

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Whyteleafe Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5ED

Inspection dates

21–22 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since joining the school, the headteacher has developed a culture of positivity which has enabled her to successfully lead improvements in all areas of school life.
- Governors have the highest ambitions for the school and their well-organised systems to support and challenge leaders have helped drive recent improvements.
- Children make an excellent start to school life because of the outstanding early years provision in the Reception classes.
- The imaginative curriculum excites pupils and is a strength of the school. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The vast majority of parents and carers are happy with the school and would recommend it to others.
- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress in them.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average throughout the school because of the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported by a dedicated team of staff.
- The very few disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress.
- While they are making good progress, on occasions the most able pupils are not given challenging enough work.
- The school has robust systems in place to ensure that all pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Older pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities they are given.
- Information about pupils' capabilities is not always shared well enough, slowing their progress when they change class.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and outcomes for pupils across the school so they are typically outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are moved on to challenging tasks quickly in lessons
 - progress does not slow when pupils move into a new class each year.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Within this school there is a culture of high expectations driven by the headteacher and governing body and shared by the whole team. The headteacher has ensured that everyone is treated with respect and dignity and valued as individuals. As a result of this, the whole school community pulls together, especially during times of difficulty, for example when the school was damaged by extreme flooding earlier this year.
- Since her arrival at St Francis two years ago, the headteacher has led significant improvements in all areas of the school so that the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve are both now good. As one parent wrote, she 'is a great leader who has made fantastic changes to the school.'
- The headteacher has successfully invested time and training in other leaders to enable them to make improvements as well. The most successful of these have been in the development of the curriculum and the early years provision which are both now outstanding.
- Professional development activities have been used successfully to enable leaders and teachers to improve their practice. Some of the school's leaders and teachers are now leading initiatives beyond the school, for example facilitating work with other schools to check that assessments are accurate.
- School leaders have a secure and accurate self-evaluation of their strengths and relative weaknesses. Planning for improvement has been successful and teachers who lead subject areas feel empowered to make a greater difference beyond their classroom. They are proud of the school, their role and the improvements that have been made.
- Leaders have developed an interesting curriculum. The use of specialists and teachers with particular skills, for example in music and science, enhances the curriculum and brings learning to life for pupils of different ages. Languages have an important place in this school; from the expert precision of the Spanish teaching, to the singing of Latin hymns and the application of English writing skills across the curriculum, but especially well in religious education.
- Extra-curricular activities are extensive and provide the vast majority of pupils with opportunities to try new activities, practise new skills and develop socially. These range from sporting pursuits, to international understanding, to poetry and prose, where many pupils enter formal recital competitions.
- British values such as tolerance, respect and democracy are embedded in the school's work. Pupils respect people from other faiths and cultures and are clear that nobody is treated differently because of their background.
- Pupils value the opportunity to pray and worship together which promotes their spiritual development. Pupils have clear moral values and want to do the right thing. For example, older pupils sell Fairtrade fruit pots and drinks to their peers at breaktimes, understanding the ethical reasons for using the products.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively to raise participation in competitive sport, provide a wider range of resources for different sports and to train teachers to become even better equipped to teach aspects of PE

such as gymnastics confidently.

- Additional funding for the very few disadvantaged pupils attending the school is used well to ensure that they are able to be part of all school activities and to speed up their progress in lessons and over time.
- Although this additional funding has clearly had a very positive effect on outcomes, the reporting of the impact of these actions by leaders is not always clear enough.
- The vast majority of parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire and all those parents who spoke directly to inspectors agreed that the school is well led and managed.
- The local authority has provided the school with effective support. Regular monitoring visits have helped to speed up improvements, while work with middle leaders has given them the confidence to monitor the impact of their actions more robustly.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is extremely effective.
- The chair of governors has led rapid improvements in the effectiveness of the governing body since the previous inspection. The governing body has a range of skills and expertise that make governors very well placed to support and challenge the school effectively. As a result they rigorously hold leaders to account and have an impressive knowledge of the school.
- The governing body is reflective, constantly seeks further improvements and uses training opportunities successfully to improve governors' knowledge and expertise further. They foster a positive partnership with parents and have the ambition to develop this further.
- Governors have a clear vision for the school to improve even more over the next few years by developing the curriculum to go beyond what is required and to prepare pupils for a successful life and future. As well as achieving academic excellence, they want to ensure that pupils leave St Francis with a wide range of skills such as being able to ride a bike safely, swim, cook a basic meal, resolve conflict independently and make informed decisions.
- Previous concerns about the governing body were fully addressed through the review of governance. Robust actions, led by the chair, were taken to ensure that governors now fulfil all their duties relating to safeguarding, equalities legislation and pay progression, which is now closely linked to performance and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are robust and effective procedures in place to check the suitability of staff and visitors in the school. There is a regular programme of training to ensure that all staff are aware of the risks pupils may face, how to identify signs and symptoms and how to report any concerns. There are clear procedures in place for the induction of new staff; those that have joined this term are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- School leaders maintain regular contact with other agencies to protect the welfare of the most vulnerable pupils in the school. The headteacher vigilantly monitors the well-being of any pupils who could be at risk of harm.
- After attending relevant training, leaders and governors have assessed the risks of extremism and radicalisation in the context of the school and its community. They

