

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Coronation Road, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 9HG

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The senior management and governors are aspirational and have high expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving. They have worked hard to improve the effectiveness of the school since the last inspection.
- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils' results in reading, writing and mathematics are above those of most schools nationally.
- All pupils make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Nearly all teaching was good with much which is outstanding, especially in Reception, Year 5 and Year 6.
- Parents are incredibly supportive of the school and value its contribution to the development of their children, especially those who have children with additional needs.
- There is a strong sense of community through the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the school. This includes raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves and getting involved in local events.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They feel safe and happy. Their attendance is above that of most schools.
- Behaviour in lessons was outstanding, with pupils showing a high level of respect for each other when working together as well as there being excellent relationships between pupils and adults.
- Governors know the school well. They have an accurate idea of the school's strengths and areas of development. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions and hold the senior leaders to account.
- During each school day there is large variety of opportunities for all pupils to develop their interests.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons of which five were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They also visited groups of pupils who needed more help with their learning.
- Inspectors attended an assembly, breakfast and after-school clubs and observed break times.
- Meetings were held with a group of parents, a group of pupils, some representatives of the governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took into account of 80 responses to the on-line Parent Survey, the school's own questionnaire, a few letters and one parent who made contact through the inspection service provider.
- The inspection team took into account a number of school documents including planning, the school's self-evaluation, information on the management of teachers' performance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's development plan, and records relating to safety, attendance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors analysed information on pupils' achievement across the school over the past five years and the school's own recent achievement data.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' books, listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of phonics.

Inspection team

Jameel Hassan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Francis Catholic Primary School is a below-average-sized primary school. There are seven classes, one for each year ranging from Reception to Year 6.
- The largest group of pupils is White British, but over half are from a variety of other backgrounds, including pupils from other White heritages with a small percentage of minority ethnic pupils from Black, Indian and mixed heritages. A low proportion of pupils than is typical speaks English as an additional language.
- The percentage of girls is slightly higher than boys.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is below average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs that have a statement of special educational needs or are on school action plus is broadly average, but a higher proportion than average is supported on school action.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are managed by the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of the middle leaders with particular responsibilities by:
 - enabling them to analyse rigorously how well groups are doing and to adapt plans to address any identified weaknesses, which may hinder pupils from making further progress
 - providing them with further knowledge and skills to lead and manage their areas more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for children of their age. Pupils make outstanding progress across the school and leave with well above average levels of attainment.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, particularly those with a statement of special educational needs and those who need additional outside help, make outstanding progress because of good systems in place to identify their needs so that appropriate support can be put in place.
- The few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, reach higher standards than similar pupils nationally because of the careful way the funding is used which enables them to make better than expected progress.
- The percentage of pupils who attain the higher levels in English and mathematics is significantly above national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving at the highest level in mathematics is significantly higher than national expectations.
- All groups of pupils do well. In English, the progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly above similar pupils nationally and that of the small number of pupils who have English as an additional language is above national expectations.
- During lessons, pupils are given many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example when discussing their next steps for learning. This is done consistently across work in reading, writing and mathematics and in all years.
- The attainment and progress of all pupils in all years in the school are carefully checked so that leaders can identify any possible trends of underperformance. This allows actions to be put in place quickly so that all can make at least good progress. As a result, the current Year 6 has already reached the end-of-year national expectations for attainment and progress, maintaining their high level of achievement.
- Although attainment was high in mathematics in 2011, it was not very high and the school recognised this fact. A focus on improving assessment procedures in mathematics resulted in attainment that was significantly above average in 2012.
- Literacy work effectively encourages children to improve and extend their own learning. In a wooded area, in the school grounds, Reception children used the story of *The Gruffalo* as a stimulus for a small group of excited children. This encouraged them to extend their vocabulary associated with mathematics, personal, social and emotional development and in their understanding of the world. Through this well-planned activity, they were able to demonstrate their increasing ability to verbalise and make connections between different aspects of their learning and development.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- During the inspection nearly all the lessons observed were outstanding or good because pupils made excellent progress. This is due to teachers sharing with pupils what is expected of them by the end of the lesson and over time. Pupils' work is regularly reviewed to ensure the pupils are making more-than-expected progress so the school maintains its outstanding levels of achievement.
- Most lessons were vibrant, lively and active. Different methods were used effectively to meet the needs of the pupils. Displays of vocabulary provide additional support to remind pupils what they already know and how to build on their experience. Throughout the school a project called Nightshift created an opportunity for work across different subject areas so pupils could make links between their writing, art and the environment. Film clips were used to stimulate discussion and in one particular year this generated a number of ideas to write a piece of work from their point of view, resulting in some well-drafted pieces of work.

