

# St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6HD

## Inspection dates

21–22 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Despite clear improvements since the last inspection areas of underachievement remain.
- The quality of teaching has noticeably improved but has been inconsistent over time.
- The standards that pupils attain in mathematics are not yet at the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 because work is not always challenging enough for them.
- The school has put in place an effective interim leadership team but has yet to appoint a permanent headteacher.
- In the past the checks made by senior leaders on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have not been rigorous enough.
- Not all teachers make effective use of information about pupils' progress to ensure work is set at the right level for all abilities.

### The school has the following strengths:

- The school's leaders, managers and governors have addressed previous underperformance, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school is now steadily improving.
- Pupils attain standards in all subjects that are above the national average in Key Stage 1.
- The middle management and subject leaders represent a real strength of the school, showing great potential for securing ongoing improvement.
- The school is a warm and welcoming community. Pupils from all backgrounds behave well, get on well together and value the opportunity they have to play and work alongside each other.
- The newly appointed teachers have established themselves quickly, and in the majority of lessons, good teaching takes place.
- All children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons and one Key Stage 2 assembly, including eight joint lesson observations with the consultant headteacher and acting headteacher. All staff were observed teaching.
- The inspectors heard pupils from Years 2 and 3 read and observed the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent).
- Meetings were held with the consultant headteacher, the acting headteacher, senior members of staff, subject leaders, groups of pupils, the school’s local authority representative, the special educational needs coordinator and the vice-chair of the governing body plus two other governors.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence which included the school’s improvement plan, the school’s data for tracking the progress and attainment of individual pupils and specific groups, the school’s checks on how well it is doing, curriculum and lesson plans, and governing body documentation.
- The inspectors also examined the work in a wide range of pupils’ books.
- Informal discussions with parents and carers took place at the beginning of the school day and the 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered. Responses from 19 staff questionnaires were also reviewed.
- During the inspection, pupils’ behaviour was observed, both inside and outside the classroom, and the school’s safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- The inspectors also took the opportunity to observe pupils at break, at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club, which are managed by the governing body. Both clubs were observed as part of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ken Bryan	Additional Inspector
Roger Parry	Additional Inspector

## Information about this school

- St Francis is much larger than the average-sized primary school and is situated near to the centre of Crawley.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and a growing number speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are taught in 14 classes. Each year group has two parallel forms of 30 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children with a parent or carer in the armed services and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or through statements of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The previous headteacher left St Francis in July 2013. The school has not yet recruited a new headteacher and the school is currently being led by a consultant headteacher, who is in school two days a week, and an acting headteacher.
- A significant number of the teaching staff have been in post for a relatively short period of time as there has been a high staff turnover in recent years.

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

- Raise the overall quality of teaching so that pupils' attainment and progress improve, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - making sure that teachers always set work that enables pupils to achieve their potential
  - providing more challenging work for the more-able pupils
  - improving the consistency of the use of assessment in lessons
  - checking pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts using correct terminology and calculation methods
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use calculation skills in problem-solving investigations.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - appointing a substantive headteacher and establishing a permanent senior leadership team to assist the new headteacher in continuing to raise pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that the school's evaluation of its performance is up to date and more robust
  - giving opportunities for teaching staff to observe high-quality practice and implement improvements in their own classrooms.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, in recent years, pupils have not achieved overall standards above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics. This is despite the secure start that is made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- The school and the achievement of its pupils are improving following a period of underperformance where the attainment and progress of the older pupils have been below expected levels. Improvements in teaching have meant this is changing for the better and that the majority of pupils are now making faster progress. A legacy of underachievement remains in some classes in Key Stage 2 because of weak teaching in the past.
- In 2013 pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 was just above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and the track record in recent years has been in line with expected levels.
- The relatively weak performance and rate of progress in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 contrast with standards attained in reading and writing which were just above national averages. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in mathematics was well below average. The school's leadership has identified this as a subject area in need of improvement and has put in place strategies which are already beginning to accelerate progress. These include developing pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts using correct terminology.
- The school's progress data provide evidence of improved progress in both key stages during the second half of last year and the current academic year.
- However the more-able pupils are not always provided with work which gives them the challenge they require to make the progress they are capable of, notably in mathematics.
- Standards achieved in writing at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 were above the national average.
- Phonics is well taught. There is an effective whole-school approach. As a result pupils use their phonics skills to sound out new words in sentences. An above average proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the required standard in the 2013 phonics screening check.
- The pupil premium funding is used in a variety of ways, for example to put in place small-group activities or one-to-one support. This is helping the majority of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals to make good progress. In 2013 at the end of Year 6, their attainment in both English and mathematics was in line with their peers.
- There are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by other groups of pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well the growing number of pupils who join St Francis with English as an additional language.
- The work in books is neatly presented and reflects the pride and care pupils take.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- Although the quality of teaching is getting better, it requires improvement because it is not consistently good enough in every class to guarantee that all pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics.
  - The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was, however, good and reflects the improvements since the school's previous inspection. Nevertheless, there has not been enough time for these changes to have a full impact on pupils' attainment, particularly in Key Stage 2.
  - Some lessons lack pace and not all teachers use assessment information about pupils' progress to ensure that work is aligned closely to the needs of individual pupils. As a result the more-able pupils are not always challenged appropriately. Pupils also need more opportunities to refine their calculation and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
  - However, teachers make sure that many lessons are lively, interesting and interactive. This was seen in a Year 4 history lesson when the classroom was divided in half by the English Channel so that the Spanish Armada could be re-enacted! In a Year 6 religious education session groups created excellent drama sequences, bringing the lesson to life.
  - There is a positive environment for learning because of the way staff manage behaviour. Pupils listen carefully, are well motivated and keen to engage with their tasks. Teachers' questioning skills and movement around the classroom ensure they keep a close check on pupils' progress and quickly pick up on any barriers to learning.
  - Teaching is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Practical activities are carefully planned to cover all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. Children benefit from a spacious and stimulating environment. Staff are skilled in ensuring that opportunities are taken to encourage children to make the best possible progress.
  - The staff demonstrate the ability and willingness to improve and refine their classroom practice. They work well together as a tightly knit team and are supportive of each other.
  - Some teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve and do not consistently use information relating to pupils' progress effectively to ensure work is set at the right level for individuals and groups.
  - The quality of marking has improved since the school was last inspected and there are some good examples of where pupils are quickly following up on the guidance offered by their teachers. However, this improvement is not yet consistent and some marking does not offer enough guidance for pupils to know how to make their work better.
  - There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils in lessons and this empathy supports pupils' learning. There is a strong focus on building all pupils' self-esteem.
  - Almost every parent and carer who completed Parent View or spoke to the inspectors considered that their child was taught well.
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**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The great majority of pupils show positive approaches to their learning even when lessons do not fully capture their imagination. Pupils encourage one another to do their best. No inappropriate behaviour was observed and pupils are not distracted in the classroom.
- The school works hard to generate and maintain an inclusive and welcoming family atmosphere and pupils from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds get on extremely well and respond very positively to the school's Catholic ethos. Diversity and difference are celebrated.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Pupils feel safe at St Francis and relationships are secure. Pupils understand types of bullying, such as those connected to race, name calling and internet bullying, but feel that it is not a problem at their school. The rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with effectively. This was confirmed by a scrutiny of the school's behaviour records.
- The school environment and premises are very safe and behaviour policies are in place. They are understood by all pupils and applied consistently. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) or who spoke to the inspectors, felt that their children are kept safe and are happy at school.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility, such as acting as play leaders, peer mediators and being members of the eco-council.
- Pupils have genuine respect for their teachers and staff expressed a high opinion of their pupils' conduct and attitudes.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are well attended and much valued by parents and carers and enjoyed by pupils. The standards of behaviour observed before and after school were high.
- Break times are well supervised and there are a number of activities for the pupils to take part in. During the inspection the pupils were observed taking part in 'parachute' games and 'basketball relay' races.
- The school has established close working relationships with outside agencies and effectively supports vulnerable pupils and their families.

