

St Francis of Assisi Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132810
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	364033
Inspection dates	8-9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	CE Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs F Hunt
Headteacher	Mr Paul Bramley
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2008
School address	Lowfields Avenue Ingleby Barwick Stockton-on-Tees TS17 5GA
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed twenty-two lessons. Most teachers were seen teaching on two or three occasions. A significant number of pupils were heard to read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, senior leaders and other staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and evaluated a range of documentation which included the school improvement plan, assessment and tracking documents, reading records, safeguarding and risk assessment policies. The 74 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers were fully considered as well as those submitted by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Francis of Assisi is slightly larger than most primary schools. The school is extremely popular receiving many more applications for places than it can offer. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The large majority are White British with a very small number of pupils coming from minority ethnic groups. Of these, most are of Pakistani Heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average and relatively few have a statement of special educational needs. The school has numerous accreditations and awards including, Investors in People, Gold Healthy School status, the Activemark and the Heartstart Award for its work to promote healthy living.

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	1
Achievement	1
Teaching	1
Leadership and management	1
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

The school provides its pupils with an excellent education. The school's exemplary leadership is highly ambitious and effective. Senior leaders have been successful in driving improvements in all aspects of provision and pupils' development. Half of all teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding with the remainder never less than good. Consequently, pupils make consistent and rapid gains in their learning to attain at levels which are significantly above average.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding. Within classrooms and around the school they take responsibility for their actions and fully respect the needs and welfare of others. They approach their tasks with enthusiasm showing positive commitment and a strong desire to work hard and succeed. Pupils enjoy receiving recognition for their efforts and this spurs them on to make further gains. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of pupils' learning needs because assessment procedures are rigorous and thorough. This information is used most effectively by teachers to produce well-planned and challenging lesson activities which amply demonstrate their high expectations of pupils' capabilities and results in very effective learning.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is clear and evaluative. In almost all circumstances pupils are provided with accurate guidance about how to improve their work although there is sometimes a lack of consistency in the marking of mathematics.

Governors bring a robust and challenging perspective to the school's work. While they are appreciative and supportive of the staff's efforts they are expectant about the school's performance in meeting the needs of all pupils. All aspects of safeguarding and risk assessment practices are fully compliant and regularly reviewed.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that when teachers mark pupils' work in mathematics they consistently provide clear guidance about how the work can be improved.

Main report

Pupils make **rapid and consistent progress** throughout their time in school. Their acquisition of core literacy and numeracy skills is highly effective. They readily take advantage of the extensive opportunities to develop these skills further by engaging in purposeful and extremely productive learning in all curriculum subjects. Pupils' have well-developed **reading skills**. They read frequently and widely; their enjoyment of reading is clearly evident. Extremely effective support for **those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities** results in similarly strong learning gains. Planned lesson activities and intervention work to support this group of pupils in reading is particularly strong resulting in brisk improvement.

When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage the majority have already acquired knowledge and skills which are broadly as expected although an increasing proportion show a greater rate of development. Children make quick progress. Their eagerness to take part in the extensive range of opportunities offered is reflected in high levels of participation and enjoyment. They work well with each other showing a developed ability to learn both independently and with other children. **Pupils' attainment** is significantly above average at Key Stages 1 and 2. In 2010, two-thirds of pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics in the national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2 highlighting a continuing and sustained rise in performance. Secure evidence from the school's tracking information and from pupils' workbooks shows that learning and progress continue to be outstanding. Pupils are exceedingly well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' **behaviour**, attitudes and commitment to their work are exemplary. They work industriously, are highly motivated and respond well to challenges by pursuing their work with enthusiasm and energy. Pupils work together effectively, sharing ideas, offering suggestions, solving problems and agreeing on outcomes. They willingly accept personal responsibility for their actions, being acutely aware of the needs of others. Older pupils in particular display maturity by accepting additional responsibilities. They are proud of their role in promoting the development of younger children. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are particularly well supported. Pupils say they feel safe and have great confidence in adults to support them. Extensive discussions with various groups of pupils show they are positive that any misbehaviour or bullying is extremely rare. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance and punctuality. There is no persistent absenteeism. Pupils clearly understand how to keep themselves safe, including when

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using new technology and the internet.

