

# St Francis Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104239
<b>Local Authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	377046
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Georgina Beasley

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 Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Gough
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Murray
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Mill Road Shelfield Walsall WS4 1RH
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	21–22 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by eight teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment and progress information, pupils' work, improvement plans, safeguarding procedures and monitoring reports. Inspectors received and analysed 47 questionnaires from parents and carers, 104 from pupils and 25 from staff.

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

- Why pupils' attainment appears to have stalled at the end of all key stages.
- The success of actions to raise girls' achievement in mathematics.
- How well information and communication technology (ICT) supports learning in other subjects and how well other subjects support learning in ICT.
- The success of subject leadership in improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' attainment, especially in mathematics.
- The level of support for the learning of boys and children born in the summer months in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

St Francis Catholic Primary School is about the same size as most schools of its type. Most pupils are from White British families with the remainder from a number of different minority ethnic groups. A below-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for children in Nursery and Reception. The school runs an after-school club each day which is managed by the governing body.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St Francis Catholic Primary School is a satisfactory school. There is a strong whole-school commitment to improving pupils' well-being. The recent organisation of the curriculum into topics has given renewed interest for pupils' learning. Pupils use ICT skills confidently to support their learning in other subjects. They use computers to present their work in different ways and use the internet safely to find information about a range of topics. Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning, and why, because teachers do not always identify this clearly enough. As a result, pupils can talk about the activity or task they have completed but few are able to talk about what they have learned and what they now need to do next to improve. Pupils know they have improvement targets but few can recall what these are.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the school's capacity to improve. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The school tracks pupils' progress termly and plans additional individual and small group teaching when pupils' progress slows. The school recognises that termly checks do not enable it to pick up dips in pupils' attainment quickly enough or to check whether planned interventions are working effectively. As a result, any slowing of attainment has not been picked up early enough for the school to make timely adjustments to teaching and learning. Self-evaluation and identified improvement priorities are accurate. However, the information has not been used to create a sharply focused development plan that details precisely how the school plans to make the required improvements, with quantifiable targets against which to measure when it has been successful.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory, as are learning and progress. There has been some improvement in attainment but the quality of teaching is not consistently good to build this further. Children start Nursery with knowledge, skills and abilities within age-expected levels. Attainment is average at the end of Reception, and Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, and has been for several years. Boys and pupils born in the summer months start to catch up but not always quickly enough to attain as well as other pupils by the end of Year 2. While still average, attainment in mathematics is lower than in English. Girls are achieving as well as boys this year in mathematics. Pupils are not always encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding of number facts to help them solve problems in mathematics quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given the support they need to make satisfactory progress.

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Pupils have a strong understanding of the Catholic faith and what this means in terms of how they should treat others. Most pupils are polite and respectful. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in school and at other times. Governance is satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements ensure pupils' safety and well-being satisfactorily. Attendance is above average and pupils' punctuality is good.

Up to 40% of the 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?**

- Encourage pupils to use their knowledge and understanding of number facts to solve problems in mathematics lessons and give them regular opportunities to explain how they did it.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching to enable pupils to make consistently good progress towards their targets by ensuring that:
  - lesson objectives focus precisely on what pupils will learn
  - tasks and activities build on pupils' prior learning.
- Establish systems for monitoring the quality of teaching against half-termly checks of pupils' progress.
- Involve all staff and the governing body in establishing a strategic vision for improvement that includes a sharply focused development plan that details how the school will know when it has been successful.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory, and sometimes, good. For example, good learning and progress were evident when pupils recognised how, by adding two equal amounts, they were doubling a number. By working together to solve problems at their own speed, pupils completed a good number of examples that consolidated and extended their understanding successfully. Often, pupils are not clear about why they are completing a particular task. For example, pupils used a number line as directed to take away an amount from a given number. A few got the answer wrong, even though, when questioned, many could use their prior learning about number facts to solve the question in their heads. While pupils know they have targets, they do not usually refer to these in lessons to help them check their work independently. All groups of pupils make equally satisfactory progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs.

Pupils know the importance of eating healthily but some still choose to eat less healthy snacks at playtimes. Older pupils take part enthusiastically in team sport when offered. Playtimes are active occasions. Pupils recognise that adults intervene

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to try to stop play fighting on the playground but say that some pupils continue to play this game too often which ‘spoils playtimes for the rest of us’. Most pupils pay good attention in lessons, although some pupils do not concentrate as well as they should to help them make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community. Pupils enjoy acting as school council members and Year 6 as ‘special friends’ to Reception children. Opportunities to contribute to communities beyond the school are more limited, although pupils enjoy raising money for charity and taking part in church events. There are some opportunities for pupils to play sport against other schools and so give them a satisfactory awareness of different social and community groups beyond the school and immediate locality. Pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of religions beyond Christianity. Pupils have satisfactory skills to prepare them for later life.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers use a range of methods to engage pupils’ interests during most lessons, including partner talk, drama and computer technology. The use of assessment to plan for different ability groups in lessons is variable in quality. When used well, tasks and activities support the development of knowledge and skills effectively. More often, lessons do not focus sufficiently on what pupils will learn and so pupils cannot talk knowledgeably about what they are learning, and why. In these lessons, pupils are not confident to check their learning and to make improvements

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

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independently.

