

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Lumley Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 2BA

Inspection dates	15–16 June 2016
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide inspiring leadership. Their love of the school and high ambition for the pupils motivate all staff.
- Leaders and governors have dealt with the areas that required improvement at the last inspection. They have improved teaching and raised pupils' achievement. They have good capacity to continue to improve the school.
- Care and respect permeate the school. All staff do their utmost to make every pupil feel valued. In this warm and nurturing environment, pupils grow in confidence and develop very positive attitudes to learning.
- Consistently good teaching, based on accurate assessment, captures pupils' interest so pupils find learning exciting. Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and develop a 'can-do' approach.
- Pupils' attainment in standardised assessments has risen. Pupils of all ability make good or better progress in each year group.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils with lower starting points and the most able pupils make especially good progress. These groups are taught very effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils' wonder and zest for life are encouraged at every opportunity.
- Pupils feel and are safe in school. Their conduct around the school and at breaktimes is exemplary. The vast majority behave well in class.
- Children make good progress in the early years. Provision in the well-established Reception class is outstanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Subject leadership is not developed to the same extent and as effectively as it could be in different subjects.
- Pupils' written work is not of a consistently good standard as they do not always apply what they know when writing independently.
- Middle-ability pupils make generally good progress but do not make the same rapid progress as other ability groups. Some work is too difficult in mathematics, so pupils do not consolidate their learning as well as they could.
- Early literacy skills are not developed as effectively in the new Nursery class as they are in the Reception class.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further, especially for pupils of middle ability, by:
 - making sure that the work given to pupils builds on what they already know and can do and is not too difficult in mathematics
 - making sure that pupils consolidate their skills in writing so they are able to apply them fluently and successfully when they are given tasks to complete independently.
- Develop the role of leaders in subjects such as science, modern foreign languages, art, music, design and technology, history and geography to ensure that pupils make just as good progress in these subjects as they do in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Further develop provision in the Nursery class and provide more opportunities for children to practise their early literacy skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are tireless in their mission to make sure children achieve the best possible standards, develop a love of learning and acquire personal skills that help them deal with challenges. Their complementary skills provide for a highly effective senior leadership team.
- Staff have complete confidence in senior leaders and enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported, able to use their initiative, but also accountable. They say the 'love of the school and commitment to the children' shown by senior leaders motivates them to do their best. Staff responses to the online Ofsted survey were entirely positive.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching, curriculum coverage and pupils' progress in English and mathematics rigorously. They have an accurate view of strengths and priorities for further improvement and are taking appropriate action. The half-termly assessments and meetings to discuss pupils' progress ensure that teachers are held to account and any pupils who are not making expected progress are supported appropriately.
- The performance of staff is managed effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from extensive professional development that adds to their skills and supports school improvement. Teaching assistants are skilled in the delivery of small group programmes designed to help pupils catch up in mathematics, reading and writing. Teachers have developed and shared best practice through training, peer coaching and focused feedback from observations.
- Leaders draw on external support from advisers, other schools and lead professionals very effectively. They seek opportunities to learn from colleagues and work in collaboration with the local secondary school and other primary schools. This ensures that all staff can broaden their skills and expertise and share best practice beyond the school. The school has received good support from local leaders of education, the local authority and through the 'Catholic Cluster' of schools.
- The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to ensure that pupils develop key knowledge and skills in the full range of subjects in each year group. Pupils enjoy topics that capture their interest and help them to make links in their learning. Literacy and mathematical skills are taught very effectively and reinforced in other subjects.
- Pupils' learning is enriched with a wide range of additional activities, visitors to the school and trips out. The before- and after-school activities, including homework clubs, sports, music, art and drama, enhance pupils' learning and develop their personal and social skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very effectively. The encouraging atmosphere helps pupils to grow in confidence and develop successful social skills. Pupils are taught about the core values of modern British society and about other faiths and cultures in lessons and through enrichment activities. They consider moral dilemmas thoughtfully and develop a good understanding of global issues.
- Pupils explore values such as democracy, compassion, respect and tolerance in lessons and these qualities are seen in their behaviour towards each other. They participate in a range of activities that enrich their understanding, such as visits to the council chamber, fundraising for local and global charities, election of school councillors and writing to children in different countries. Pupils' strong social skills and understanding of diversity in wider society prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leadership of English, mathematics, special educational needs and the early years is very well developed. Leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and aspects that require further work. They have good knowledge about the curriculum and quality of teaching within their responsibility areas.
- Leadership of other subjects, such as science, modern foreign languages, history, geography, art, design and technology and music is not as effective. Leaders in these subjects maintain an overview of how each subject is covered within a topic but they do not have a comprehensive overview of the quality of teaching and progression in pupils' knowledge and skills in each subject.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school; there were no negative responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire. All respondents say their child is happy, is taught well, makes good progress and is well looked after. Typical comments include: 'All teaching staff are friendly and happy to deal with concerns', 'the level of praise and encouragement is excellent' and 'I can't recommend it highly enough'.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors work effectively with senior leaders to ensure the school keeps on improving. They have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement because they are well informed and ask challenging questions. They attend training to keep up to date.
- The budget is managed well. Governors oversee the performance and salary progression of staff effectively. They ensure that the pupil premium (additional funding allocated to the school to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) has a positive impact on the achievement and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. The provision of a minibus helps pupils get to school on time and family support has proved effective in helping parents to become more involved in their children's learning. The additional sports premium is spent effectively to broaden pupils' experience of and participation in a range of sports. It also serves to extend teachers' skills in teaching different physical activity.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff recruitment arrangements meet requirements and all adults who work with children are vetted appropriately. Staff and governors have completed relevant child protection and safeguarding training. Everyone is aware of the school's policy and procedures to follow if they have safeguarding concerns. Leaders liaise with external agencies effectively to safeguard vulnerable pupils and provide support for families. Staff are fully aware of the 'Prevent' duty, having completed training. Governors are not as aware of the 'Prevent' duty, but they have plans to complete training. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire say their child feels safe and the school deals effectively with bullying.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Staff have high expectations of pupils. They instil confidence, so pupils feel they can both achieve highly and ask for extra support if they need it. This 'can do' culture has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and helps them develop high aspirations for their future.
- Teachers plan activities that capture pupils' interest so pupils find learning fun. They question pupils skilfully to probe and deepen their understanding.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning in all classes. Good-quality professional development has helped them develop their knowledge and skills, particularly in the provision of small group support programmes.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) and grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught very effectively and help pupils achieve well in reading and writing. Reading for pleasure is promoted exceptionally well, under the leadership of a higher-level teaching assistant and supported by pupil librarians. The library is enchanting and pupils love the competitions and 'tea parties' based on different books and characters.
- Literacy and mathematical skills are developed and reinforced in many subjects, which helps pupils to contextualise and connect their learning. Pupils learn the key features of different text types and broaden their vocabulary successfully. For example, in Year 3 pupils learned the key features of script writing and then applied this knowledge to write a play script in religious education lessons.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the standards expected of children in each year group in all subjects. Teachers typically assess pupils' work effectively in order to plan the next steps in their learning. There are occasions, however, when assessments in writing do not reflect what pupils can do without support. For some pupils, the written work that they produce independently does not reflect the higher standards they achieve in more supported contexts.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength across the whole school. The needs of these pupils are assessed accurately and they are skilfully supported to develop their confidence, knowledge and understanding. Children with language difficulties receive effective extra support and this has had a significant impact on improving their language skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support and make good progress.
- Raising the achievement of the most able pupils has been a key focus in the professional development of all staff. Teachers have high expectations and provide additional challenge and support to make sure the most able pupils reach their potential. Pupils' achievement is checked carefully by teachers and leaders and effective action is taken if they are not making the progress expected. The most able pupils are typically given work that makes them think and deepens their learning
- There are occasions, however, when pupils of middle ability do not make the most rapid progress they could. This is because some of them find the work they are given in mathematics too difficult and their

