

# St Francis C of E Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123172
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380613
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Paul Edwards

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shane Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Standing
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12–13 May 2012
<b>School address</b>	Horspath Road Cowley Oxfordshire OX4 2QT
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	15–16 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380613



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Edwards	Additional inspector
Jacqueline Lawson	Additional inspector
Danvir Visvanathan	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers and listened to pupils reading. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were held with a number of parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at governing body minutes, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. The inspectors took note of the questionnaires completed by 144 parents and carers and those completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

St Francis is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, who have a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, is well above that seen nationally. The largest groups are of White British and Pakistani heritage and an increasing proportion of Eastern European heritage. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above that seen nationally. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.

Nursery provision is provided, with nursery children attending either morning or afternoon sessions. Elsewhere in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught in either a separate Reception class or a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, which results in unevenness of pupils’ progress across the school.
- Achievement is satisfactory because pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because of much-improved provision. Mostly satisfactory progress, and some exceptional progress in upper Key Stage 2, results in attainment that is average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are elements of good teaching in each year group, in particular in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where there is evidence of some outstanding practice. There is also outstanding practice in Year 6. However, a few weaknesses impede pupils’ progress. For example: not all pupils are challenged sufficiently, including the more able; there are too few opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves; teachers occasionally spend too long explaining tasks; opportunities to extend writing skills in other subjects are missed; and marking is not used consistently to identify the next steps for learning.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. They enjoy learning and concentrate well, particularly when tasks are challenging. Pupils work well with one another and show considerable interest in their work, which they undertake with enthusiasm. Pupils’ attendance continues to improve and is now average. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and parents and carers feel strongly that the school looks after the children well.
- Leadership and management are linked well to managing the performance of the school and continuing to improve the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have correctly identified the right priorities for moving the school forward. Leaders have been successful in addressing issues from the previous inspection; for example, the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly and pupils’ progress continues to improve. Subject leaders monitor subjects satisfactorily but are insufficiently involved in ensuring the impact of teaching or initiatives to improve pupils’ progress.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring

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visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better in order to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly that of the more able pupils, by:
  - making more effective use of assessment information to pitch work at the correct level and to ensure that it is sufficiently challenging
  - checking the marking of pupils' work and feedback is used consistently to identify the next steps for learning
  - reducing the amount of time some teachers spend on explanations so that pupils have more opportunity to work independently and to find things out for themselves.
  
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - continue to develop the skills of subject leaders so that they can identify the impact of initiatives and that there is a clear focus on learning.
  
- Improve the quality of the school's curriculum by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt their children were making good progress. Inspectors found that all groups of pupils were making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils make particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6 so that attainment by the time they leave the school is in line with that seen nationally. The school has successfully narrowed the gap between boys and girls in writing, and the attainment of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with their peers nationally. There is no difference in attainment between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below the levels expected for their age. As a result of strong leadership, good teaching and provision, they have a good start to their school life, enabling them to achieve well so that their attainment is broadly average on entry to Year 1. The children's enthusiasm for learning is stimulated by a wide range of interesting activities such as discovering stones and cones in the school's own mini 'Forest School'. Emergent writing skills are encouraged effectively as they 'write' about the Little Red Hen, and pupils demonstrate secure counting and number skills. There is a good emphasis on teaching reading skills and the very secure grounding children receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the understanding of letters and sounds is built upon effectively, so that pupils' attainment in reading by the end of

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Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with that seen nationally. Pupils demonstrate increasingly effective skills in being able to decode unfamiliar words and sounds.

Children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language progress well, in part because of the effective intervention strategies but also because of the 'buddying' programme, with older pupils providing support in their own language. Early interventions for pupils with disabilities or those with special educational needs, and regular one-to-one support, ensure they make progress in line with their peers. Pupils' writing skills develop satisfactorily and there is some evidence of pupils developing their writing in different subjects. However, there are too few opportunities for them to enhance their skills through writing at length in subjects such as history and geography, particularly the more able pupils.

### Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers judge teaching to be good. Inspectors found it to be satisfactory but there are elements of good teaching in most year groups. Parents and carers are very pleased with the support their children receive, and the views of one are typical when commenting, 'I feel the staff look after the children really well and give them lots of support. My child is very happy at school.' In the Early Years Foundation Stage, where teaching is good and occasionally outstanding, teachers make effective use of children's prior learning to pitch work at the correct level. The teaching of linking letters with sounds (phonics) helps children develop a good foundation in early reading skills.

