

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125203
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	363987
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hooper
Headteacher	Margaret Clerkin, Trisha Burke
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who saw 15 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation about pupils' progress and policies, particularly those for safeguarding, as well as school development planning and evidence of self-evaluation. They considered 116 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is teaching challenging enough to ensure all pupils make good progress, especially boys?
- How well is the school dealing with the relatively lower levels of attainment seen in writing and mathematics than in other subjects, especially of the most able pupils?
- Are previous high quality outcomes and provision in Reception being sustained?

Information about the school

St Francis Catholic Primary is an average sized school and pupils come mainly from White British heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language, and the main other language spoken is Spanish. There is one class with just reception children and one with mixed reception and Year 1 children. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has Healthy Schools status, Artsmark Gold, Sing-Up Platinum and Inclusion Quality mark. The school has two headteachers as a result of a job-share that started in January 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Francis Catholic Primary is a good and improving school. It provides effective care, guidance and support for pupils, which is much appreciated by parents and carers. One wrote, 'A hugely positive experience. My child has been encouraged, challenged and nurtured all the way by staff, who go the extra mile.' Another, commenting on the strong Christian nature of the school, wrote, 'The school has a wonderful Catholic ethos. My children thrive in such a healthy environment.' The governing body provides excellent direction for the school's improvement and works extremely closely with staff to set challenging targets and plan developments.

Many pupils' level of attainment is high. Attainment is generally above average, and is rising. Recent differences in performance in mathematics and writing, and between boys and girls, have been resolved. Attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The content of pupils' writing is good and has improved, but sometimes handwriting is untidy and careless, which spoils the overall impact. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress and some make exceptionally good progress. Children in Reception make good and sometimes excellent progress from broadly average starting points. Overall, pupils' achievement is good.

Good and improving teaching is promoting rising attainment and progress. Lessons are interesting and work is generally well matched to pupils' learning needs. Teachers assess pupils' performance accurately, plan work carefully and, for the most part, pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what their targets are. However, even when there has been discussion between teachers and pupils, occasionally there is not a sufficient written reminder in pupils' work of how they can improve what they do. Where there are useful prompts on how to improve, teachers do not consistently provide enough time for pupils to carry out any guidance given. Work is usually challenging, and adapted quickly where teachers observe that pupils need further challenges. Nevertheless, sometimes the starter activities in lessons are too long and pupils do not get to work for themselves soon enough, and this slows learning a little. The curriculum provides a very wide range of activities to promote pupils' enthusiasm for school. These are well supported by links with the local church and other schools and organisations. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills is promoted effectively through well-established literacy and numeracy activities in all subjects, and an increasingly wide range of computer activities.

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. They feel exceptionally safe and report that bullying of any kind is extremely rare and is dealt with swiftly.

They behave well, are thoughtful and kind towards each other, and confident and polite in their dealings with adults. They take on responsibilities readily in both school and the local community. They have a good understanding of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle.

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Leaders and managers are effective. The headteachers provide extremely good direction for the school's improvement. Their accurate self-evaluation has enabled them to accurately identify where the school can make improvements. Other leaders are rapidly gaining the skills to identify areas for improvement themselves. All leaders are fully involved in driving improvements and this is evident in the rising attainment in mathematics and writing, and the improved performance of boys. The school's capacity to sustain further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by ensuring that pupils produce consistently neat and well-presented work.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that:
 - starter activities are completed swiftly so that pupils move on to individual and small group learning activities as soon as possible
 - marking consistently provides written reminders for pupils on how to improve their work, and provides opportunities for them to follow advice given.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils start school with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. By the end of Year 6 levels of attainment are above average and, although there is always scope for improvement, for many pupils is well above average. Writing and speaking skills are good. Pupils use an extensive vocabulary and complex sentence structures, and work in a wide range of literacy styles. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils used examples of well known riddles as models effectively and used their own ideas to write their own riddles. The most able pupils independently created a series of questions to their own riddles successfully. All pupils could explain what made a riddle 'tricky' and fun. However, throughout the school pupils do not always write neatly or legibly, and this does not reflect the frequently good content of what they write. Mathematical skills are good and have improved as a result of the school's focus on basic numeracy skills. Pupils carry out mental calculations well and apply basic numeracy skills successfully to problem solving situations. Throughout the school all pupils' progress is good and improving, and sometimes excellent. For example, in a lesson on fractions, pupils made good progress in calculating sevenths and eighths of pizzas. They used a wide range of personal strategies well to calculate the fractions and to find answers to problems. The least able pupils made good progress because they worked independently but with occasional prompts to boost their confidence and to remind them of what they knew already that would help them work out solutions to the problems set.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy working independently. In one lesson, a pupil said, 'No, don't tell me, let me do it by myself!' Pupils support charities and work closely with the local church. School council members have had a positive influence in improving playground resources. They also act as playground leaders and librarians. Other pupils organise 'house' activities, and most pupils take great pride in contributing to the success of the house they are in. The Healthy Schools status indicates the high level of involvement by pupils in physical activities and their understanding of the importance of eating healthily. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils

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have a good understanding of the traditions of people in different countries and an improving understanding of the wide range of cultures within modern Britain.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons teachers use assessment information effectively to match work to pupils' learning needs and to ensure that activities are challenging and understood by pupils. For example, in an art lesson in the 'Mother Nature' topic, the tasks were challenging for all abilities, and adults provided tips and asked questions which helped pupils successfully make decisions for themselves about using different techniques. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and use several methods to guide pupils on how to improve their work. However, while effective at the time, discussion with pupils about their work without providing a written record means that, later on, pupils do not recall what they need to do to move on with their learning. Where marking does give advice on how work should improve, pupils do not always respond to guidance because they do not have time to do so. Relationships are very good and effective in ensuring pupils are confident to ask questions and contribute to discussions, and in maintaining good behaviour.

