



Follow-through Inspection Report

Sacred Heart Primary School

May 2008

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published a report on standards and quality in Sacred Heart Primary School in September 2006 following their inspection of the school in May 2006.

Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how the main points for action, identified in the report, would be achieved.

Continuous Improvement

All members of staff had worked effectively as a team to address the main points for action and other relevant issues highlighted within the inspection report. Their positive attitude and commitment had enabled them to successfully build on their existing good practice to improve the work of the school.

In June 2007, the head teacher, who had been in post for twenty-two years, retired. The depute head teacher was appointed as head teacher and took up her post in August 2007. A new depute head teacher was appointed in May 2008.

The school had taken further positive steps to improve, enhance and extend the links between home, school and the church. Relationships had continued to improve and a stronger sense of partnership now existed.

A calendar of events provided planned opportunities for parents to be more actively involved in the life of the school and in their children's learning. Parents were receiving more regular information about the ongoing work of the school through the monthly newsletters. Open evenings, presentations by class teachers and demonstration lessons and workshops allowed parents to be provided with more detailed information about curricular areas and developments. These events had been well supported by the parents and attendance at pupil progress report evenings had increased. The Parent Council had been established and had begun to work effectively to support the school. The whole school community had worked well together to produce their very successful 'Christmas Extravaganza' show, which had been a major event within the wider school community.

Staff had continued to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to achieve through extra-curricular activities and through the curriculum. The school had achieved a Gold Award for Enterprise and had begun to work towards achieving the Eco Schools Green Flag Award. Each class had begun to take responsibility for organising and leading one of the two whole school assemblies held each week. These themed assemblies had provided opportunities for the pupils to contribute effectively through music, dance, drama and narration to the promotion of the values and aims of the school. Pupils had begun to develop a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities as members of the school community.

Progress Towards the Main Points for Action

The initial inspection report identified four main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

Main point for action 1

Make more use of assessment information to build on pupils' learning and ensure that all activities meet pupils' needs.

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

All staff had been involved in auditing the planning, assessment and recording procedures in place to identify areas for improvement and development. They were more aware of the value and purpose of the assessment information they recorded and were considering ways to use this information more effectively to inform their forward planning and teaching to meet the needs of all pupils and ensure progression in learning. They had also extended the effective use of assessment information to more areas of the curriculum.

Teachers were using assessment information more consistently to plan next steps in pupils' learning. Senior managers monitored teachers' forward plans systematically to ensure continuity, pace, challenge and progression. Through classroom observation and monitoring of pupils' work they had ensured that the planned activities had provided appropriate challenge and differentiation to meet pupils' needs. Teachers were using assessment information to give evaluative feedback to pupils. Pupils were now more aware of what was expected of them and of their individual strengths and areas for development. These developments had been linked to the next stage of the development of the personal learning plans (PLPs) for pupils. All pupils had a PLP. Each pupil, with the support of the teacher, had begun to evaluate their own learning and set targets for themselves. Teachers and pupils were now more confident in setting personal targets, which built on prior learning and ensured systematic progression.

This more focused approach had had an impact on pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics. Most pupils in P2 had achieved Level A in writing, reading and mathematics. More pupils at the senior stages had achieved Level E and in P4 the majority of pupils were working on Level C.

Main point for action 2

Provide more opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning, work collaboratively and take more responsibility for organising their learning.

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

All staff had received training in active learning, contextualized learning through play and teaching for effective learning (TfEL) strategies. They had had opportunities to visit other schools to observe best practice in each of these approaches.

Teacher had begun to use these approaches more effectively to provide active learning and collaborative working opportunities for their pupils. At the early stages, teachers had worked collaboratively with the local nursery school to develop active learning activities. One of the teachers had used contextualized learning through play as the focus for her Project Leadership course. She had led the developments and had provided her colleagues with the support and training necessary to set up 'Learning Lanes' to facilitate active learning situations. This project had had a major impact at the P1 and P2 stages. Pupils were now more actively involved in all aspects of their learning. They were developing more independence in their learning and were becoming more aware of and confident in their abilities.

The school had established a structured programme for talking and listening to provide a better focus on skills development and progression across the curriculum. Teachers were incorporating the development of these skills into the active learning activities.

At the middle and upper stages, teachers were providing more opportunities for pupils to work more collaboratively in groups and in pairs for reading and writing. Teachers were involving pupils more actively in their mathematics lessons through deploying interactive approaches.

PLPs had ensured that the pupils had opportunities to take more responsibility for planning and organising their own learning. Pupils at all stages had responded well to these initiatives.

Main point for action 3

Deploy support staff more effectively in classes.

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

All support staff had had support and training from senior managers to meet their specific needs and to enable them to carry out their remits more effectively. The headteacher had provided clearly defined remits and clearer guidance on their roles and duties within the classrooms, the playground, the office and the dining hall.

All support staff reported that they felt valued, included, listened to and respected by pupils and staff. They had opportunities to be involved in the decision making processes of the school and had welcomed the opportunities to be involved in the whole school events, training sessions and consultation processes regarding the work of the school.

Pupil support assistants were being used more effectively in the classrooms. They had consultation time with the teachers for planning and evaluating their work to ensure that appropriate support was given to the pupils to meet their learning needs. The overall provision of support for pupils had improved.

Relationships between support staff, teachers and senior management had improved significantly. An ethos of collegiality and mutual respect now existed.

Main point for action 4

Address the accommodation and health and safety issues referred to in this report.

The school and authority has made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

A Health & Safety Officer from the authority had carried out a full audit of the security arrangements. Procedures had been put in place to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils both in the school building and in the playground at all times. All stakeholders had been informed of the new arrangements.

The school had set up systems to ensure all visitors to the school were identified and accounted for in line with the authority's guidance on school security. The janitor and office staff had been given the responsibility of ensuring the procedures were adhered to at all times.

Access ramps had been installed to facilitate access to the school for people with physical disabilities.

Procedures for fire drills had been reviewed in line with the authority's guidelines. The new procedures had been implemented and evaluated. Fire drills had been carried out

more regularly at varying times and in a variety of settings. Pupils and staff had carried out procedures promptly.

Teachers had begun to display pupils' work more effectively in the classrooms and corridors. Good quality examples of pupils writing, art work and projects were creatively displayed around the school. Teachers had begun to change the displays more regularly to keep them more relevant and current to what pupils were learning. The pupils were proud of their work and achievements and had strived to produce a high standard for display.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The head teacher and her staff had worked well together as a team to progress all aspects of the Action Plan effectively. Senior managers had provided effective guidance and direction to the teachers and support staff who had actively participated in working groups, training sessions and individual projects to progress the initiatives satisfactorily.

The school had used the inspection process and the recommendations within the whole report as a focus for whole school improvement to enable them to move forward effectively and to build on their existing good practice, high standards and high expectations for their pupils. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

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