

# St Francis C of E Primary School

Longfield, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 4SU

**Inspection dates** 10–11 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
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 a good school.

- In the current year, a high proportion of pupils make more than expected progress in English and mathematics, although this has not always been the case since the last inspection.
- Teachers and support staff provide interesting and often exciting lessons that pupils find enjoyable and which engage them in learning. This has led to many pupils reaching much better than expected levels in their work by the time they leave.
- There is a good emphasis on the creative and social elements of children's learning that broaden their knowledge and experiences.
- The behaviour of pupils is impeccable at all times and they enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and are aware of how to keep themselves away from harm.
- The excellent leadership in the school has reversed a dip in teaching and curriculum quality following the last inspection.
- Governors are extremely well informed through their close involvement in school life, taking a major role in developments.
- Pupils say that teachers are very good at assessing their work and helping them to improve it.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not all pupils achieve to the highest levels. For example, an insufficient proportion of pupils made greater than expected progress in two out of the last three years.
- A minority of girls do not always make the same level of progress as boys in mathematics.
- There has been some inconsistent progress between some groups of pupils across the whole school.
- Some pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not yet achieve to the highest levels.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed all teachers. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher joined the inspectors for 13 of the observations. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and small-group work.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work took place in lessons as well as jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors and a telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school development plans, priorities for development, curriculum documents, achievement information and those relating to the safeguarding of children.
- The inspectors took note of 26 parental responses on Parent View as well as the school's own survey. The inspectors also spoke to some parents and carers. Thirty-six responses to the staff questionnaire were also noted during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Graham Pirt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional Inspector

Kevin Wright

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average size primary school serving a range of communities in Falmouth.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, although there is wide variation in numbers across the school in different year groups.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There is a range of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but very few who do not speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly higher than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement to outstanding levels by:
  - continuing to develop, throughout the school, the strategies for reading and writing
  - giving girls more opportunities to develop problem solving skills to increase their progress in mathematics
  - improving the achievement of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage to outstanding levels
  - ensuring that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium achieve to outstanding levels.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils is good rather than outstanding because since the previous inspection there has been inconsistent progress for some groups of pupils. This has been reversed more recently. The results this year show that the outstanding teaching is now having a positive impact, with more pupils making accelerated progress. Although girls generally achieve well, a minority do not always do as well as boys in mathematics.
- Children join the school with skills at below the levels expected for their age. The improved regular teaching of phonics helps them develop early reading and writing skills effectively, although the school recognises that not all children achieve to the highest levels. Children in Reception classes enjoyed creating collages and discussing the school production of *Beauty and the Beast*. This good start to school enables them to start in Year 1 with more confident language, number and physical skills.
- An increased focus on the teaching of phonics has resulted in a large rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in the national phonics check. Pupils read more confidently through the school and talk about their favourite authors and types of books they read at home.
- The focus on a systematic scheme of work to improve their levels of spelling, punctuation and vocabulary has had a good impact on pupils' progress, particularly this year. For example, in Year 4, pupils could improve key vocabulary in producing a persuasive poster with the more-able pupils preparing to teach the rest of the class about imperative verbs.
- Pupils are confident when solving simple number problems, such as in the practical use of money problems, as seen in a well-taught lesson in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastic when choosing which of three problems at different levels to solve in finding missing angles. Many of them succeeded in completing Level 6 and Level 6+ problems.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well because of the wide range of support programmes, intervention groups, or one-to-one reading activities. This ensures they now achieve better than expected progress, becoming more in line with all pupils nationally. Teaching assistants are very effective in providing the right kind of support.
- Those eligible for pupil premium funding achieve well so that the gap between the levels they attain compared to all other pupils nationally, although not eliminated, has reduced to about a term and a half in both English and mathematics.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is typically outstanding over time as the school was quick to address some declines in quality following the previous inspection. This means that this high-quality teaching has been a major influence in the substantial rise of pupils' achievement in the last year, particularly for those in Years 1 to 6.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from a wide range of resources, both inside and outside of classrooms, as the school quickly addressed the key issue from the previous inspection report. They enjoy and engage in their learning, and extend language, reading, writing and number skills well, although the school recognises that their learning is not always boosted to the highest levels.
- Planning of lessons and the curriculum is of a high quality matched well to pupils' needs and focused strongly on individual pupils as part of the school's 'personalised learning' strategy.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, with subject specialisms, such as physical education and drama, being used well.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting pupils' learning, especially for those pupils who have additional needs. This was particularly evident when a Year 3 class were studying endangered species and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were recognising the subject-specific vocabulary.

