

St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery

Teazel Avenue, Bournville, Birmingham, B30 1LZ

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in each key stage. Pupils are making rapidly accelerating progress in Year 6.
- Different groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are well organised and relevant so they engage pupils' interest and encourage hard work.
- Behaviour in lessons is good because pupils are keen to learn and because staff manage behaviour well. Conduct around school is frequently excellent and pupils show courtesy and respect to others.
- The headteacher is leading and managing the school very well after a period of considerable change. Consequently, rapid improvements have been made in the past year to the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- Governors conscientiously use their wide range of skills and life experiences to hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the purpose of lessons is not clear enough or too complicated. As a result pupils are not always clear about what they should be learning.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunity to show they can understand and learn from teachers' written or spoken comments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, including those involving the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make). All teachers were seen. A lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher. Breakfast club and after-school activities and care were also seen.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Individual pupils read aloud to inspectors.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at various documents, including those concerning safeguarding, assessments of pupils’ progress, and records of attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took into account the 74 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as letters from parents. They spoke with parents collecting their children after school and on the telephone.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Fraser

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Francis is an average-sized primary school.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average while the proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- A low proportion of pupils are eligible for support through pupil premium (additional funding from central government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority, or who have a parent in the armed forces).
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- Before-school and after-school childcare is provided, managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the governments' floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher retired and there were several permanent and temporary changes in headship. Leadership and management were affected by illness and absence. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2012. Several new teachers have also been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the purpose of lessons is always clear to the pupils, so that they make rapid progress in all lessons
 - providing pupils with better opportunities to learn from and use their teachers' comments to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is good. Progress in Key Stage 2 has varied in recent years but improvements this year have turned things around. School data, lesson observations and the work in pupils' books show that current progress is good in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English, with Year 6 pupils making rapid progress.
- Learning is good in all years. Children start in the Nursery at expected levels and do well because learning is exciting. In a lesson involving building a pirate ship and sorting treasure, children developed well their language skills and their learning of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) as the teacher helped them to understand and use different sounds in words and to write them if they could.
- In a well-structured science lesson for younger pupils on classifying characteristics of different foods, the teacher extended pupils' understanding with sharply focused questioning. In Key Stage 2, a brisk mental mathematics session led seamlessly into work on converting measurements and scales related to an 'alien invasion', encouraging pupils' concentration and good achievement.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to show what they can read and share the records of favourite books. In the national phonics check in 2012, pupils were above the national average. Currently, enthusiastic phonics teaching helps ensure pupils progress well.
- Work shows strong improvement over time. Pupils gain confidence for the next stage of their education, achieving well in literacy, mathematics and other subjects. They perform exceptionally well in the wind and string orchestras. In art, they produce skilled paintings and structures.
- Pupils know the targets for their learning and can say what these are and how well they are achieving them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are identified with care given well-targeted support, the effectiveness of which is monitored.
- Pupils receiving pupil premium make good progress because targeted support accelerates their learning and personal and social development. Current school data indicates that those for whom the school receives the pupil premium are about a term behind their classmates in mathematics and English.
- In 2012, progress in Key Stage 2 was in the band for the lowest quarter for all schools. Results last year were especially affected by weak progress in mathematics due to weaknesses in teaching. These were not identified early enough or tackled vigorously enough because of the turbulence in leadership and management at the time. Decisive steps taken by the new headteacher and other leaders have ensured that teaching is now good. Pupils' learning builds very effectively on what they already know and are able to do. Close monitoring is in place to frequently check that rapid progress is being made. As a result of all these measures progress is now good.