writing skills are not sufficiently embedded to enable them to apply them independently.

- There is a consistent approach to marking and feedback in line with the school's policy. Feedback helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and take pride in their achievements. They use their initiative, for example in organising fundraising for charities that are close to their heart.
- Pupils take on a variety of responsibilities with enthusiasm and pride. 'Play Buddies' make an excellent contribution to organising constructive games at breaktimes and make sure all pupils feel included. The school councillors represent the views of pupils and lead initiatives with confidence, and prefects contribute greatly to the smooth running of the school. The librarians are enthusiastic promoters of reading. They have worked with the school librarian to create a wonderfully stimulating library and help other pupils to read competently.
- Pupils feel and are safe in school. They do not feel that bullying is an issue and are entirely confident that staff will resolve any concerns they might have. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including name-calling, and do their best to uphold the school's message of 'kindness first'. They are taught about how to keep safe when using the internet and about possible risks on roads, railways and near water.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is a high priority. Their health is promoted through healthy food at lunch time and a range of physical activity. Leaders work constructively with a range of agencies to ensure the well-being of vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils who are educated off-site. For example, transport is provided to take pupils to the pupil referral unit and regular checks are made on pupils' well-being and achievement if they are in alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils and are excellent role models for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils are extremely welcoming and polite to visitors. They are obviously proud of their school and keen to talk about all the good things they benefit from and contribute to the school.
- Pupils' conduct around the school was exemplary during the inspection and pupils typically show respect and consideration for others. Pupils play sociably at breaktimes. They enjoy participating in self-organised games and are very inclusive.
- Behaviour in lessons is typically good. The vast majority of pupils are highly motivated, attentive and keen to contribute in lessons. They produce good-quality work and are proud of their achievements. A small minority of pupils occasionally display inappropriate behaviour. On these rare occasions, staff act swiftly and fairly to make sure disruption to learning is minimised.
- A small minority of pupils who struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour are helped in school and in liaison with relevant agencies. When temporary exclusion has been unavoidable, school leaders have supported families to help pupils reintegrate into school. Every effort is made to keep pupils in school; there have been no permanent exclusions but temporary exclusion is above average.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection, with the provision of good support for families who struggle to get their children to school. Persistent absenteeism has reduced significantly and attendance is now average. Punctuality has also improved; pupils who need extra help to get to school on time are picked up by a minibus.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Children start in the Reception class with varied experiences and often with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress from these various starting points in the early years and at key stage 1.

