

St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

Roberts Road, Balby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 0JN

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governors have made sure that the school has improved a great deal since its last inspection.
- The school is still moving forward. This is because staff, leaders and governors want to give every pupil the best possible education. They find out what could be better, decide how to make changes and then work together so improvements are made.
- Pupils achieve well, especially in reading and writing. Different groups of pupils, such as those who are still learning to speak English, all make good progress.
- Teachers make sure that the work they set pupils is neither too hard nor too easy. They mark pupils' writing very well indeed and this is one reason why writing improves so much as pupils move up through the school.
- Pupils enjoy learning and want to do as well as they can. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Newcomers are made welcome and older pupils set good examples to younger ones.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They learn about situations in everyday life that could be risky and know just what to do if they are worried.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not as strong in mathematics as it is in English. Marking is not as helpful in this subject and pupils do not have enough chances to use their skills during mathematics and other lessons.
- Not all teaching is good or outstanding. This means that learning slows down during parts of some lessons. Teachers do not expect pupils to develop their handwriting skills quickly enough or use them at all times. Not all leaders play a part in checking on and improving teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- They held discussions with staff, groups of pupils and governors and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions took place with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors listened to a number of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- A range of documents were examined including records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour, samples of pupils' work, the school's plans for its future development and its own evaluation of its work and performance.
- The seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered as was the school's analysis of its most recent survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Rosemary Eaton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Barker

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion speaking English as an additional language are well above average. Both groups have increased significantly since the last inspection.
- More pupils than average join the school at other than the usual times for admission.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Of the eight teachers, five have joined the school since its previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics so it is as strong as that in English by ensuring that:
 - marking informs pupils exactly how to improve and that they are required to follow the advice teachers give them
 - more lessons include opportunities for pupils to practise using their mathematics skills
 - outdoor activities encourage children in the Nursery and Reception Years to develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Improve teaching further so it is never less than good and an increased proportion is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - learning moves on quickly throughout each lesson
 - teachers expect pupils' handwriting to be of a better standard
 - leaders other than the senior team take more responsibility for checking on the quality of teaching and helping to improve it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- At the start of the Nursery Year, many children have skills that are below those expected for their age. Pupils who join the school at other points in their primary school education are often in the early stages of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standards in the Year 6 tests varies from year to year. Factors such as the number of pupils who have not been at the school for long make a big difference. However, it is clear that all groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are making good progress while they are at the school.
- Pupils tend to reach higher levels and make faster progress in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. Since the last inspection, teachers have concentrated on improving pupils' writing. This work has been very successful and leaders are now looking at ways of raising achievement in mathematics.
- Pupils learn the necessary mathematics skills but find it hard to put them to use, for example, when deciding the best way to show the results of their science investigations.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make faster progress than at the time of the last inspection. These pupils now spend more time being supported in classrooms rather than being taken out to work separately. This means that teachers can keep a closer eye on how they are getting on and quickly adjust tasks accordingly.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language make slower progress at first until their speech and reading develop. Progress then speeds up and is often rapid. Some teaching assistants are fluent in languages such as Polish and their help is a key factor in pupils' good achievement.
- The pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including looked-after children, also make good progress. Each half term, leaders look at the effect the extra money is having and make changes if pupils' progress is better than expected or has not improved sufficiently. As a result, the gap between the achievement of pupils entitled to the premium and others in the school is narrowing, particularly in English.
- From the Nursery through to Year 3, the teaching of the sounds made by letters (phonics) has improved and is now good. This means that pupils confidently tackle new words. Many Year 6 pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, read enthusiastically, fluently and with expression. Their reading skills help them to learn well in other subjects.
- Pupils' books show clearly that the content and style of their writing improve at a good rate although handwriting does not. Teachers too often accept handwriting that is carelessly formed and older pupils are not in the habit of joining their letters.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, teachers have become much more skilled at matching pupils' work to what they can do already and what they need to learn next. One very effective way in which they achieve this is through a system known as 'steps to success'. Different groups of pupils are told what they need to do in order to be successful and always have opportunities to push themselves harder by choosing to work at a higher level.
- The expertise of teaching assistants is often used very well to help pupils to learn, particularly those who are disabled, have special educational needs or are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers use questions skilfully to judge how well pupils have learned so they can decide whether some or all are ready to move on or need more time to strengthen their understanding.
- Pupils say that teachers make learning fun. Year 6 pupils described a mathematics lesson during which they had gone outdoors to make angles with their bodies. This had been enjoyable and

had helped them to remember the names of angles.