The quality of teaching is good

- All teaching observed during the inspection was good and some was outstanding. Staff create a positive climate for learning, encouraging pupils to try their best and to contribute to lessons with increasing confidence. Teaching in Key Stage 2 has improved since last year because new teachers have been appointed, pupils' progress is much more rigorously 'tracked' and teaching has been closely monitored in relation to progress so that teachers are clear how to improve and, with support, have done so.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children achieve well. Staff set high expectations of achievement and behaviour, working closely with parents. In a Reception class lesson, the teacher and teaching assistant worked closely together to engage children in a wide range of activities including painting, building with plastic bricks, and writing. Pupils enthusiastically took turns to do a 'maths challenge' finding a route through part of the school. Consequently, children enjoyed the session, and learned and developed well.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively. Penetrating questioning helps teachers to judge the level of pupils' understanding so that they can modify the lessons as necessary.
- Behaviour is calmly managed and relationships are respectful. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together so that all pupils are involved in lessons.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and, because lessons are made interesting, pupils engage well in them. In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to develop language about emotions through work involving a cartoon character who would express different feelings, capturing pupils' imagination and interest well.
- The pace of lessons is suitably varied according to what pupils are learning. Work is pitched at the right level for different groups so that all can make progress.
- In a few lessons, there are too many objectives that pupils are meant to learn and these are not always clear enough. This slows pupils' progress because pupils are not clear about what they should be learning.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunity to respond to teachers' comments (whether written or spoken) and show that they are learning from them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's 'high five' values of 'honesty, friendship, forgiveness, happiness and love' permeate all the school does and contribute to the highly positive climate for learning. This, and the good management of behaviour by both teachers and teaching assistants, encourages pupils to behave well in lessons and try hard.
 - Pupils enjoy lessons and were quick to list for inspectors all the things they appreciate about the school. They show good manners and are thoughtful towards one another. Around school, pupils' behaviour is often excellent. In breakfast club and in after-school activities, pupils are absorbed and well behaved.
 - Parents, pupils and staff are all rightly confident that behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions for the past five years. Pupils clearly understand the consistently applied rules, and
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the system of rewards such as house points, class rewards and the 'gold book', which entitles pupils to be mentioned in the Friday celebration assembly.

- Pupils understand clearly what bullying is and can explain about different types of bullying. However, they find it hard to give any examples from their experience, saying it is very rare in school. Children can very occasionally be 'mean' to others but this tends to be fleeting they say. Pupils know they can go to a member of staff with concerns of any kind and they will meet with understanding. They also mention the 'worry book' where they can write about anything that concerns them. There is no evidence of discrimination in the school. Quite the contrary, pupils play and work harmoniously with one another.
- Pupils are confident they are safe at school and parents share this confidence. Pupils can explain about situations that might not be safe and what to do in these situations; for example, road safety, where they say you should 'look both ways' and 'do not run'. Older pupils especially talk confidently about safety issues involved in using a computer.
- Attendance is well above average because the school and parents take regular attendance seriously and encourage it well and because pupils are eager to attend. Pupils are punctual to lessons. They are proud of their membership of school council and the eco-council.

The leadership and management are good

- Working closely with the restructured senior leadership team, the new headteacher has galvanised the school into determined action to rectify the decline in progress in 2012 by quickly improving the quality of teaching. Roles and accountability are much clearer. Tracking of pupils' progress has been made much more rigorous so that leaders and staff have a sharp focus on progress.
 - Teaching has been rapidly improved by close monitoring and support and by the appointment of new teachers.
 - In mathematics, there has been a much greater focus on extending and using and applying mathematical skills and ensuring work builds on pupils' previous learning, leading to rapidly accelerating progress in Key Stage 2.
 - Parents' views have dramatically improved in the past year as they have seen that the school has tackled previous weaknesses. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'I feel really privileged that my children attend school here.'
 - The local authority appropriately increased its support in the period of changes in leadership and is now confident about the school's strong forward momentum.
 - Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements, and this is reflected in the confidence of pupils, parents and staff that pupils are kept safe.
 - Staff speak positively about their experience of the performance management arrangements and the training and support they receive from different sources, including the local authority. They speak of the 'phenomenal' progress made in the past year and say that 'the school is moving forward and I am proud to be part of the journey.'
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- The curriculum deeply supports good behaviour and the strong development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, music provision includes well-attended orchestras, and art ensures that pupils have opportunities to consider other cultures.

 - Strong partnerships which benefit children exist between the school and the local church and with other schools, and services such as the health services.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Finances and resources are managed with care. Governors draw on their range of skills to hold the school to account and have a clear view of achievement, teaching, behaviour and leadership. They are conscientiously involved in the management of the headteacher’s performance and ensure that teachers’ pay is linked to the performance of their pupils. Governors are fully conversant with the way pupil premium funding is used and its impact. They take considerable care that children’s safety is secured.
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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	103546
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	412349

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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Babington
Headteacher	Claire Cowlard
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2010
Telephone number	0121 4595548
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