

St Francis Catholic and Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136011
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	382005
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Ronald Hall

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	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Kaiser
Headteacher	Angela Hewkin
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Leeson Road Ventnor Isle of Wight PO38 1PR
Telephone number	01983 52394
Email address	headteacher@stfrancisventnor.net

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	12–13 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Hall Additional inspector

Joanna Peach Additional inspector

Frances Hurd Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed, representing just over eight hours of teaching by 13 staff. A number of these were undertaken jointly with the senior staff. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, senior staff, parents and carers, and individual teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation. They examined questionnaires completed by 122 parents and carers, 145 pupils and 32 staff.

Information about the school

St Francis is larger than the average primary school and is split over two sites. St Francis was created as a result of local authority reorganisation and the amalgamation of three schools into one new school in September 2010. The number on roll has increased significantly as the school has retained Years 5 and 6 to become a 4-11 primary school. A small number of children have left across the age ranges. Increasing numbers affects all year groups. This has led to an increase in the number of staff and the middle management team has only recently been finalised.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils identified as having a disability or special educational needs is average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and most pupils are of White British heritage.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school in which pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Current attainment in Year 6 is broadly in line with expectations for their age. This represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. It is a popular school with parents and carers being very positive about their children's education. St Francis has a family atmosphere with a nurturing environment.
- The senior leaders have developed many positive features despite substantial staff changes and, together with staff, are building a harmonious learning community, where pupils are safe, secure and enjoy learning. Pupils' personal qualities make the school a welcoming community. Nevertheless, fluctuations in pupil numbers have resulted in a significant number of instances of poor behaviour. However, by working with the pupils, families and putting into place robust, positive systems, behaviour is rapidly improving. Attendance is above average and improving as the headteacher works extremely hard to help families understand the importance of coming to school.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start to the children's learning. They make good progress across most areas of learning but develop particularly well in their social, physical and creative aspects. This good progress is maintained across Key Stage 1 due to good teaching, based on robust planning matched to the pupils' needs.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 which slows progress. These are due to work not always matching the needs of all pupils. Nevertheless, attainment in reading and mathematics has improved.
- The new leadership team has begun a rigorous programme to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 and to use data more rigorously to identify underachievement at an early stage. However, this is not fully embedded and has

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not yet addressed the inconsistencies in progress in Key Stage 2.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop strategies to ensure pupils play a fundamental role in developing systems to improve behaviour across the school.
- Raise achievement across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers at Key Stage 2 consistently match work to the needs and abilities of their pupils
 - ensuring that all leaders, managers and teachers have accurate data which is used to inform planning in order to accelerate progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Due to a very positive view of their children's achievement, over 95% of parents and carers would recommend this school to others. However, inspectors found that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. With a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils across Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress. Additional support for pupils who fall behind and for those with particular needs are strengths of the school. Pupils were observed receiving effective one-to-one support in a range of subjects. The relatively new staff are well trained and have developed a strong team approach, and assess and plan with precision, which is the key to pupils' success. In lessons, pupils regularly learn in very small and precise steps, but staff know when they are ready to take greater leaps in their learning. The use of robust reading systems enables pupils to build words effectively and so read with greater accuracy. Pupils use their knowledge of sounds and letters thoroughly to tackle new words and write new sentences. These skills were clearly evident in one lesson, for example, where pupils took pride in reading instructions unaided. Attainment in reading skills at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average and this represents good progress from below average starting points. Pupils' reading skills are consolidated in Key Stage 2 and attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6.

Key Stage 2 has borne the brunt of the ongoing changes in the school since amalgamation. Increasing pupil numbers and staff changes have created challenges for the school. Inconsistencies in the planning of all pupils' work to fully meet their needs have slowed their progress. In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and have a positive learning attitude. In one mathematics lesson, for example, pupils made excellent progress as the work was well matched to their needs and abilities. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of rounding up and down numbers related to

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money. Support in the lesson for those with disabilities and special educational needs was excellent and ensured their progress was in line with their peers.

Pupils' writing skills are good and this was clearly demonstrated in displays of pupils' work. Although the Year 6 group only came into being at the start of the current school year, observations and scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrate satisfactory progress and attainment broadly in line with expectations. Progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is in line with their peers. This represents satisfactory achievement overall from pupils' starting points with no significant variations between groups, including those who arrive later than at the usual times.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers believe that their children are taught well. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The school has put into place training, coaching and peer observations, which are supported by the local authority to improve teaching. These actions, coupled with the rigorous monitoring of teaching by leaders, have begun to bring about improvement in teachers' skills. Improving planning to ensure work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities is a current priority. Currently, this is inconsistent and in some lessons pupils are not challenged sufficiently. As a result, the pace of learning slows and pupils become disengaged. Changes to rectify this issue have not had time to bring about more rapid improvement.