- All teachers use a very good system when they mark pupils' writing. They select a particular section or aspect of the work, explain precisely how it could be made better and then give pupils time to attend to this. Pupils really like this 'redrafting' and their books show how well their writing improves as a result. There are examples of some excellent marking in mathematics, using the same approach. However, in general, marking in mathematics is not as helpful as this.
- In most lessons, pupils learn well throughout. Occasionally, they do not make as much progress as they could because at certain points time is not used well enough. Pupils are sometimes required to spend too long listening to the teacher rather than getting on with their work. In other lessons, pupils have to listen to what others are going to do or wait for equipment to be given out.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have plenty of interesting activities to choose from. Outside, there is always equipment that encourages them to write, perhaps in sand, and read. There are not always things to do that help children to learn in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn. In lessons, they are eager to contribute to discussions and they produce the work that is expected with little need for staff to keep reminding them.
- Pupils are ready to help each other during lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils talked with a partner about the story they had read, reminding each other about what had happened next.
- Those who join the school are welcomed and helped to settle in quickly. 'There's no discrimination', one pupil commented, 'we're all joined together'.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and interruptions to learning are uncommon. Staff follow the school's systems for rewarding good behaviour and correcting those who need to be reminded about how to behave. Pupils are enthusiastic about the rewards and say that these encourage them to behave well.
- At playtimes, there are sometimes disagreements about games but not to the extent that pupils are fearful or unable to enjoy their play.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. There are only a few instances of bullying and pupils know how to respond if they have concerns. They have confidence in the staff and are certain that any problems are quickly sorted out.
- In addition to learning how to recognise different types of bullying, pupils are taught about how to stay safe when out and about and the risks associated with using the internet and mobile phones.
- Pupils who have difficulty controlling their own behaviour are given good advice and support. They make good progress in learning to cope with their emotions and their behaviour improves significantly.
- Older pupils set younger ones good examples by the way they conduct themselves and by acting as 'buddies'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has made sure the school improved significantly during a period of great changes in the pupils it caters for and in its staffing. He has established a senior team that has lots of expertise and whose members fulfil their responsibilities well.
- Teaching has been improved through good appointments and training for staff. Senior leaders know exactly how to improve teaching further: they want all teaching to be good and more of it to be outstanding. They use a range of methods to judge how well each teacher is doing their job including frequent checks on the progress made by pupils in each class. Teachers have

opportunities to learn from those whose teaching is of the best quality.

- Teachers' salaries are mostly linked well to the responsibilities they are given. Leaders other than the senior team are starting to play a bigger part in checking the quality of teaching and helping to improve it but they are not yet having enough of an impact on improving teaching.
- Visits provide experiences that stay in pupils' memories and weeks devoted to countries such as Poland help pupils to learn about and understand other cultures. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to read and write when learning about many subjects but there are not enough chances for them to use their mathematics skills to help them learn.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well organised by the deputy headteacher. A particularly good feature is the way in which parents and carers are kept informed about how their children are getting on and how they can be helped at home.
- Staff and leaders are clear that every child is valued equally and deserves the best the school can provide. Checks on the progress made by different groups of pupils are used to make sure that the steps taken by the school are working and that no groups are disadvantaged.
- Leaders and governors make sure that pupils are kept safe, for example, by making sure that new staff are entirely suitable to work with children.
- The local authority has responded well to the school's request for additional advice and support in order, for example, to confirm that leaders' view of the quality of teaching was accurate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and how well it is providing for its pupils. They find out about the school through, for example, days when a number of governors visit classes, talk to pupils and look at their books, always with a particular focus that governors decide on. Governors know in broad terms about the quality of teaching. They understand how the school rewards its best teachers and the steps that have been taken in the past when teaching was not always good enough. Training has enabled governors to look at information about pupils' achievement and to ask probing questions, for example, about what leaders are doing to improve mathematics. They are aware of how the pupil premium is being used and that, for example, it has improved the progress of pupils learning English as an additional language.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106762
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	400858

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Haczynskyj
Headteacher	Nicholas Collins
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2010
Telephone number	01302 344678
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