The curriculum was recently revised into topics and gives pupils real, purposeful reasons to practise their literacy skills, which is motivating boys in particular to read and write. Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed deciding for themselves what they wanted to find out about monkeys and asking relevant questions to help them find the answers. When talking about the Second World War, pupils in Year 6 empathised with what it must have been like for the people affected. The subsequent creation of a peace emblem made a good contribution to their spiritual development. The good range of after-school activities tend to be attended by the same group of pupils.

Most pupils say that adults care about them, although a few who returned a questionnaire said that some adults are not always interested in their views. However, pupils do value how the learning mentor listens to ‘all sides of the story’ before making a judgement about pupils’ behaviour. Home visits before children start Nursery involve parents and carers in their children’s initial assessments of learning and help children to settle quickly. Pupils with long-term health needs receive good care to enable them to attend school as regularly as they do. The after-school care club gives pupils a calm and positive end to the day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Termly reviews of pupils’ progress give school leaders a generally accurate view of the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in English and mathematics. The information is being used to promote equality of opportunity in a satisfactory way. The subject leader for mathematics has ensured that teachers encourage girls to answer questions in lessons to check their understanding and help them to make the same progress as boys in the subject across the school. The recently appointed subject leader for English has already reviewed the quality of learning of pupils in Reception and in Years 1, 2 and 3 when they work in small groups on specific reading and writing skills. Progress is assessed weekly and pupils moved to different groups to boost or extend learning depending on their needs. This is resulting in faster progress this term, including for summer-born children. Sharply focused actions plans to implement further improvement have not yet been developed.

The governing body receives regular information about the school’s work which it uses to make decisions about improvements to the accommodation, staffing and

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resources. It ensures statutory safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Annual reviews of risk assessments are not always recorded with sufficient detail to reflect whether any changes have been made and whether these have been effective. It is only just starting to get fully involved in school development planning in order to ask the school challenging questions about attainment and school improvement.

The school has evaluated its economic, religious and ethnic characteristics and used the information to develop some community links beyond the school and other Catholic communities. Learning about world communities is developing as the curriculum is developing. In order to improve the promotion of community cohesion, pupils are currently learning about different countries and communities in Africa including the work of the Catholic aid agency CAFOD. Partnerships with the church and other Catholic and local schools make a satisfactory contribution to pupils’ learning and well-being. Parents play a positive and active role in the work of the school and in their children’s learning by ensuring their good attendance.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, reach levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with health needs receive good care, guidance and support to enable them to make good progress in their personal and social, and especially, their emotional development. Learning and progress in children’s knowledge and use of letters and the sounds they make has improved over the last two years and are securely in line with expectations by the time children start in Year 1. Adults are monitoring the progress of boys and children born in the summer to try to ensure they reach the same levels as other children this year.



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Leadership and management are satisfactory, and have resulted in a number of recent improvements. Curricular topics draw learning together across a number of areas of learning so children learn through interesting play activities. The wedding celebrations this week are a good example of this. The children talked about family relationships, wrote name cards for the reception meal and created bouquets for the bride and her bridesmaids. The children explained that they were blowing bubbles instead of throwing confetti because ‘confetti makes a mess and it is also not good for the birds to eat’. There is a suitable area for children to learn outdoors. The outdoor area has recently been fenced to enable children to access learning outside independently which supports boys’ learning in particular.

The indoor area has been similarly improved so that children can get what they need to support their learning without having to ask an adult for help. Assessment information is used effectively to track progress and to inform adult interaction when children are engaged in adult-led tasks and in activities they have planned themselves. Sometimes, adults give children too little opportunity to talk about their learning, and do the talking for them. Learning is good when adults ask children questions that help them find their own solutions to a problem or to extend their understanding. For example, when a child commented that a triangle had changed shape as it moved around the interactive whiteboard screen, the adult asked questions until the child realised that it had ‘turned around but is the same shape’.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

A below-average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority are happy with what the school provides. The inspection endorses their view that the school keeps pupils safe and that the school’s relationships with parents and carers are positive. Parents and carers raised no significant concerns.

### 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 220 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	57	20	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	53	22	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	47	24	51	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	36	27	57	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	47	24	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	53	21	45	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	51	23	49	0	0	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)	17	36	29	62	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	21	45	24	51	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	21	33	70	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	32	25	53	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	13	28	28	60	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	26	55	20	43	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Walsall WS4 1RH**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned a questionnaire and took the time to talk to us about your school.

St Francis is a satisfactory school. You make satisfactory progress in lessons. You have satisfactory skills in English and mathematics, and good information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support your learning. You told us that you like being 'special friends' to the youngest children and enjoy raising money for charity. Although some of you told us you do not enjoy school, you do enjoy learning when the curriculum is organised into topics. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and, although you know how to behave well, some of you do not always choose to do so, especially outside.

We have asked your school to make four improvements. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you to use what you already know and understand about numbers to solve problems in mathematics lessons, and then help you to explain how you did it. We want to see more good teaching across the school so we have asked that all teachers plan precisely what they want you to learn in lessons, and to make sure that planned tasks and activities build on what you already know and can do. We then want your headteacher to check how much progress you are making at least every half term to confirm that the quality of teaching is improving. Last, we want all of the adults and the governing body to work together to decide precisely how they will help you to make faster progress, and to write it down so that everyone is clear about what they have to do to make this happen.

All of you can help by always trying to do your best, and especially to make sure that you listen carefully to teachers and each other in lessons so that you do not miss important pieces of learning.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley  
Lead inspector

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