

St Francis Catholic Primary School, Goosnargh

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119633
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379859
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2012
Lead inspector	Jim Alexander

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	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Duncan Fishwick
Headteacher	Janet Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jim Alexander

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons taught by four teachers. The inspector listened to individual pupils, from both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, read. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at the documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attainment and progress and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The inspector analysed the views of staff, pupils and the 49 questionnaires from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. A large proportion of pupils are from a White British heritage and smaller than average numbers are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. A high proportion of pupils join the school at times other than into the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is split into four classes: a Reception class; a mixed Year 1 Year 2 class; a mixed Year 3 Year 4 class; and a mixed Year 5 Year 6 class. The school meets the current floor standards, which the government sets for the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. A before- and after-school club operates from the school site and formed part of this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is higher in English than mathematics and better in reading than in writing. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support this good school and these comments express the views of many: 'my child absolutely loves coming to school' and 'nothing is too much trouble for the staff'.
- Children are helped to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage and soon make good progress. This good progress continues throughout their time at school. A high proportion of pupils start school at times other than in the Reception class. These pupils are also helped to settle quickly and, as their confidence grows, they make equally good progress as others in the school. By the end of Year 6 attainment is broadly average overall, although across Key Stage 2 it is stronger in English than mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well over time because the quality of teaching is typically good with some outstanding practice. Relationships are strong and pupils are very keen to learn new skills and answer questions in class. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are effectively supported to make the same good progress as others in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they have excellent attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance, has been significantly above average for many years. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and develop a strong social conscience. Pupils are very supportive of each other and understand the need to 'build one another up'.
- Effective leadership has consolidated the school's good performance since the time of their last inspection. Leaders successfully use performance management procedures to improve the quality of teaching and to enhance pupils' achievement. Leaders, including the governing body, know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have clearly established plans for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring attainment in mathematics matches that of English
 - narrowing the gap between pupils' writing and reading attainment
 - ensuring teachers always set work that is sufficiently challenging for all pupils at the start of every lesson
 - sharing best practice across the school so the quality of marking ensures all pupils are clear about how to improve the quality of their work and then provide opportunities to practice these skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Typically, pupils are very keen to learn new skills and answer questions readily in class. Their natural curiosity is harnessed well through carefully chosen activities which fire their enthusiasm for learning. For example, Year 6 pupils were helped to develop their descriptive writing skills when, through role play, Medusa visited their class to describe what life was like for her living in a cave with only snakes as company.

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally typical for their age. However, this can vary each year owing to the small cohort sizes. Children enjoy their time in the Reception class and carefully planned activities meet their individual needs well. As a result, they make good progress and are well-prepared for the start of Year 1. Progress across Key Stage 1 is also good and attainment, which over time has been above average, continues to improve significantly. As a result, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above average in 2011. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels by the end of Year 2 was also above average.

An increasing number of pupils join the school through Key Stage 2. A large number of these pupils have experienced difficulties in their schooling and many arrive with low self-esteem. The school's good reputation for supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also attracts many to send their children to St Francis. These parents and carers say that, 'The staff have been amazing; so very helpful and kind' and 'My child now loves coming to school and their confidence has grown significantly'. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average overall, reflecting this inward mobility. However, there is very clear inspection evidence that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are making good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils, who have been at the school longer and benefitted from the good quality of teaching, generally reach higher levels than their peers. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in reading and a high proportion of pupils gain the higher levels. Pupils generally read with fluency and enjoy talking about the author and content of their books. Attainment in writing is broadly average. The school is currently implementing strategies to build more effectively on pupils' prior learning in writing, and to provide

more opportunities for them to write across the curriculum, although it is too soon to judge the impact of these in overall attainment over time. The guidance offered to pupils on how to improve the quality of their writing is currently stronger in some classes than others and leaders recognise the need to share this best practice.

Attainment in mathematics is also broadly average. Leaders have identified the need to improve opportunities for pupils to solve problems and apply their skills in practical situations. To this end, steps have been taken to re-organise the curriculum, especially the use of the outdoor learning environment. This is already proving successful, but again it is too soon to see the impact on overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching

Pupils achieve well over time because teaching is mainly good with some outstanding practice. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree. Across the school, teachers build strong relationships with pupils, who in turn demonstrate very positive attitudes to their lessons and display a 'can do' approach to their learning. This was best illustrated in a mixed Year 1, Year 2 class mathematics lesson where a wide range of carefully organised tasks built effectively upon pupils' prior learning. Pupils rose to the challenge and, under the watchful eye of the experienced class teacher, supported one another to make good use of the time available.

