

St Francis Xavier's Primary School

Venn's Lane, Hereford, HR1 1DT

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- An atmosphere of calmness, tolerance and respect for each other permeates the school. This underpins very good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, which helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with standards that are average. Provision in the early years is good and prepares children well to start Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how well they will behave. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs achieve as least as well as other pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and arrangements to keep them safe are good.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They have good attitudes to learning, are kind, polite, and courteous towards others.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership. Together with other senior leaders and governors, she has successfully improved the teaching and raised achievement. Standards are improving across the school.
- Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school. The communication with parents successfully encourages them to be effective partners in their children's education.
- The governors are very well-organised and skilled in monitoring the performance of the school. They help to improve pupils' achievement by providing appropriate support and challenge for the headteacher.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers sometimes give the most-able pupils work that is too easy in mathematics.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve and teachers do not consistently ensure pupils act upon the advice given.
- A few teachers do not respond to the results of checks that they have made on how well pupils understand, by making tasks easier or more difficult as appropriate.
- Leaders' checks on teaching do not focus sufficiently on the progress of the most-able pupils in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, and talked to pupils about their progress and the work in their exercise books. Four visits to classrooms were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also looked at work in the Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were observed in lessons, assemblies, playtimes, when they moved around the school and during lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school day. They heard pupils from different age groups speak about their perceptions of the school.
- Pupils' work in literacy and mathematics and other subjects was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, groups of pupils and with the chair and a member of the Governing Body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents reviewed include the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, arrangements for safeguarding, and records of observations of teaching, pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. In addition, notes of governors' meetings and the school's policies for behaviour management, support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were considered.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Francis Xavier's Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are White British and the largest minority are Indian.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding (additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are in care) is 10%. This is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is 9%. This is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is 6%. This is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2012.
- The school works with other schools in the Hereford Teaching Alliance. This group collaborate in order to support school improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently give pupils constructive feedback about the strengths and weaknesses in their work and tell them how to improve it
 - teachers quickly adjust the work they give to pupils in lessons when they are finding it too hard or too easy
 - the most-able pupils are always given suitably demanding work in mathematics.
- Ensure that checks on the quality of teaching focus on the provision for the most-able pupils in mathematics, so their achievement can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Following her appointment the headteacher identified the need to improve the quality of teaching and achievement. The school swiftly put into place effective training for teachers, for example using the headteacher's expertise, through the Hereford Teaching Alliance. As a result, the quality of teaching, and pupils' achievement, have improved. However, there is not yet enough outstanding teaching across the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school, recognising both its strengths and weaknesses. The vision and determination of the headteacher to improve standards and the learning for all pupils are shared by all staff. Staff and parents responding to discussions with inspectors and Parent View are overwhelmingly positive. Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high; all parents would recommend this school to other families.
- Procedures to manage staff performance have been strengthened. All teachers are accountable for the progress their pupils are making. Leaders set improvement targets for individual teachers and check they have been achieved. As a result, rates of progress for most pupils are improving quickly. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Checks on teaching are, for the most part, accurate, but do not always take sufficient account of the progress made by the most-able in mathematics.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about individual pupils' progress. They hold half-termly pupil progress meetings and check standards in their subjects are improving. Work in books confirms attainment is rising. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, have the same opportunities and are treated equally in school. They take a strong line in preventing any form of discrimination.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-planned and interesting opportunities to develop their literacy and mathematics skills across a wide range of subjects. They enjoy a range of trips and activities which widens their understanding of the world. Assemblies provide pupils with regular opportunities to reflect. This has a positive impact on pupils' social, cultural, moral and spiritual development. Pupils are eager community volunteers. They also take part in elections for the school council and the local junior Mayor of Hereford. These activities are preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary physical education and sport premium provides specialist coaches to deliver high-quality physical education and coaching for the staff. Every pupil has access to physical education each week, which has been improved through the coaching. This is helping them to learn new skills and increase their understanding of living a healthy lifestyle. Attendance at sporting clubs is increasing, enabling many pupils to participate in a range of sports and tournaments.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress because the pupil premium is used effectively. For example, extra funding is being used to support pupils in smaller teaching groups where necessary. This is helping them achieve as well as their classmates. Leaders and governors ensure there is no discrimination and everyone has an equal chance to achieve.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective. The local authority uses the school's safeguarding and child protection policies as documents as an exemplar for other schools. The learning environment is safe and calm which enables good behaviour and good learning to flourish.
