

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Henley-on-Thames

URN: 123204 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

## Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

## Achievement

Expected standard

Most pupils achieve well. Overall, this is reflected in their attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils generally achieve close to national averages. Typically, pupils secure the knowledge they need in each subject as they move through the school. They are ready for the next stage of their education. On the whole, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known to or previously known to social care generally achieve well from their starting points. However, there are some disadvantaged pupils, some pupils with SEND and pupils known or previously known to social care, who do not consistently develop a detailed knowledge in the fundamentals of early reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders prioritise improvements in this area so that the school is working hard to close the gaps that some of these pupils have.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school's curriculum is broad and well sequenced. It is ambitious and designed to reduce barriers to learning. The curriculum considers the needs of the mixed-age classes well and builds to clear end points in each subject. This helps to promote pupils' learning at every stage. Staff professional development is based on the school's aspiration to ensure that teaching is consistently effective and supports all learners. Typically, teachers have the knowledge they need to help pupils learn well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in many subjects, teachers carefully check and ensure that pupils build their learning on what they know already. Most of the time, the school extends pupils' use of language and vocabulary well. In general, staff adapt the curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Typically, pupils receive the support they need to catch up quickly in the basic skills they need, including in reading and mathematics. Well-trained staff provide extra practice sessions to help pupils catch up. However, sometimes teaching does not address gaps in knowledge, so that for some pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils the gaps persist.

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## Early years

### Expected standard

Leaders ensure that the early years curriculum is designed carefully. Work is ongoing to ensure that there are even more opportunities throughout each day for children to practise and develop essential skills such as reading, writing and communication and language. Staff establish nurturing relationships. Children settle quickly in to the Reception class. This is due to well communicated and practised routines and rules. This also helps to develop an environment where children share resources well with each other and their care needs are met. The school ensures that children, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and those that have other barriers to their learning, access learning in all areas effectively. Staff identify quickly any barriers to learning that children may have. Leaders also work well with parents and carers and external agencies to ensure that children have the right help and support to make progress in their learning. Staff introduce children to phonics from the moment they join in Reception class. They check carefully that children learn to use their phonics knowledge to read and write with growing confidence. Typically, children learn well from the start, and leave Reception well prepared for their future learning.

## Inclusion

### Expected standard

Leaders promote a school culture where diversity is celebrated, and every pupil is valued. Leaders identify the needs of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), promptly and with increasing accuracy. This ensures that, regardless of their individual needs, pupils are helped, feel understood and are ready to learn. Consequently, pupils develop increased confidence and independence. Staff benefit from regular training to enhance their expertise, for example in areas such as autism. Leaders and staff work hard to ensure that the provision for pupils with SEND is effective. Leaders understand how to evaluate the impact of their actions to support pupils with SEND. As a result, most pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care are supported well from their individual starting points. The school works effectively with external agencies and pupils' families to ensure that pupils benefit from this collaborative working. Leaders monitor pupils' progress well and evaluate the impact of interventions to inform future planning. Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to help improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care.

## Leadership and governance

### Expected standard

Leaders make decisions in the best interests of all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or face other barriers to learning. They ensure that the pupils usually receive the support they need to succeed. Leaders and the governing body work purposefully to raise aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Staff value the team spirit and open culture that exists in the school. Staff feel that

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their workload and wellbeing are really prioritised by leaders. The school works hard to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to achieve well. Leaders have a secure understanding of strengths and areas which they need to prioritise. The school has a well-structured professional learning programme that is informed by research and focused on the school's strategic priorities. However, leaders continue to strengthen staff expertise to ensure that teaching closes any gaps in English and mathematics. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and knows the school's context well. Governors challenge leaders effectively to ensure that pupils' educational experience is typically of a high quality.

## Personal development and wellbeing

### Expected standard

Leaders and staff help pupils to be confident and kind citizens who respect other people's differences. They ensure that the carefully crafted personal development programme is woven across all areas of school life. This helps pupils to grow into thoughtful, responsible, and kind individuals. Pastoral support is effective. Strong relationships between pupils and staff underpin a nurturing culture. Targeted support and interventions, for example time with the school counsellor, helps pupils to manage issues such as friendship difficulties. The school's mental health and wellbeing strategy ensures that pupils' needs are identified early and reviewed for impact. This means that pupils are confident in accessing help when needed. Pupils demonstrate a respect for others and celebrate differences. They are taught about the importance of living the fundamental British values, and consequently their understanding of these grow. Pupils discuss topics such as equity and disability thoughtfully and with maturity. Their work on projects, such as litter picking, helps them to develop an appreciation of the significance of looking after the environment and being self-reliant. Pupils talk maturely about differences and similarities between religious celebrations. The personal, social, health and education curriculum enables pupils to develop detailed knowledge of important aspects. This includes how to take care of their mental health and wellbeing, including age-appropriate relationships and consent. Pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe both online and offline.

Pupils use their democratic voice to work with leaders to inform strategic changes. These range from deciding what to showcase on the display boards around school to selecting playground equipment. They participate wholeheartedly in a wide range of events and tournaments where they demonstrate their sporting and performing arts skills and talents. Leaders track pupils' participation in these events, especially that of disadvantaged pupils. These opportunities help to develop and broaden pupils' horizons.

### What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to be part of this happy and inclusive school. Parents and carers praise the school's efforts. Pupils say the best thing about the school is the staff. Staff form trusting relationships with pupils. These start in the early years, continue throughout the school and help pupils to belong and thrive. Pupils are confident that staff will help them deal quickly with any concerns they may have. As a result, incidents of bullying or discrimination are rare. Pupils now come to school more often than they did. However, attendance for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged is an area leaders are

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addressing. Pupils work hard to meet the expectations that staff have for their behaviour and achievement. Typically, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. This generally includes pupils who face barriers to their learning. However, some pupils have unaddressed gaps in their knowledge, including in writing and mathematics. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities. Leaders ensure that these are inclusive and build pupils' aspirations. Activities include visits to the local regatta, where pupils learn more about the unique geographical and historical area they live in. Pupils enjoy learning about how other people live and their beliefs. This helps pupils to celebrate differences confidently and understand the community beyond the school. Pupils also hone their leadership skills by taking on roles and responsibilities such as being school councillors and playtime buddies. Through weekly assemblies and discussions, pupils learn how they can use their collective voice to influence decisions that others make. They are particularly proud of their impact to raise awareness about the importance of keeping the community clean and litter free.

## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their attendance strategy continues to raise attendance rates for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders should continue strengthening staff expertise, including in early years, to ensure teaching consistently closes gaps in foundational knowledge for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to social care.

## Attendance and behaviour

### Expected standard

Leaders promote the importance of attending regularly and continue to focus on improving attendance further for all groups of pupils. Leaders work effectively to find and resolve any barriers before they become an issue for pupils or their families. Consequently, pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known or previously known to social care, now have higher attendance than they did previously. However, some other pupils still do not attend as well as they should. Pupils behave well. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Every morning, they walk into school with happy smiles and this permeates into all areas of their learning. Staff implement the school's behaviour expectations and systems consistently well. As a result, the atmosphere around classrooms and corridors is calm and purposeful. The school provides suitable support for any pupils who need help to manage their emotions. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying or harassment. Any incidents of derogatory language or unkindness are not tolerated and are dealt with swiftly and fairly.

**For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:**

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/sacred-heart-catholic-primary-school-henley-on-thames-henley-on-thames>