The curriculum is well organised so that pupils experience a rich range of subjects, trips and visitors. French, Spanish, dance and drama are provided for all pupils. Poets, musicians and sports people visit the school and pupils visit museums, churches and art exhibitions. The Artsmark Gold award indicates the wide range and high quality of artwork

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pupils produce in environmental work, science and religious education and which are displayed around school. Junk art, mosaics and still life reflect the wide variety of styles pupils use. Music provision, especially singing, is good and the school has a 'Sing Up' Platinum award in recognition of this. The range of out-of-school activities is wide and well supported by pupils. For example, information and communication technology (ICT) for infants, recorders, ICT for juniors, chess, gardening, Japanese, Chinese and many sports are well supported by pupils.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. It is improving as individual education plans increasingly emphasise targets worded in ways to help pupils make small steps in their progress, a reflection of the work done by the school to deserve the Inclusion Quality Mark. The school has a wide range of support organisations to help pupils whose challenging circumstances make them vulnerable. Attendance is good and any issues are dealt with effectively through close relationships with families. The school keeps parents well informed about pupils' progress through reports, opportunities to meet staff and well-attended parent consultation evenings. Transfer arrangements are good and the school has good working relationships with its many feeder nurseries and secondary schools that pupils move on to.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The joint headteachers are both ambitious for the school. They have established effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's work, and have initiated actions to involve all leaders in this work, especially to observe and evaluate teaching. Staff work together effectively to reduce differences in performance between different groups of pupils, and between different subjects. For example, recent changes in how assessment data are recorded and used have led to a better match of work to pupils' needs. The governing body was careful to establish how the recent changes to shared headship should operate and they monitor the success of arrangements so that the effectiveness of the school is not compromised. It works closely with staff on shared training days to make sure it is fully informed about how well the school performs, and is fully involved in planning improvements. This arrangement works extremely well in ensuring the governing body contributes fully to promoting school improvement. The school's relationships with parents are good. It keeps parents well informed about all of its activities and actively seeks their views on how well they feel the school does for their children. It provides good guidance on how parents can help their children. Partnerships with other schools, local organisations and services, and with support services and agencies are good, promoting pupils' well-being and learning well. For example, one-to-one support for pupils with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities is a major factor in promoting their good and sometimes excellent progress. The school promotes community cohesion effectively, particularly at the school, local and international levels, and increasingly so, as links nationally with schools in different situations become established.

Safeguarding procedures are fully met. Policies are up to date and take account of the governing body's, parents' and pupils' views. The school works effectively to ensure the grounds and premises remain safe. Taking into account pupils' good and improving progress and the narrowing gap between boys and girls, the promotion of equal opportunities is good. Procedures to eliminate all forms of discrimination are effective and well established in all aspects of pupils' life in school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, their skills generally exceed expectations. The majority of children speak and write well. For example, some children spoke knowledgeably and wrote well about the lifestyles of bats, and others labelled body parts accurately and in recognisable writing. Children count and carry out simple calculations well. For example, they work out how many children are absent from the number on register and the number present. They develop independent working skills well and chose a wide range of activities available both inside and outside. They behave well, work and play together well, and cooperate with each other sensibly. Adults assess children's progress accurately and plan work carefully to meet their learning needs. Adults provide many opportunities for children to speak about what they do, and ask them questions that make them think and try to come up with answers. As well as promoting independent learning, adults increasingly model good writing, and this has a positive impact on children's progress. Links with families, nursery settings and school staff are

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good and ensure children settle in to Reception well and transfer to Year 1 successfully. Resources are good and used carefully and imaginatively to support learning. Leadership and management are effective, and outdoor provision is improving as the relatively new leader focuses on improving provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

More than half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is above average, and almost all were positive. A small number feel that the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not adequate. Inspectors judged support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be good, especially the one-to-one support they receive. A further minority feel that the school does not respond to their concerns. In particular they feel the school does not take any notice of requests for wrap-around care. However, the school has explained that it does not have areas that could be converted to a child care centre, that other local schools do and they provide the care that parents seek. The school is also exploring other ways that it might meet parents' wishes. A small number of parents or carers feel that there are too few out-of-school activities for Key Stage 1 pupils. Inspectors found that there is a wide range of activities, some available to just Key Stage 1 pupils, and some to all pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Francis Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 268 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	84	72	27	23	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	96	83	20	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	53	50	43	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	63	38	33	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	73	63	41	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	54	43	37	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	67	35	30	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	51	44	56	48	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	53	44	38	9	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	51	52	45	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	41	55	47	3	3	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	64	55	48	41	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	64	39	34	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Caterham CR3 5ED

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited you. You gave us a lot of useful information. We judged that you are at a good and improving school. You make good and sometimes excellent progress, which continues to improve. The following things are particular strengths of the school.

- Teaching is good. Lessons are interesting and the school provides many activities to make sure you enjoy learning.
- The headteachers and staff work hard to make sure the school continues to improve. The governing body especially works extremely hard to support the school in its efforts to improve.
- You feel extremely safe, behave well, and treat each other and adults with consideration.
- Many of you have responsibilities in school and through the Church that you carry out well.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of staying healthy and most of you take part in physical exercise and eat sensibly.
- The school takes good care of you and ensures you are safe.

In order for the school to be even better, we have asked your teachers to:

- help you to produce neat, well-presented work
- make sure that you start your main learning activities in lessons as soon as possible, have the opportunity to check from teachers' comments on your work what you need to do to improve, and have time to carry out the advice teachers give you.

You can help by making sure you write neatly, check with teachers or other adults what you need to do to improve your work, and carry out any advice you are given.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley

Lead inspector

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