Teachers are enthusiastic and plan around a broad and balanced curriculum, making effective use of the well-resourced outdoor learning environment. In the best lessons, expectations are high, learning is fun and pupils are given every opportunity to make decisions and show initiative by discussing and sharing ideas with others. Information and communication technology is also used effectively to support both teaching and learning. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of support, particularly for those that find learning more difficult than others and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well-deployed, clear about the specific learning outcomes and take a lead in managing the pace of learning. Pupils' excellent attitudes mean they are keen and able to work independently for sustained periods of time.

Where teaching is less strong, pupils of all abilities sometimes have the same starting point in lessons, which means the more able pupils are not always provided with carefully pitched work until later in the lessons. The quality of marking is typically good and there are examples where pupils quickly act upon the good advice they are given to improve their work. On occasions, however, while marking praises pupils' efforts, they are not offered clear guidance to improve their work or then provided with enough time to practice the skills identified.

The curriculum provides a wide range of meaningful learning experiences, including art, music and sports, which effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are carefully planned opportunities for enrichment through specific timetabled lessons, visits to places of interest, visitors into school and a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These experiences add considerable enjoyment to pupils' learning and are appreciated by all.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

From an early age, children develop excellent social skills and extremely positive attitudes to learning. These qualities are maintained throughout the school and older pupils take genuine care about the well-being of younger members of the school. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their work and behave exceptionally well. When asked to express their views on the school, they found it very difficult to think of any improvements they would like to see. Playtimes are happy and enjoyable occasions. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and develop a strong social conscience.

Pupils have genuine praise for their teachers and the way in which lessons capture their imagination. They also recognise that the school goes 'the extra mile to build our confidence'. Pupils who arrive at the school during Key Stage 2 speak very warmly of the welcome they have received from the other pupils and how this is helping them to have very positive attitudes towards their own learning.

Pupils' attendance has been above average for many years and continues to improve year-on-year. It is now exceptionally high, reflecting the pupils' great enjoyment of school. A typical comment made by pupils is 'every morning when I wake up I can't wait to get to school'. Pupils have a very good knowledge of how to recognise bullying in all its forms and how to keep themselves safe. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers also consider the school keeps their children safe and say that any incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare.

Leadership and management

The whole-school commitment to achieve the best for all pupils is clearly evident in all that the headteacher and senior leadership team do. Staff development continues to be a high priority and as a result, the overwhelming majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding. The school recognises the need to share the best practice to further improve teaching from good to outstanding. Leaders use a wide range of monitoring strategies to evaluate the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make in lessons and to measure their attainment. Robust monitoring has resulted in the curriculum being redesigned to improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics, which is already starting to make a positive difference. Self-evaluation is robust and accurately informs future development plans. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully considered in this inclusive school and leaders ensure pupils have equal opportunities, so that none are disadvantaged. The curriculum has been reviewed in recent years and the strong focus on using the school's well-designed outside environment is particularly effective in promoting pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the school improves further and is skilled at offering both support and challenge in equal measure. Recent appointments to the governing body are also bringing increased strength and expertise. The before- and after-school club is highly organised, well attended, and provides a happy and positive start and end for the day. Safeguarding requirements are met. The school's capacity to improve is demonstrated through, for example, the

consolidation of pupils' good achievement, the successful induction of all pupils new to the school, as well as pupils' high attendance.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



20 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Goosnargh, Preston, PR3 2FJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. You are obviously very proud of your school and expressed your views clearly. Thank you for also taking time to complete the questionnaire. I really enjoyed talking with you and listening to some of you read. You told me how much you like coming to school and having spent the two days with you I can understand why. This explains why your attendance is so high and why many of you never miss a day. Well done!

I am writing to you to say what I found out about your school.

I am pleased to tell you that you go to a good school and are taught well. It is such a safe and fun place to be. Everyone takes good care of you and I was particularly pleased to see how excellently you behave in lessons and around the school. I was also really impressed with how well you look after one another, particularly those new to the school, and encourage your friends to do their best in lessons.

Your headteacher and staff are working effectively to improve the school. I have asked them to ensure that you do as well in your mathematics as you do in your English work, especially those pupils in Key Stage 2. You can help by continuing to work hard and following the advice they give, so your work goes from strength to strength.

I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Alexander
Lead Inspector

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