rightly assess that the greatest risk to their pupils is through the use of the internet out of school. They have been proactive in making parents aware of these dangers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. This is because leaders have put in place clear expectations about learning at their school and teachers have good subject knowledge across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and give clear explanations about what they are expected to do. For example, in a history lesson for older pupils, the teacher gave clear instructions about a task that required pupils to organise sources of evidence into chronological order.
- The school has developed a concise and effective way of teachers giving pupils written feedback on their work. This is applied consistently through the school and pupils say that it is helpful at enabling them to improve their work.
- There is a very clear focus on basic literacy and mathematics, which are generally taught well and applied well in other subjects. Writing is applied particularly well in religious education books, for example where older pupils explored the unconditional love shown to the prodigal son by his father.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective and contributes well to developing pupils as successful readers. The teaching of reading through the school challenges even the most able, who are encouraged to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Literacy lessons allow pupils to develop their writing skills effectively. Teachers model writing and support pupils through the writing process using prompt sheets and vocabulary lists. Staff are well deployed in these lessons to support pupils who are new to using English.
- The school is developing an approach to teaching mathematics where pupils are required to master new concepts before they move on. Practical and visual resources are used well to support pupils' understanding. There is rightly an increased focus on problem solving and reasoning skills but these features are not yet being used consistently well in all classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants so they are able to make progress in lessons.
- Teachers' assessments of how well pupils are learning are accurate and are confirmed by the use of regular tests. The vast majority of teachers use this information well to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils. However, a few teachers do not use all the information available to help them set challenging tasks for the most able pupils. This is particularly true in writing and mathematics and especially when pupils have just changed class.
- Parents are pleased with the quantity and quality of homework that their children receive. Inspectors agreed that the examples they saw were age appropriate and challenging.
- The vast majority of parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire believe that their child is taught well. However, some parents would like to receive more information about how well their child is progressing.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- During their time at St Francis, pupils become thoughtful citizens who show great care for their fellow pupils and are active in improving the school and wider community to be a better place to learn and live.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school. This is because the school site is a safe place and staff care for all pupils, especially those who are anxious or vulnerable. Older pupils care for their younger peers by being playground monitors.
- In lessons pupils are normally well engaged in their learning. There is a high level of respect between pupils and they value each other's views and ideas. Pupils take pride in their learning and present their work very neatly. Older pupils give their peers polite and constructive feedback on their work.
- The curriculum gives pupils opportunities to learn about being safe and healthy. Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe online is a strength of the school. Healthy relationships are modelled by adults throughout the school.
- There is a range of positions of responsibility such as prefects, house captains and librarians that older pupils are appointed to. They also have the opportunity to apply for the role of head boy and head girl by giving a speech to their peers before a democratic election.
- Pupils are not yet consistently taking responsibility for extending their own learning. For example, some girls are less willing to challenge themselves in mathematics lessons.
- The school's latest anti-bullying policy (which parents were consulted about) makes the distinction between unkind behaviour and bullying clear. Pupils understand the difference and say that bullying is rare. They are confident that both unkind behaviour and bullying are dealt with appropriately by school staff; nonetheless, there are missed opportunities for pupils to take a leading role in promoting the anti-bullying message.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils report that they work and play well together and that behaviour is good overall. This matches what inspectors saw during the inspection and is true in lessons, assembly and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils are very clear about the processes for managing behaviour including the yellow and red 'time' consequences. Due to the success of these systems, school leaders do not need to use more serious consequences such as exclusion.
- The few pupils who find it more difficult to manage their behaviour show clear improvements over time because of the good support of adults and the care they show them.
- Attendance is good for all groups of pupils and nearly all pupils arrive for school punctually.
- Parents who completed the online Parent View survey were very positive about how

well the school managed behaviour.

