



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery
Headteacher Mrs Janet Mullally
Windermere Road, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 2RF
Phone: 01702 534546
Email: office@sacredheart.southend.sch.uk



6th September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Please find enclosed a copy of our latest Ofsted report following the monitoring visit, which took place on 21st and 22nd June 2022. We were so very proud of your children's courteousness and politeness, which was commented on many times by the inspector.

When OfSTED visit, they want to see what it is that we do well and what we need to improve on. Our OfSTED inspection in June focused on the overall effectiveness of the school, as well as a specific focus on our Phonics/Reading, Maths and Art curriculum.

What the school does well

The inspector found many positive strengths within the school. We are delighted that these great strengths of school have been positively acknowledged, specifically around key areas such as the teaching and learning of Phonics and our provision for Reading, pupil behaviour, the range of opportunities available to pupils that enables their Personal Development, along with our effective SEND and Safeguarding provision. There are many comments that I could pick out to highlight that we are very proud to read, but I do not wish to repeat what is written in the report – the words speak for themselves. I would like to comment on what the inspectors said really stood out for them and that is relating to the supportive relationships between pupils and staff, which accurately reflects the ethos and atmosphere within the school. This is not something that can be manufactured or prepared for when the inspectors call – it is something that takes years to develop and will only be in place when all members of the staff are pulling in the same direction with the same expectations.

What the school needs to do better

As a school we have always, and are always, looking for ways to improve and do things better. In our school Self-Evaluation we identify the areas that we need to improve on and use our School Development Plan to detail how we are going to tackle them. We agree with the inspector on the areas that require improvement, and will continue to work on these.

The curriculum across the school, including the use of assessment, requires further development. We have carried out some significant development work on our curriculum in recent years, and most particularly last academic year, to ensure that curriculum coverage and teaching and learning in all subjects is effective and that it continued to best meet pupils needs given the impact of the Pandemic. As the report indicates, the inspector acknowledged that work has been in place to develop our curriculum, however this "was incomplete". Senior Leaders, working alongside Subject Leaders and Class Teachers, will continue in their work to address this.

The additional support in place to help weakest readers to develop their fluency also needs improvement. We have carried out some significant work in refining our practice in supporting pupils who have fallen behind in being able to read with fluency, particularly having recognised that COVID-related school closures had had some significantly effect for some children's reading skills. We made some refinements to our teaching strategies and

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Part of the Assisi Catholic Trust Ltd,
Registered address: Kenilworth Gardens, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS0 0BW
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adopted a new reading book-bag scheme last year, the Read Write Inc book-bag scheme, to align pupils' reading at home to their Phonics learning from the classroom. Whilst this book scheme and our related practice is effectively supporting most pupils, there are areas to work on, particularly relating to our very 'weakest' early readers, and the continued need for staff professional development. School leaders know where further improvements need to be made and steps are in place to swiftly address these. We know that if the children can't read, it closes the curriculum to them.

You will see that the overall outcome of the inspection is there has been no change to the school's overall judgement of 'good' as a result of this (section 8) inspection. However, the wider inspection outcomes in the report have brought some disappointment for all members of staff. To a certain extent, the timing of our monitoring visit was unhelpful given the unsettled nature of the school year, in the aftermath of COVID. It is also important to note that the two days formed a small snapshot of education at Sacred Heart School. However, we are giving serious attention to the findings of the OfSTED monitoring visit and our continued hard work has included addressing their recommendations. It must be said that all staff in school are committed to providing the best education for the children of Sacred Heart School. We were working on these areas before the inspection and continue to do so. Following our inspection, immediate steps were taken to review the School Development Plan that was already in place and refocus our attention and work where this was necessary.

I am eager and keen to drive the necessary improvements, as are all my staff. Underpinning that is the school ethos and the commitment of staff, which makes us better placed to address the areas we can get even better at. We are confident that with the robust action plan in place, and the rigour in our leadership and governance, the school will be able to make the necessary strides and address the areas for improvement in the shortest timeframe possible and we look forward to sharing this with OfSTED on their next visit.

If you have any questions when you have read the published report, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Janet Mullally
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