Questioning is thorough and probing but, occasionally, in Key Stage 2, some staff miss opportunities to stretch pupils even further. Nevertheless, teachers often have high expectations of pupils and this is bringing about a very positive approach to learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a thorough assessment of children's needs is central to the planning of programmes which successfully aid children's good development. The pace of learning is usually good and adjusted accordingly for pupils who find learning difficult. In one Key Stage 2 class, pupils were exploring the properties of 2D and 3D shapes and their clear enjoyment and the drive of the teacher ensured a well-paced lesson throughout. In contrast, in another English lesson, pupils were not as engaged and the pace was slower. The broad and well-balanced curriculum engages the pupils and it is supported well by a good range of enrichment activities. The school utilises a wide variety of resources, including the outside, local and wider environment.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development produces some positive outcomes. Their behaviour and relationships are enhanced by the social and moral inputs during some lessons. For example, in one lesson, pupils were actively encouraged to discuss their behaviour and how it linked with their learning. There are plenty of artistic, spiritual and ecological experiences for pupils, such as learning to play the drums and other instruments, which fuel pupils' spiritual and cultural

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development well. They are beginning to gain an understanding of global issues through links with a school in Ghana and their study of festivals, but the school knows aspects of cultural development should be extended. Parents and carers feel that teaching is good across the school and, although it is judged satisfactory, it is improving rapidly.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory over time. The reorganisation and amalgamation has generated challenges and behaviour has been one such challenge. Generally, pupils are polite and show respect for each other and staff. Due to a large number of incidents, however, some pupils were concerned about behaviour, particularly on the playground. Further investigation, while supporting the pupils' comments, also found that most were associated with a small minority who were having a detrimental effect on behaviour overall. The senior leadership team has worked hard in this area and major changes have been brought about. Targeted intervention work with both the pupils and families is having a marked improvement on this issue.

In classrooms, pupils feel behaviour is good and this was the case during lessons observed. They say there is some bullying but if there are any problems, 'the staff sort things out quickly'. Pupils are supportive of others and show great compassion, sensitivity and understanding of other's needs. This is shown in examples of their art and design work and in the way they comment on and support each other in their work. The school's promotion of its key values of faith, hope, trust, peace, love and honesty underpins pupils' acceptance of others and ensures their positive views of others.

The school has the confidence of its parents and carers, with good communication being key to this. One such area is attendance and punctuality, and through the school's rigorous approach, attendance is above average and rising.

Leadership and management

Nothing flusters the headteacher and senior staff, despite the challenges this school faces. Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally rigorous and result in pupils feeling safe and secure, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The encouragement of a positive learning ethos by the staff is now developing amongst the pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

The leadership by the senior leadership team is very effective. There is a clear drive and ambition for improvement and everyone knows what is working well and what needs to be improved. Although relatively new to the role, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision for the future and what needs to improve. The recently appointed middle leadership team has not yet had an impact on raising achievement and improving teaching and learning.

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Plans for improvement are clear. Changes to the curriculum in being more practical and imaginative inspire pupils to do their best. Pupils were eager to express how much they enjoyed the wide range of clubs available and the benefits of the visits they make to enhance learning. Target-setting processes are not yet ambitious enough, which is due to data not being presented effectively enough to allow leaders and teachers to plan accurately. The governing body has rightly concentrated on resolving amalgamation issues. Now it is becoming far more active in supporting the school and challenging it to do better. The governing body is well led and has taken timely and effective steps to ensure a smooth transition into the new school premises in 2013. All this demonstrates that leadership at all levels currently has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. All the strategic roles are in place but they have not yet had a chance to prove their effectiveness. Discrimination is not tolerated and all pupils have an equal opportunity for success.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Catholic and Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Ventnor PO38 1PR

Thank you for talking with us during the inspection of your school. Your headteacher has worked hard to make the school a better place for you to learn. We have judged that your school is satisfactory and rapidly improving. We were impressed with the enthusiasm you have for school and your enjoyment of lessons and learning. Although behaviour has been an issue in the school, you and your teachers are working together to make this better. We have asked the headteacher to involve you more in improving behaviour across the school.

We noted that you are making satisfactory progress in most lessons. This is because the teaching you get is satisfactory as teachers do not always match the work you do to your needs and abilities, especially in Key Stage 2. The headteacher has been asked to ensure all teachers consistently provide work linked to your abilities. Many of you stated you like the variety of activities indoors and outdoors. Those of you who find learning difficult do as well as your peers because the school is good at providing extra help for you. As a result, you have made progress in your reading, writing and communication skills.

Your headteacher has worked very hard to make your school a safe place for you to learn. She continues to work with your parents and carers so they help you with learning and make sure you come to school every day and on time. You can all help by making sure you, too, take responsibility for this. As the school is growing constantly both new staff and pupils have arrived in the school. This has meant that the new managers and leaders have not as yet had time to become fully effective in their roles, resulting in information about your progress not being used as well as it might. To correct this, we have asked them to ensure that your teachers all have accurate information on which to base their planning for your learning.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall
Lead inspector

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