- There is a strong focus on communication, reading, speaking and listening and the guided teaching of writing. This contributed to the improvements in all year groups over the current year, but the school has rightly identified some areas to address resulting from past weaker teaching.
- The recent introduction of the teaching of reading through a consistent systematic approach has been very successful in raising standards and helping pupils love reading.
- There are often innovative and exciting teaching strategies that engage pupils' interests and encourage them to learn. However, occasionally not all girls are always fully stretched by extending their problem solving skills in mathematics
- Marking and assessment through the 'next Steps' approach are consistently applied and pupils respond well, leading to improvements in their work.
- Teachers' use of checks on pupils' progress, talk partners and homework contributes well to the increasing progress of pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils are courteous, well mannered and their attitudes to their learning are of the highest order. They behave very well in lessons participating enthusiastically and demonstrating excellent relationships.
- Parents, carers and pupils are unreservedly positive about feeling safe in the school.
- Pupils behave very well around the school and this was demonstrated, despite the excitement, during the preparations for their presentation of Beauty and the Beast as they moved around the school to deliver a public performance.
- During lessons, pupils take control of their own actions leading to them using their independence skills to take responsibility for their own learning. This is reflected in the very good partner work and peer-assessment that help pupils to develop their learning.
- The well-established routines and respect shown by everyone in the school mean that teachers' and other staff members' management of behaviour is part of normal classroom structure where there is a seamless use of the reward system, which fosters high levels of motivation and excellent behaviour.
- Pupils' views play an important part in the development of the school. This was demonstrated when the school council undertook a presentation to governors, staff and parents and carers.
- Attendance has improved over time. During a recent flu epidemic, pupils' learning was maintained by work being provided at home for those who were unable to attend or advised not to attend.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- Leaders at all levels have high aspirations for all aspects of the school, and are skilful at identifying areas that still need developing if they are to be outstanding in all areas.
- There is a strong focus on the personal and creative development of pupils.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils to succeed further and this is reflected in the well-structured school development plan with an emphasis placed on raising achievement following a dip in test results over the previous two years.
- The monitoring of teaching and other areas is extremely rigorous and includes observations linked to planning and pupils' work. It is now focusing on those areas needing to be developed to outstanding levels through well-structured professional development of staff.
- Pupils enjoy a lively and enjoyable curriculum with visits, extra activities and very good cross-curricular links, for example, the inclusion of literacy skills in geography when looking at endangered species or writing about cocoa in the work on Tudor history. Currently, pupils in the reception classes benefit from a range of good activities to promote their learning, though not as extensive as in the rest of the school.

- The music, art and dance curriculum has a major impact on developing pupils' confidence in all aspects of their work. The production of *Beauty and the Beast* was an extremely impressive display of many of the skills taught in the curriculum, such as speaking, design, art and music coming together.
- There is a strong caring and nurturing ethos that contributes to the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Responses from the school staff questionnaire were unanimous in their positive view of leadership with comments about the drive of the headteacher and that they were proud to be part of the school.
- Parents' and carers' views reflected in Parent View and the school's own surveys, reflect the high levels of behaviour and safety seen by inspectors.
- The school has excellent relationships with partner schools through the work of the headteacher as a Local Leader in Education.
- During the long period since the previous inspection, leaders largely reversed a decline in the pace of progress for some pupils. They quickly took action to boost the quality of teaching resulting in an improving trend of pupils achieving very well.
- The local authority has had little involvement with the school but had identified weaker aspects of pupils' achievement and have plans to work with the school to increase it to outstanding levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The members of the governing body have undertaken a wide range of training, including safeguarding and understanding information on pupils' progress and so have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities. They utilise this knowledge in the very effective monitoring of the school in joint observations and learning walks with school leaders and are able to rigorously analyse performance data with senior leaders. They understand fully how performance management links to the quality of teaching, promotion and salary progression. Governors regularly visit the school to check the progress of all pupils, but particularly those eligible for pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that equal opportunities are available for all members of the school community and that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. The financial control is very securely monitored with governors working closely with the school bursar. They ensure that their statutory duties, such as site security and staff vetting checks, are met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112035
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	413267

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	390
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Coles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Fortey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01326211910
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