- The support the school gets is mainly from an outside consultant they have employed and from the Hereford Teaching Alliance. The authority has directly provided support in developing provision in the early years.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is well-organised. Governors are determined to ensure the school continues to improve. The governing body has received training in the use of achievement information and data. This has enabled the governors to challenge leaders and hold them to account effectively. Minutes of governing body meetings include a wide range of searching questions to enable them to judge the performance of the school.
- Governors frequently visit the school to deepen their knowledge and understanding of its current performance. This enables them to challenge the school further to ensure continued improvement. They publish a record of their visits to which parents have access. Governors have strengthened the process used to hold leaders and staff to account for their performance. They link teachers' pay and their performance effectively, including that of the headteacher.
- Governors manage financial resources well. They are knowledgeable about how additional funding is being spent and they check carefully that it is making a positive difference to pupils' progress. They know the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and treat others respectfully. Older pupils enjoy being 'buddies' to the younger children starting school and during lunchtimes. Pupils of all ages behave well in lessons and are able to learn without disruption.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy and sociable occasions. They enjoy school, feel well cared for and safe. They say name calling or inappropriate language is unusual.
- Pupils have a keen moral sense and appreciate that everyone is a unique and special individual. They know that discrimination on any grounds is wrong. Pupils from all backgrounds and with a range of needs and difficulties are naturally included in all activities and friendship groups.
- The school's reputation in the wider community is very good. This was demonstrated during the inspection when a disabled member of the public rang the school to praise and thank the Year 6 pupils who had helped her access the changing rooms in the swimming baths during the school's time at the baths.
- The school's consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour ensures most pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Parents who responded to Parent View agree with this view. Pupils are eager to learn and accept the challenges set by their teachers. On occasions, the work set does not sufficiently challenge the most-able pupils. As a result, they sometimes lose concentration and do not then make the progress that they should. Consequently, behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils move safely and sensibly around the school. Pupils know how to use the internet safely and are well aware of other risks.
- Pupils of all ages are clear that bullying is rare. They have complete confidence in their teachers that any incident will be dealt with quickly. They understand bullying can take different forms. The school's focus on teaching moral values is making a positive contribution to the typically good behaviour observed during the inspection. A scrutiny of the school's records relating to pupils' behaviour found that incidents are dealt with effectively and are not common.
- Leaders, including governors, have taken firm action to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has risen and is now above the national average. The school rigorously follows up absence and does not authorise holiday requests. Children arrive on time in the morning, smartly dressed in school uniform. Pupils wear the school's physical education uniform during sports lessons to ensure their safety. This also helps to foster a real sense of pride in the school and its work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers usually set high expectations and plan lessons that build up the skills that pupils need to improve further.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured improvement to teaching throughout the school, partly by addressing recognised areas of weaker teaching. The teaching now caters more consistently for pupils' different abilities. Teaching successfully engages pupils and promotes good learning for pupils from all backgrounds. Teachers establish very positive relationships with pupils and expect their behaviour to be at least good. This improvement in teaching has produced pupils' current good progress and rapidly rising standards.
- Reading is promoted strongly throughout the school and pupils of all ages read well. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been reviewed and strengthened and, as a result, more pupils are now achieving the required standard in the screening check in Year 1.
- Writing is taught well. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to practice their writing skills in subjects other than English. This helps pupils' to consolidate their skills and achieve well.
- The teaching of mathematics is usually good. New resources have ensured that the school uses a more consistent approach. This has improved standards for the younger pupils. Older pupils are well-supported through the use of an additional teacher so that lessons are now more tailored to pupils' varying abilities than was previously the case.
- Regular checks of how well pupils are doing are undertaken. These, along with teachers' marking which identifies where pupils have been successful in their learning, ensure that pupils are clear about how they are getting on. However, marking does not consistently provide enough constructive guidance to pupils on how to improve their work further.
- There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. This contributes effectively to a positive working atmosphere and pupils cooperate well with each other in pairs and in small groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are understood very well and teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at supporting them in their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils also receive effective support when they need it and often make better progress than other pupils.
- Sometimes, in mathematics lessons, teachers only expect the most-able pupils to produce a greater quantity of work rather than tackle harder tasks that will enable them to use the knowledge and skills they have learnt. Often, when pupils are working in ability sets in numeracy, all pupils are set the same work, which is sometimes too easy for the most-able.
- Teachers often use questioning well to encourage pupils to think, reflect for themselves, and to test and extend their knowledge. However, this is not always used to good effect. In cases where pupils find the planned tasks too easy or too hard, teachers are not always adept at altering or stopping the activity. Consequently opportunities for pupils to make maximum progress are reduced.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they start in the Reception class, children have levels of knowledge and understanding which are below those typical for their age, especially for their communication and personal and social skills. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, although attainment in reading, writing, number and aspects of their creative development have been lower than the other areas. However, last year, a well above-average proportion of the children reached or exceeded the expected level of development in all

