

St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

Roberts Road, Balby, Doncaster, DN4 0JN

Inspection dates 18–19 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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.

- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are too low, given pupils' previous starting points. This is because the teaching of mathematics is not consistently good and teachers do not always check that pupils understand their learning.
- Teaching overtime requires improvement. Not all teachers plan work well enough to match pupils' varying needs and abilities. The most able pupils particularly are not always given hard enough work.
- Marking does not always make it clear how pupils can improve their work and expectations of pupils' presentation of work are sometimes too low.
- Leaders and governors have not acted urgently enough to tackle fully the weaknesses in mathematics identified in the previous inspection report to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in improving teaching and learning and checking that pupils' progress is good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, together with senior leaders and governors, has successfully tackled any inadequate teaching and pupils are making good progress in English.
- Pupils in most classes are making better progress than in 2013. Senior leaders have the ability to make further improvements.
- Pupils new to learning English as an additional language and those supported through pupil premium funding make good progress overall.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and happy at school and form good friendships.
- Pupils behave well, have very positive attitudes to learning and always try their best in lessons.
- Attendance has improved to average. The attendance of most pupils is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' work and listened to a number of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the vice-chair of the governing body, two other governors, the headteacher and other leaders and managers. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- There were 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took account of these and the views of a number of parents spoken to during the inspection, the school's parental survey and seven responses from staff that completed Ofsted's staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and the records of how the school uses funding, especially how the pupil premium and primary school sport funding is spent. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. There has been an increase in numbers on roll since the previous inspection.
- Nearly half the pupils are of White British heritage. The rest are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a high proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language. A small proportion is at an early stage of English acquisition.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus is average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A higher than average number of pupils joins the school at times other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- There have been a high number of staff changes since the school's previous inspection in December 2012, including the appointment of some temporary teachers.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standard that sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all of it is at least good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide work that is hard enough and challenges all pupils, particularly the most able
 - teachers always check that pupils understand what they are learning and that pupils have the support they need to be more productive and learn well when they work on their own
 - teachers have higher expectations of all pupils, especially in the quality of their written work
 - teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in more detail so that pupils have the guidance they need to improve their learning effectively.
- Raise achievement in order that all pupils make at least good progress, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils' ability to understand and recall key number facts and multiplication tables is secure and that pupils apply them confidently in calculation and problem-solving activities
 - pupils understand and use mathematical vocabulary accurately and have the skills they need to interpret information so that they complete their work successfully
 - pupils are to apply what they have learnt to a wider range of tasks in order to extend their learning.
- Improve further the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governors, in driving forward the school's improvement urgently, by:
 - checking on the quality of teaching and learning even more rigorously to ensure that all pupils make good progress
 - ensuring that subject leaders, particularly for mathematics, are more involved in driving improvements in their subjects
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently implement the school's procedures for planning and marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children start in the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. In the safe and happy environment at school, children are supported well, settle quickly and enjoy learning. Throughout the school, bilingual support ensures that those new to speaking English as an additional language learn effectively. Children make steady progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that by the time they enter Year 1, while many are still below the levels expected for their age, a good number are working at average levels.
- Through Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make at least expected progress, although it is often more rapid in upper Key Stage 2 where teaching is strongest. Occasionally, a few of the most able do not achieve as well as they could because the work they are given is not hard enough to challenge them sufficiently.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are generally still below average although a small proportion of pupils are working at average levels in literacy. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are close to average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics.
- Progress is often good in English because the teaching of reading and writing is generally good and pupils have good opportunities to extend their basic literacy skills through other subjects. The high emphasis placed on raising standards in reading since the previous inspection has been effective. Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Reading skills are extended well as pupils move through the school and so many attain the standards expected by the end of Year 6.
- The school's most recent assessment data and inspection evidence indicate that most pupils are now working close to age-related levels in writing and are achieving well. Pupils apply their good reading skills to write creative pieces, whether fiction or non-fiction. A well-above average proportion of pupils come from families where English is not the home language and, as a result, these pupils' grasp of subject specific vocabulary, especially in mathematics, is sometimes insecure, which limits their understanding and achievement.
- Standards in mathematics are below average, because teaching in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing, and so pupils do not achieve as well. Teachers do not always check sufficiently that pupils understand what they are learning and pupils' errors are not corrected quickly enough to help them achieve well. This is particularly so in problem solving, where pupils are required to interpret information before they can calculate answers, and some lack the confidence to do this. In contrast, the most able pupils are not always given hard enough work so that they can apply what they know to solve practical problems.
- Effective support, particularly the personalised planning for individual pupils, ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least expected progress from their individual starting points. They make good gains when working in small groups, because they are fully involved in tasks that are just right for them and are supported effectively.
- Pupils new to learning English as an additional language are supported well so that they can work alongside their classmates confidently. Those who share a common home language help each other interpret information and so these pupils generally make good progress. Pupils who join the school part-way through their schooling are integrated well and so achieve as well as their classmates.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. The standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics are no lower than their classmates because they are supported well. While a few are sometimes a term or so behind their classmates, most are working close to the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. The gap between the achievement of these pupils and similar pupils nationally is minimal because the support they receive has a significant impact on pupils' confidence to learn and achieve well.
- The school uses the primary school sports funding effectively to increase opportunities for pupils

