expression. Pupils enjoy sharing ideas with each other, to improve their descriptive writing. For example, in English in Year 5, pupils discussed figurative language in poetry.
- At times, particularly in Years 1 and 2, pupils' handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills are not developed quickly enough. Sometimes these aspects are not emphasised enough in teachers' marking, and some pupils lack confidence in expressing their ideas in writing. Teachers are rapidly putting this right by using pupils' favourite stories as models for improving writing.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The vast majority of pupils behave and relate well towards each other and their teachers.
- A strength of the school is the way that pupils who are new arrivals from other schools and backgrounds are warmly welcomed and readily develop supportive friendships.
- Pupils' behaviour was good at the time of the previous inspection and views of pupils, parents and carers and staff show that this has been sustained over time.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes towards learning and take their responsibilities seriously, for example as peer mentors helping other pupils at playtime. Pupils are considerate of others and in Year 6, pupils say, 'We like working towards our Civic Award because it's fun and challenging and we like helping the community.'
- Pupils confidently say they are well looked after by caring staff and, as a result, know how to keep safe. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' typical views were reflected in the comment, 'We are taught and cared for in a helpful way that we understand.'
- Pupils know about bullying and its different forms, for example cyber bullying. They also report that bullying is rare, and that if it did happen then the teachers would 'soon sort it out'.
- The year-on-year improvement in attendance, bringing it to an average level, further reflects the pupils' enjoyment of school and the school's support of families in need.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The experienced headteacher has further developed the successful approach to team leadership and management, identified as a strength at the time of the previous inspection, to sustain a rapid pace of improvement.
- For example, continuing and accurate checking of pupils' progress enables staff to support pupils' individual needs effectively, identifying any potential underachievement at an early stage. As a result, the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs, those in receipt of pupil premium support and those arriving from other schools all benefit from additional support and progress as well as other pupils.
- With the full support of senior staff and governors, the headteacher has played a key role in checking and improving the quality of teaching and in using staff appraisal and training to develop the skills of subject leaders and to retain teachers with proven ability. Teachers' pay increases are securely linked to the quality of their work.
- In this way, the school has now secured equally good achievement for all pupils in relation to their starting points. In particular, more consistent teaching of speaking and listening, and problem solving in mathematics, has lifted pupils' achievements since the previous inspection.

The school shows a secure capacity to continue this into the future.

- The school works well with parents and carers, especially to help those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. All staff provide high quality care and diligently treat pupils equally to eliminate discrimination.
- Pupils' skills and interests are developed well through topics which link subjects together, for example 'Fit to learn' which, as well as healthy lifestyles, also promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- With help from governors, staff ensure that procedures for safeguarding the pupils' welfare are fully implemented in accordance with statutory requirements.
- The local authority has contributed well to the continued improvement of the school. For example, it continues to provide supportive training for staff, more recently in teaching phonics and by sharing expertise with other schools.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The stable and experienced governing body has accessed training over time, including updating training on safe recruitment of staff and examining data of pupils' performance to compare it with schools nationally. Governors undertake frequent visits to the school. Having shared information about the school's performance within their well-established committees, they regularly question the headteacher about the way provision, especially teaching, promotes pupils' achievements. As a result, governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and have applied their skills well since the previous inspection to drive improvement. For example, they have been closely involved in decisions regarding teachers' status and pay to ensure that staff appraisal and performance management balance school, pupils' and staff needs effectively, especially to retain and develop capable teachers. Governors manage the budget efficiently and receive detailed reports from senior leaders, for example to check the good use of additional funds for pupils with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium to help them achieve as well as other pupils.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113470
<b>Local authority</b>	Torbay
<b>Inspection number</b>	405472

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Francis Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803558298
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