areas of learning.

- Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have risen slowly but consistently over recent years and are close to those expected nationally in writing and mathematics. Current pupils in Year 2 are building on the good progress they made in Year 1 and are attaining standards close to those expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been average for the past two years. This represents good progress in relation to pupils' starting points. In addition, the results in the new spelling, punctuation and grammar test improved significantly in 2014 as a result of more focused teaching of the basic skills.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills in Years 1 and 2. This ensures pupils' basic skills develop well. Pupils quickly learn to use their phonics knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle unknown words. As a result, most pupils attained above the standards expected in the Year 1 phonics check in 2014. Standards in reading at the end of Year 2 are above average. Good teaching and a high level of care and support ensure an increasing proportion reach the higher levels, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The school's information shows that most Year 5 pupils are on track to reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. An increasing proportion is on course to attain the higher levels. The good teaching is enabling pupils to make rapid progress, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding are making good progress. The school invests carefully and wisely in staffing to ensure these pupils receive the support they need. Consequently, most of these pupils achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their classmates. There were too few such pupils taking tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013 to compare their performance with others without identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the extra help they receive, which meets their needs well. Last year, pupils in all years made similar or better progress than their classmates.
- The school acts decisively to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Strong leadership from the headteacher ensures well-tailored and planned literacy and numeracy intervention is effective in speeding their progress. Parents report high levels of satisfaction with the school's provision.
- Good teaching is supporting the most-able pupils to improve achievement. They make good progress in reading and writing. However, in a few mathematics lessons, teachers do not challenge these pupils sufficiently. Some find the work set too easy and learning time is lost. They do not then make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is led and managed well. The learning environment is well-planned and exciting. Children access a wide range of activities.
- All children get off to a good start, settle quickly and make great strides in their learning. As a result, by the time pupils enter Year 1 most children are working at the expected level for their age and a significant proportion leave with skills, which exceed this. This shows that children in the early years make good progress from their starting points; they achieve well and are well-equipped to start Year 1.
- Children are extremely well-cared for and nurtured. They are expected to quickly develop qualities such as independence and resilience, so, within a short period of time, they settle into a well-structured environment where activities match their stage of development.
- Staff work well as a team and parents and carers value the very effective communications between home

and school.

- Children's behaviour is good. They learn to play together and quickly absorb the routines established in and out of the classroom that help them to get along with each other smoothly.
- Activities led by adults are well focused on developing basic skills, such as holding a pencil properly and forming letters correctly. Effective use of early assessments of what children already know and can do ensures children are grouped appropriately for different activities.

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	116884
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	448476

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie Williams
Headteacher	Diana Pearce
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2010
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