Teachers have a good understanding of the teaching of phonics and build effectively on what is taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the best lessons, teachers motivate the pupils well and there is good level of challenge. For example, in an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils' ability to apply the context of persuasive writing to letter writing was enhanced very well. Pupils of all abilities, particularly the boys, were fully engaged, stimulated by the teacher showing them a 'fly in a jar'. While all teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities, they do not take consistently good note of prior attainment when implementing their plans. Consequently, progress is uneven, particularly for the more able pupils, who make slower progress than they should in their writing.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and identifies what the pupils have done well. It is not consistent, however, in explaining to pupils how they should attain their new targets. Most teachers question the pupils well and encourage them to respond with extended answers. As a result, pupils are confident speakers and happily explain to adults what they are doing or ask for help. Teachers occasionally provide too much information for the pupils, explaining tasks in detail and not encouraging the more able to move on to more challenging work sooner in lessons.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through teachers' planning, which encourages partner work, working in groups, role play and reflection of their work through discussions at the end of sessions. For example, as part of Year 5 mathematics activities on data, pupils worked well, both individually

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and in small groups, analysing Venn diagrams and recording data on computers. Teaching assistants are well deployed and contribute effectively to lessons. Very occasionally, there is a lack of clarity in lesson planning as to what pupils with special educational needs are expected to be able to achieve and how teaching assistants will contribute to their learning. This limits the impact of their support.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Most parents and carers and pupils believe that a good standard of behaviour exists throughout the school. Inspectors agree with this view and that behaviour seen was typical. Pupils are courteous towards adults and each other in the classroom, around the school and in the playground. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They are attentive, ask and answer questions confidently and persevere with their work. Occasionally, where teaching is less engaging, they lose concentration but disruptions to lessons are a rare occurrence. Through effective work with families, attendance is improving and is similar to that seen nationally. Pupils are punctual and the breakfast club provides a good environment for families who need childcare before school. The school has effective strategies in place to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils for whom attendance is a concern.

Pupils value the high expectations set by the school for their behaviour. They feel that the behaviour policy is fair and consistently enforced and helps to improve the behaviour of a very small minority of pupils who occasionally misbehave. Pupils report that the rare incidents of bullying are resolved quickly. Pupils are very aware of cyber- and other forms of bullying, the result of the school's effective programme on bullying awareness. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds say they feel free from racism in school and pupils from all backgrounds work and play happily together. Some were keen to say how well they had been supported in learning English when they first started at the school. Older pupils look after younger pupils well at break times. Inspection evidence confirms that the good behaviour seen at the time of the inspection is typical, that behaviour over time is good and that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare.

Almost all parents and carers felt their children were kept safe in school, and this view was supported by pupils. They are very aware of how to keep themselves safe when using new technology and the internet. Pupils feel valued and undertake their responsibilities, such as play leaders, with pride.

### **Leadership and management**

The school is improving under the effective leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been tackled systemically and effectively. For example, the Early Years Foundation Stage now provides children with a very secure start to their learning, with a strong emphasis on the promotion of basic skills. The approach to tracking pupils' academic progress is rigorous and, together with improvements in teaching, has resulted in better progress being made by pupils, particularly in their reading. Senior leaders keep a close eye on the progress of different groups of pupils and put interventions in place

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where appropriate. Consequently, the gaps between different groups of pupils have been reduced, particularly that between girls and boys in writing. While there is still a gap between the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals and others, this is reducing.

There is a rigorous approach to checking the quality of teaching from senior leaders. Well-targeted professional development, including mentoring and coaching, has successfully improved the quality of teaching in some aspects, for example in the teaching of phonics. However, subject leaders are insufficiently involved in ensuring issues for improvement are followed through by teachers. The school monitors the progress of pupils with precision and is using data purposefully to drive up achievement. These improvements demonstrate clearly the school's capacity for further improvement.

Music and dancing feature strongly within the broad and balanced curriculum. For example, the pupils' performance of *Alice in Wonderland* demonstrated their good performance skills. Experiences such as these, together with a range of visits and visitors to the school, effectively promote pupils' enjoyment of learning, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum promotes pupils' awareness of other cultures and faiths effectively and topics identify role models that reflect the cultural diversity of the school. There are missed opportunities to provide pupils with the opportunity to write at length.

The school engages parents and carers extremely well and they comment that they feel welcome to come into any class. The governing body supports the school effectively. It has a good understanding of the school's priorities for development. The governors use the information about pupils' achievement well to hold school leaders to account. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are well integrated into the life of the school. The progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is monitored closely, with early and effective interventions. This means equal opportunities are promoted effectively and that there is no discrimination. The school is a safe, secure environment and the school meets statutory requirements for safeguarding.



## 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](http://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.**



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Francis C of E Primary School, Cowley OX4 2QT**

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We appreciated the time taken by some of you to talk and read to us. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and at playtimes and seeing how you enjoy school. St Francis is a satisfactory school and these are some of the things we found.

- You behave well, both in lessons and in the playground, and this helps to ensure you feel really safe. Your attendance is improving and is now similar to that seen in other schools.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn well and they have many interesting things to do.
- You make satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school so that your skills in reading, writing and mathematics are average by the end of Year 6. Your reading skills are improving well.
- Teachers provide you with interesting activities and you have many visits, visitors and clubs that make learning more exciting.
- You have a very good understanding of right and wrong and of people from other cultures and backgrounds.
- Those in charge of the school are working hard to make the school even better.

To help to improve the school, I have asked the headteacher and governors to ensure more teaching is good or better; make sure that you have more opportunities to use your writing skills during lessons in other subjects and give you more opportunities to find things out for yourselves. I have also asked them to make sure that the teachers in charge of different subjects check more often on how well their subjects are taught.

All of you can help by trying really hard with your work and informing teachers if you think the work is too easy or too hard.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards  
Lead inspector

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