to engage in events organised by football coaches and extend expertise among staff to develop the curriculum for physical education. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.

- Overall, the school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Other than on the occasions where the most able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work, most pupils make at least expected progress in all subjects by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, although there are some good and occasional examples of outstanding practice across the school.
- Sometimes, in order to ensure pupils complete the tasks set, especially in mathematics, teachers cut discussions short and do not always check that pupils understand their work. Consequently, a few pupils become unsure about their learning and make slow progress when working on their own. Where learning is better, discussions are included that help pupils develop their thinking and teachers ask probing questions that check successfully that pupils understand what they have learned.
- At times, again more often in mathematics, information about what pupils have already achieved is not used effectively to set work at the right level. As a result, pupils of all abilities sometimes sit through presentations that are too easy for some and too hard for others and so do not achieve as well as they could. Where teachers use information about pupils' ability and progress effectively to plan activities, pupils work at the right level and achieve well.
- While staff are generally very supportive and encourage pupils to try their best, teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance to help them improve their work, particularly in mathematics. They also do not always check that pupils apply their basic skills of handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately and set out calculations systematically so that errors can be readily identified and corrected.
- Pupils' learning accelerates at a rapid pace when their enthusiasm is sustained and they find tasks interesting, lively and have a clear sense of purpose. When learning is good, teachers have high expectations and push pupils on to achieve as much as possible. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were totally engrossed in their work on symmetry and, although some initially struggled, step-by-step guidance enabled pupils to make rapid progress. The planning was structured effectively to ensure all pupils could achieve successfully and use the correct vocabulary confidently. Despite the complexities of the tasks set, pupils persevered because expectations were high for them to have a go without fear of being wrong.
- The one-to-one and small-group support provided by teaching assistants and other staff is effective in helping pupils most at risk of falling behind to achieve well. Pupils who are new to learning English as an additional language particularly benefit from the opportunities to talk about their work using their home language in order to understand their work and so achieve well. Similarly, pupils supported through the pupil premium funding receive well planned additional support and so make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. On occasions, it is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy learning and try their best. Occasionally, a few do not achieve as well as they could because they are not sure about their learning and so become inattentive.
- Pupils are very friendly and polite; they work together well and are kind to others. They say that they feel safe and that they are looked after well. Pupils show high regard for staff and these trusting relationships give pupils the confidence to ask for help if they need it.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss matters of personal safety and how to manage issues, such as racism and bullying.