- School staff who completed the staff survey unanimously agreed that leaders support them well in managing pupils' behaviour and that behaviour was good overall.
- Occasionally, a few pupils become distracted in lessons when teaching is not as strong or can be seen to run along corridors when in a rush.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Throughout the school pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time so that the vast majority meet the new higher expectations of the national curriculum. Pupils make good progress in most lessons due to effective teaching.
- Outcomes from the Year 1 phonics screening check are consistently above national averages and improve year on year, due to highly successful teaching.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has historically been above average. Evidence seen during the inspection demonstrates that current key stage 1 pupils and those who have just entered Year 3 are performing consistently above what is expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, continuing an upward trend.
- Published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2015 showed that pupils, especially girls, performed less well in mathematics than in English. However, school assessment information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils and those who left the school in July 2016 achieved equally well in both these key areas. As a result of this improved attainment, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for secondary education.
- The progress of the very few disadvantaged pupils has improved, due to the successful use of additional funding. They now make at least the amount of progress expected for all pupils in the school. However, they are not yet all making accelerated progress to diminish the differences in attainment with all other pupils nationally due to other barriers to learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers with the same starting points because of the closely targeted support. Due to the variety of needs, achievement for this group varies when compared with that of all pupils nationally.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language generally make accelerated progress once they have developed the most basic English skills.
- The progress of the most able pupils has improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, some most-able pupils still have their progress slowed in lessons due to not being moved on to challenging tasks quickly enough. These inconsistencies occur where the teaching is not yet as strong as it could be.
- Inspectors observed outcomes beyond what may normally be expected in Spanish and music due to very effective teaching by specialists.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The headteacher firmly believes that successful learning starts in the early years. She has fuelled the passion of the early years team to make a real difference to the outcomes of children.
- Children joining the school have skills and knowledge that are at least typical for their

age and for some children above this, especially in speech and language and personal, social and emotional development. Therefore, even early in the school year, many children are able to concentrate on tasks for extended periods of time.

- From their starting points, children, including the very few who are disadvantaged, make accelerated progress in all areas of learning so that the proportion achieving the expected good level of development is significantly above average and improving year on year. Children are well prepared to start the national curriculum in Year 1.
- The proportions of children exceeding the early learning goals in all areas of learning have significantly improved over the last two years because all children, including the most able, are consistently challenged within the setting.
- Children's achievements in writing are particularly impressive. By the end of the Reception Year, many children are able to write an extended paragraph in legible sentences using interesting vocabulary and techniques such as similes.
- Teaching in the early years is outstanding. Adults have high expectations and set routines for children to follow quickly. The classrooms are stimulating and inviting and promote learning well. Even early on in the school year, all children are participating fully in effective phonics lessons.
- Adults use assessment and observation regularly and accurately to enable them to plan activities that build on children's previous experiences and challenge them to try new things. They are skilled at scaffolding and moving on learning at a pace by building on what children discover for themselves. For example, after a group of boys and girls had been playing together to solve a problem building a pirate ship, a teacher came and asked them to describe the features of the ship, skilfully extending the children's language and vocabulary.
- Behaviour is very positive because children learn the routines and expectations quickly. Adults are vigilant and skilful in ensuring that pupils are safe, behave well and make progress in their learning.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding in the setting is a high priority and all adults are well trained.
- Parents are very positive about the start to school life that children get in the early years at St Francis. They support their child's learning both at home and at school. One parent wrote about how her daughter had asked, 'mummy, can I go again tomorrow?' after her first day at school and said that this demonstrated the care staff showed her child and how they helped her to settle quickly.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding because it has led to outstanding teaching and developed a team whose members work well together to achieve the very best outcomes for all children.
- Leaders should now develop more evaluative ways to demonstrate the impact of their actions and work closely with Year 1 staff so that the outstanding outcomes from the early years are built on effectively.

School details

Unique reference number	125203
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10012306

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	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mirella O'Donoghue
Headteacher	Maria Wheeler
Telephone number	01883 342005
Website	www.stfrancis.surrey.sch.uk
Email address	head@stfrancis.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average primary school and has two classes in each year group. The early years provision is provided in two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is much lower than that found nationally.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very low compared with similar-sized schools.
- Over two thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Just under a third are from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards that set out the minimum expectations for primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class at least once and also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms. Some of these observations were carried out with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Her Majesty’s Inspector met with the chair of governors and four other governors and also with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, a small group of teaching assistants and teachers with responsibility for different areas of the curriculum.
- To gain their views of the school, inspectors spoke informally with pupils around the school, went on a tour of the school with some pupils, met three groups of pupils more formally and considered 75 responses to the online pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also heard some pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, governance, the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- In addition to speaking to a number of parents at the start and end of school on the first day of the inspection, inspectors considered the 96 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire including 61 free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
David Cousins	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Lambert	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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