Attainment in the standardised assessments at the end of Year 2 has risen steadily over five years and was closer to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015.

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved significantly to broadly average standards in 2015. The proportion of pupils who made expected progress across key stage 2 was above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in their language and literacy skills because these skills are taught very effectively. In 2015 pupils attained average standards in the phonics screening check in Year 1 and above average in the grammar, spelling and punctuation test in Year 6.
- The improvements that were evident in 2015 are being sustained. Pupils continue to make good progress from their various starting points and the majority are currently working at standards expected for their age in each year group. Their work shows that knowledge and skills in literacy and mathematics are built on progressively in each year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make especially good progress. In 2015 they made better progress than others in school and others nationally. This strong progress is continuing because teachers plan work that develops their confidence and skilfully builds on what they know.
- Pupils who have lower than usual starting points and those who speak English as an additional language are also supported very effectively to catch up and make rapid progress.
- The most able pupils are now making more rapid progress than was evident in the 2015 assessments, when a few did not make expected progress to reach the higher standards. Pupils deepen and extend their learning through investigations and their own research as well as through challenging tasks set by teachers.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made just as good progress from their starting points as others in school and similar progress to other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment was two terms behind other pupils nationally in writing and three terms behind in reading and mathematics, although the work of disadvantaged pupils who are currently in school shows that the attainment gap is narrowing. Disadvantaged pupils continue to make just as good progress as others in each year group.
- The achievement of middle-ability pupils is usually good but there are times when work is not pitched at just the right level of difficulty to enable them to make the same strong progress as the other groups. This is because work is too challenging for some pupils at times, so they do not consolidate and deepen their learning securely before moving on.
- Reading, writing and mathematical skills are reinforced effectively across all subjects so they make consistently good or better progress in these subjects. They also make at least good progress in their physical and personal skills. Pupils cover the necessary knowledge and skills in other subjects but do not make such good progress in subjects such science, modern foreign languages, art, design and geography as yet.
- Pupils' good literacy and mathematical skills, their well-developed personal skills and good attitudes to learning ensure they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Up to 2015, children entered the Reception class with a wide range of pre-school experiences. Their knowledge and skills in language, literacy and mathematics have often been well below those expected for their age. Children make good progress from these starting points.
- Leaders have taken effective action to support children in developing their skills earlier by opening a Nursery class in 2015, which includes provision for two-year-olds. Teachers assess children's knowledge and skills accurately and build on them from the start through fun activities.
- The Nursery class is still at an early stage of development but is already having a positive impact, particularly on children's social skills and readiness to learn. Language and early mathematical skills are modelled by adults and developed effectively in various fun activities. Early reading and writing skills are not yet developed as well as they could be and are recognised as an area for further development.
- The Reception class is well established and provision is outstanding. The teacher skilfully assesses children's learning needs and provides them with a range of motivating and challenging activities. Phonics skills are taught exceptionally well. The outdoor area reflects the high-quality provision in the classroom, providing children with opportunities to try out their skills and investigate, for example by weighing and ordering objects and writing in the role-play areas. Children develop confidence, wonder and joy in all

areas of learning.

- Since the previous inspection there has been an increased focus on improving language and writing skills in the Reception class and this has proved highly effective. Children make rapid progress and the proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year increased significantly in 2015 to well above average. These good outcomes are being sustained. Additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged children to make just as good progress as others.
- Children feel safe and are looked after very well across all of the early years provision. Adults develop warm, encouraging relationships with children and children play and work together happily. There are clear routines and staff have high expectations for children's behaviour and achievement. Staff have participated in relevant training to make sure they can help all, including the very youngest, children grow in confidence and feel secure.
- Teachers work constructively with parents from the start. Parents make a valuable contribution to initial assessments and are encouraged to share information about their children's learning. The 'Stay and Play' sessions, home to school books and reading workshops have all helped to increase parents' involvement and confidence in supporting children's learning at home.
- Very effective leadership from the deputy headteacher, also the Reception class teacher, has ensured that there are effective procedures to check children's progress and support their development in all areas of learning. Children make good progress and are very well prepared for their move into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	112363
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10012187

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Buckley
Headteacher	Bernie Barnes
Telephone number	10229 840940
Website	www.sacredheart.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	office@sacredheart.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in single age classes.
- A Nursery class opened in September 2015, providing 24 places in the morning and 24 places in the afternoon.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. A smaller than average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and scrutinised a random sample of pupils' work in all subjects. They observed pupils at work and play around the school.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to discuss their work, safeguarding, their roles and their views of the school. They talked to others at breaktimes and in lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and three governors and spoke with the local authority school adviser by telephone.
- Nineteen parents' responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 questionnaire responses from staff were taken into account.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's assessment information, checks of teaching and pupils' progress, self-evaluation and improvement planning. Checks on safeguarding and child protection procedures were completed and records relating to behaviour and attendance were considered.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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