- From their lessons, visits and outside speakers, for example, the emergency services, pupils understand well how to stay safe outside school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and what to do if problems arise, for example, they know the dangers of using internet chat rooms.
- The school tackles any form of discriminatory behaviour promptly. Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying, including the threats posed by strangers and cyber-bullying. They say that there is very little bullying at school and that staff deal with any problems straight away.
- Parents and staff who contributed their views during the inspection were very positive about pupils' behaviour and interest in learning and the caring ethos the school nurtures among its very mixed community.
- The school is a harmonious community where pupils learn to care and be kind. Opportunities to take responsibility, such as Reception children looking after Nursery children and monitors helping around the school generally, all provide pupils with purposeful experiences that develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness effectively.
- Pupils enjoy many social and cultural events, including visits, for example to the local football club, to extend their experiences of the wider world. Through working with an extensive range of visitors, pupils show respect for the different communities and lifestyles in the wider world.
- The school has successfully raised attendance to average. A few pupils still have poor attendance but most attend regularly because they say, 'You must come if you want to learn.'

The leadership and management requires improvement

- While the headteacher, senior leaders and governors have, in the last year, improved teaching so that more of it is now good and none inadequate, they have not fully ensured consistently good progress in all classes, particularly in mathematics. The teaching of mathematics requires further improvement. Consequently, leadership and management require improvement.
- Senior leaders are aware that they have not fully tackled the issues identified in the previous report, but, to some extent, improvement has been hampered by the many staff changes over the last two years, including among key leaders. With relative stability in the school now, senior leaders' actions to improve teaching and achievement are increasingly successful. They have an accurate view of the school's performance and know how to make it better.
- The teaching of literacy, particularly reading, has improved throughout the school. Inspection evidence and the school's most recent assessments show that a much higher proportion of pupils across the school are making better progress this year than previously.
- Attendance has also improved significantly. These improvements demonstrate that leaders have the ability to make further improvements.
- The leadership of teaching has improved overall. Senior leaders' checks on teaching identify where pupils are not achieving well and teachers receive good training and support to improve their practice. However, leaders, including governors, do not always check closely enough that all teachers consistently implement the school's procedures for planning and marking. Too much variation in the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, therefore, means that pupils' overall achievement still requires improvement.
- Subject leaders, most of whom are relatively new to their roles, are not yet involved sufficiently in checking and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in order to raise standards, particularly in mathematics.
- The rigour with which senior leaders hold teachers to account for pupils' progress has strengthened over the last year. As a result, pupils in many classes are making better progress.
- The curriculum is generally well organised to interest pupils and promote their enthusiasm for learning but pupils are not always enabled to build successfully on previous learning in mathematics in order to extend their skills effectively.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' learning and enjoyment of school is enriched well by visits to places of interest, social and

sporting events and other community activities. Provision for music is a strength and pupils have good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments.

- The primary school sport funding enables pupils to participate in a wider range of sporting and physical activities than was previously available, for example, sports activities run by specialist coaches and visits to leisure facilities in the area. Specialist knowledge is shared with teachers, indicating that these improvements have the potential to be sustainable.
- Safeguarding and child-protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides the school with a range of training for staff and governors and good support to leaders in reviewing the school's performance and identifying development priorities.
- Partnerships with parents are generally good. The school website and newsletters keeps parents well informed. Parents are welcome to many school events and are encouraged to support their children's learning at home, by, for example, listening to them read and helping them complete homework.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has received effective training, for example, to better understand pupils' performance data, and to identify where teaching needs to improve in order to raise standards. Governors are now well informed about the management of teachers' performance and they review teachers' pay accordingly, making it clear to staff that pay awards will only be granted where it is evident that pupils have made good progress.
 - Governors manage the school's finances efficiently. They understand and review the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding and the primary school sport funding on pupils' achievement and physical well-being. They know that pupils supported through pupil premium funding achieved as well as their classmates last year and, with the increase in numbers this year, they have allocated additional resources to ensure this remains the case this year.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the school's current performance and what needs to be done to improve provision. They have the skills to challenge senior leaders regarding the school's performance. They are supportive of the headteacher and staff and are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They know that pupils are currently not achieving well enough in mathematics and that teaching still requires significant improvement to be of good quality overall.

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	440750

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Haczynskyj
Headteacher	Nicholas Collins
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2012
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