**The leadership and management require improvement**

- The acting headteacher and consultant headteacher have only been in post since the start of the academic year. Staff, parents, carers and pupils have adjusted to the new management structure which will remain in place until the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The previous headteacher inherited a weakening school and, with support from the governors, was able to address a declining trend. In recent years there have been significant staffing changes which have helped to move the school forward. A new learning culture is now in place and is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The school's self-evaluation needs to be updated and become more challenging in order for St Francis to realise its full potential. However, the school improvement plan has realistic goals, and targets the improvement of academic standards.
- The school leaders have addressed all areas in need of improvement, particularly focusing on mathematics. Despite a legacy of underperformance, St Francis is on a clear upward trajectory. The middle and subject leaders show a strong capacity to move the school forward.
- The school's current leadership has raised the aspirations of the teachers. The staff are

supportive of each other and the leadership. Morale is good and teachers display an increased level of commitment to improve their classroom practice. However, they do not have enough opportunities to observe high-quality practice by other teachers in order to help them to implement improvements in their own classrooms.

- New performance management and staff appraisal systems have made teachers increasingly accountable for their pupils' progress. Information gathered from lesson observations and the analysis of progress data is used to decide teachers' performance targets, salaries and promotion.
  - Data on pupils' attainment and progress are now more accurately examined and recorded. Half termly meetings are scheduled to consider individual pupils' progress, identify any not achieving expected progress and promptly provide appropriate support.
  - Secure evidence of St Francis' capacity for future improvement is shown through recent improvements in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
  - The local authority has provided appropriate advice and support and continues to do so.
  - St Francis operates an 'open door' policy and works well with parents and carers from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. There are many opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their child's education. A minority of parents and carers registered concerns regarding the current leadership and management structure at St Francis.
  - The topic-based curriculum is creative and engages pupils' interest and imagination. Themed weeks and days, such as the arts weeks, and Victorian and Forest Skills days, are particularly enjoyed, as is the Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight.
  - St Francis offers numerous musical opportunities, with the school choir taking part in many competitions, including the O2 'One Voice' event.
  - As a church school, St Francis has well-established links with the local community and diocese and is involved in a range of partnerships which extend the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding.
  - The school has extended pupils' sporting opportunities, which now include netball, tag rugby, boys' and girls' football, gymnastics, hockey and dance. The additional primary school sports funding has been allocated effectively to extend pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and provide opportunities to 'live' it.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body has successfully supported and guided the school through a period of significant change in staffing and leadership. Governors understand the need for the school to appoint a substantive headteacher and establish a permanent senior leadership team. Individual governors have specific areas of responsibility which ensure they are fully involved in the life of the school. They monitor safeguarding arrangements, which are all in place and visit the school regularly. They also receive comprehensive information from the school relating to the quality of teaching practice in the classroom. All members of the board have undergone the required statutory training. They closely monitor the school's finances, including the additional primary school sports funding, and are clear about how the pupil premium funding is apportioned and its effect on accelerating pupils' progress. The governors are knowledgeable about how St Francis' performance compares with that of other schools, both locally and nationally. They have a clear understanding of the new performance management system that is now in place and how it links teachers' performance and salary scale progression.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126046
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	462521
<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>	421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Braganza
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Yvonne Mundy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01293 521009
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