- In a Year 6 lesson, outstanding progress was seen during an exciting, enthusiastically delivered science lesson. Pupils acted as scientists and practical tasks were assigned which met the pupils' individual needs. Appropriate, open-ended questioning was used to develop their critical thinking and extend what pupils already knew.
- There is a robust marking policy, but in some classes it was not always used effectively to inform pupils of what they had achieved in lessons. However, assessment information is used effectively by staff to improve pupils' progress by identifying what pupils have learnt and what they could learn next. During the inspection inspectors saw planned opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to improve their own learning by being involved in their own assessments along with their peers.
- Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and supported extremely well by teaching assistants, some of whom are highly qualified. This was particularly seen in a Year 4 class, where pupils were given the appropriate resources to tackle ways of recording data and created their own conclusions when interpreting information. They made outstanding progress.
- Some pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding are supported through an emotional literacy programme to raise their self-esteem, which has improved their confidence, allowing them to become more able to work by themselves.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use the correct mathematical and grammatical language and so contribute to the outstanding progress made in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning. They were able to stay on task for sustained periods because the outstanding and good lessons were interesting and the pupils were keen to do well.
- Relationships are very strong between pupils and staff, but also between pupils. They know who to go to if they have any worries. A 'worry box' is placed where pupils can post their concerns. Pupils said that staff deal with their concerns effectively. During lessons, pupils have an excellent attitude towards supporting each other in their learning, whether in groups or in partner work.
- Behaviour in the playground is excellent and, as one parent mentioned, pupils respond well to being treated like adults and an atmosphere of mutual trust has been created.
- There are many opportunities for older pupils to be given responsibilities which they are eager to take on such as 'collective worship' leaders and school council members. They are proud of their school and show a willingness to support the school in any way they can. Children in Reception look forward and enjoy having the play leaders from Year 6 to help them at lunchtimes.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They are aware of what bullying means and the different forms of bullying. They know they can speak to an adult if they are aware of bullying taking place. Peer mediators are available should any pupil want to talk to someone.
- All pupils have been made aware of various types of unsafe situations through the school's rich curriculum, including the use of the internet and fire safety.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the behaviour in school. Very few expressed any concerns. During the inspection there was very little evidence of inappropriate behaviour because of the high expectations of the staff and the use of effective behaviour management strategies.
- Attendance is high and the school had no exclusions.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Effective leadership by senior leaders and the governors has led to the improvements in many aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. In particular, they have taken swift action to enhance the quality of teaching and learning so that there are better outcomes for all pupils.
- Highly effective management of teachers' performance by the headteacher has led to the

improvements in teaching, resulting in outstanding teaching and learning taking place on a regular basis.

- All school staff share the drive and vision for high standards. The headteacher has supported and provided training for leaders with particular responsibilities to develop their areas, although additional support is required to enhance their skills further, to ensure they are fully effective in identifying the underperformance of individuals or groups and in taking action accordingly.
 - The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school because they believe that they and their children feel valued. In discussion with parents, it was clear that the current headteacher and staff have made them feel welcome.
 - A community spirit is fostered in working with local businesses and raising funds for several charities. For example, the school raised money for a parent who was involved in a charity run.
 - The school has an impressive and informative website. This is just one way in which parents believe communication has improved since the last inspection, as well as having regular updates about their child's progress both informally and formally. There is an active parents association.
 - The curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to develop academically and personally and thereby tackles discrimination effectively and provides equality of opportunity. For Reception children, the Forest School initiative has been introduced to good effect. St Francis takes every opportunity to widen the pupils' experiences through visitors, residential trips, visits to local places of interest, religious and sporting events. For example, Experiencology was an initiative where pupils planned a 'perfect day' and learnt a deeper understanding of themselves and the environment.
 - The school provides a daily breakfast club where pupils can have something nutritious to eat, relax, play games or just get ready for the school day ahead. Catering for all ages, each day there is also a huge variety of creative and sporting, after-school clubs which include rugby, badminton, French and judo. Many are well attended and pupils report that they enjoy them.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body play a significant role in driving the school forward. With support from the local authority, governors have attended training which has helped enhance their work. Members of the governing body bring a variety of experience, both from the fields of education and industry, which is used to good effect. They know about the quality of teaching and are involved with the leaders' management of performance, as well as making checks on arrangements for the performance of teachers, their salaries and promotion. The governors make regular checks on other aspects of the school's work including how the pupil premium funding has been spent and what impact it has had on those pupils it should help. They have an excellent understanding of data and how these inform them of pupils' achievement and allow them to hold the senior leaders to account. Governors and leaders have a shared vision which ensures that all groups of pupils have the opportunity to succeed.
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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	110029
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	403106

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Poulston
Headteacher	Jane Gow
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
Telephone number	01344 622840
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