Equal proportions of outstanding and good teaching result in excellent improvements in pupils' learning and very high levels of attainment. Teachers successfully deliver a strong, supportive yet challenging climate for learning. Expectations of pupils' capabilities are exceptionally high. An extremely positive relationship between teachers and pupils engenders confidence so that pupils rise to the significant learning challenges provided in all curriculum subjects. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and meticulous preparation means that work is successfully matched to pupils' needs and underpins the brisk progress which they make. Teachers make effective use of the school's tracking information when lessons are being planned. Within lessons teachers routinely review progress making astute changes to activities to ensure pupils remain on-task and challenged. Marking is sharp and evaluative and in all cases pupils are given pertinent feedback about how well they have achieved. In a few instances, in pupils' mathematics books, information about how to progress further is not consistently evident. In the Early Years Foundation Stage all staff are effectively deployed showing significant expertise in supporting child initiated learning. Teaching assistants also make a particularly successful contribution to pupils' learning by complimenting the role of teachers and by maximising opportunities to engage directly with pupils.

The school's **leadership** is decisively focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and further raising pupils' attainment. The headteacher and deputy headteacher exhibit a deep and substantial understanding of the school's performance because monitoring practices are strong and extensive. Performance management reflects a secure focus to staff's professional development. The school's commitment and success in promoting leadership development is noteworthy.

Staff and governors confirm a wholehearted commitment to the school's aims and values. These are reflected in their successful promotion of all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their comments and actions reflect a learning community which is constantly striving to improve. They enjoy the overwhelming support of those parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

There is a clear and successful drive to continually promote inclusivity. The needs of all pupils are well known and understood. These are met exceptionally well. Leaders have worked assiduously to build on a strong core curriculum by encouraging innovation in other subjects. Exceptional practice was observed for example in the teaching of history, religious education and music. The school makes wide-ranging additional provision to cater for pupils' interests including through the use of external expertise. Safeguarding procedures are secure and routinely monitored. The school's leadership has successfully promoted all aspects of community cohesion. Far-reaching work with the local community is extensive and pupils are given numerous opportunities to learn about other cultures within modern British society.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Francis of Assisi Church of England VA 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 262 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	54	73%	18	24%	1	1%	0	0%
Q2 My child feels safe at school	59	80%	14	19%	0	0%	0	0%
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	43	58%	28	38%	2	3%	0	0%
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	43	58%	25	34%	4	5%	1	1%
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	56	76%	17	23%	0	0%	1	1%
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	50	68%	22	30%	1	1%	1	1%
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	52	70%	21	28%	0	0%	1	1%
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	43	58%	25	34%	1	1%	1	1%
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	37	50%	23	31%	4	5%	3	4%
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	65%	22	30%	3	4%	1	1%
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	41	55%	28	38%	1	1%	3	4%
Q12 The school is well led and managed	44	59%	28	38%	1	1%	1	1%

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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



10 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis of Assisi Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

On behalf of the inspection team please accept our thanks for your help and support when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet you all. In particular could I thank those pupils who gave their time to meet with us including those who were so keen to show how well they can read.

We have judged your school to be excellent in all aspects of its work. We were particularly impressed with your exemplary behaviour and attitudes towards work and your excellent attendance. You work hard and work together exceptionally well. You deserve great credit for the way you tackle all the activities you are given no matter how hard they are. The progress you are making in lessons and your attainment are both excellent. Well Done! Your headteacher, the governors and all the staff show great commitment to supporting your education. We consider that the leadership of the school and the quality of teaching to be excellent also. It was a pleasure to see how well you and the staff get along together both in lessons and around the school.

When we looked at your work in books we noted how well the teachers mark your work almost all of the time. We have asked them to look more closely at the guidance they give you in mathematics however so that you always know how to improve.

We were very impressed by the constant drive to make your school better. We know from what you told us that you are keen to help your headteacher, Mr Bramley, and the staff to achieve this through the many ideas which you have. We know how importantly the school values what you say. Please accept our best wishes for the future in all that you do and for those in Year 6, good luck on your move to secondary school and in striving for those goals which you shared in assembly.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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