

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Jessopp Road, Norwich, NR2 3QB

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching is good and pupils achieve well during a time of change.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and permeates the work of the school.
- Pupils behave well and attendance is above average.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they get on well together. All are welcome and relationships are good.
- Leaders make sure teachers receive the training they need to improve their work and successfully unite staff in understanding the school's aims.
- Teaching is good. Teachers often make learning interesting. They make sure pupils understand what to do and encourage them to express their views.
- Pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes and make very good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always motivate pupils to do their very best or help them to understand how to improve. Sometimes, pupils do not have enough time to use new skills.
- Leaders do not always focus on pupils' learning when they check the quality of teaching.
- The teaching of spelling is not consistent.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons and an assembly. Five observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In all, 15 members of staff were seen teaching.
- The inspectors looked at samples of work from all age groups, spoke to pupils about their work during lessons and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body, leaders and staff and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of written comments from parents and 63 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors analysed the response from the 31 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance information, improvement plans, evidence of the monitoring of teaching and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Dutton	Additional Inspector
Peter Malcolm	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2013 as a result of the amalgamation between St. John's Catholic Infant School and St. Thomas More Catholic Junior School. It operates from the former junior school site. When the former two schools were last inspected in 2008, the infant school was judged to be outstanding and the junior school was judged to be good.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British and other White background.
- Just under a half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is well above the national average.
- About a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average and accounts for about a tenth of the school population.
- The pupil premium funding, which provides support for disadvantaged pupils, supports just over a tenth of pupils. This is well below the national average.
- Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception classes which, children attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school care which are both managed by the school's governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress further by making sure teachers:
 - make the most of pupils' keenness to learn by providing tasks that always motivate them to do their very best
 - teach spelling more effectively
 - ensure that pupils use new skills they have learned to the full and understand how to improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that leaders focus sharply on the learning of groups of pupils when they check the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have successfully ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement is at least good, while amalgamating the school. They have ensured the outstanding provision in the early years. Leaders unify staff in a common sense of purpose, reflected by the very positive response from the questionnaires submitted by staff.
- The experienced headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and governors, knows how well the school is doing and what it needs to do next. She sets challenging targets and clear priorities which have improved the quality of phonics teaching (phonics is the sounds that letters make) and raised standards in mathematics.
- Leaders ensure staff receive good training to improve their work. Less experienced subject and key stage leaders work alongside more experienced members of staff in preparation for their roles. All leaders, including middle leaders, use a range of methods to check the work of the school effectively.
- The school receives 'light touch' support from the local authority because it has confidence in the school's leadership and management. The school makes good use of external support to provide additional facilities for pupils and training for staff and governors. Leaders maintain good partnerships with external agencies, especially to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders are carefully evaluating various methods of assessing how well pupils are doing as the new primary curriculum is implemented. They use systems effectively to check pupils' progress, including disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding. Money is spent on extra resources and staffing to best meet individual needs; this is having a positive effect on closing any gaps in performance.
- Leaders ensure there is a range of interesting activities that promote pupils' academic achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Trips, visitors to the school and strong links with the church, widen pupils' experiences. The celebration of its cultural diversity and the teaching of British values are central to the school's work and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- All are given equal opportunity to learn, and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The primary sports funding is used well to broaden the range of physical education activities, increasing pupils' participation and enjoyment and helping staff to improve the teaching of physical education.
- There are good daily links with parents and various ways that they can be involved in their children's learning. Parents and children benefit from the facilities offered by the breakfast and after-school care which provide pupils with a sociable start and end to the school day.
- Leaders use various and regular methods to check the quality of teaching to help staff to improve. However, there is not always a sharp enough focus on the impact of teaching on the learning of different groups of pupils, in order to ensure that teaching has an outstanding impact.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors undergo the training they need to carry out their responsibilities effectively. They give new governors good guidance on their roles. They make sure there is a strong culture of respect and tolerance within the school. Governors check the school's work by visiting frequently and analysing information on pupils' progress. They are involved in setting priorities. They ask the right questions if pupils or staff are not doing well enough. Governors know how good teaching leads to good achievement and how this links to teachers' salaries. They check the performance of the headteacher and set realistic targets. Governors recognise the diversity of the school's community. They forge links with parents and are working on effective ways to involve all parents, especially those from beyond the immediate locality, more fully. Governors make sure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils listen attentively and are very willing to express their views. They say they enjoy school, which is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils respond well to the school's recognition of their efforts and they like to gain awards and certificates. They accept responsibility for their own actions and are involved in the school council, which aids their understanding of democracy and fairness.
- In the Reception classes, teachers inspire children to learn and they are fully engaged, resulting in exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils maintain the same levels of good behaviour whichever adults are with them, for example, during the breakfast club and when being taught by visitors. Their good behaviour aids the smooth running of this large school. Leaders make sure behaviour is consistently well managed and that playtimes, lunchtimes and lessons start and end promptly.
- Pupils mix well with each other and show tolerance of pupils from different backgrounds. They understand that a very small minority of pupils find good behaviour difficult. They say that the school does all it can to help. The school calls upon additional external help to provide the right level of support, resulting in improvement over time as pupils conform to the school's expectations.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure that staff receive the necessary training to keep pupils safe. Systems, policies and procedures are well maintained and consistently applied. Staff give pupils good guidance on keeping safe during personal and social education lessons and assembly.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They value the help they get from each other and their teachers. They say friendships are an important part of school life. Pupils report that nothing 'mean' happens but if they have any problems they know who to speak to. Pupils have confidence that the school will sort any issues and are helped to discuss any worries during lessons such as 'Circle Time'.
- Pupils are developing their understanding of the different forms of bullying, including when they use the internet. Incidents are rare and pupils say bullying has reduced greatly since the two schools became one. They say the school provides them with a range of ways to let staff know if they have any concerns and that, 'Teachers will sort it out.'

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers often make learning interesting. As a result, pupils say they enjoy lessons and make good progress. Teachers link subjects together effectively and make good use of homework to consolidate learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 gathered information, at home and in school, about endangered species to support learning about animals around the world.
- Teachers ask the right questions to extend learning, including for the most able pupils. In mathematics, they stretch pupils' thinking during problem solving tasks. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use subject related vocabulary. They check that all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, know what words mean. Teachers expect pupils to contribute and make sure pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well.
- Learning support assistants are well directed and work with a variety of different groups of pupils. Relationships are good and all staff manage behaviour well. They offer encouragement and value pupils' views. They help them to understand issues such as the eco-benefits of using dams and the effect of disappearing habitats which contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

and their understanding of world issues.

- Pupils do well in reading because it is taught well. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to read for enjoyment and to gather information. Staff receive the training they need to teach phonics effectively and attainment is rising. However, the teaching of spelling is not consistent enough to make sure that pupils spell accurately.
- When teaching captivates and motivates pupils, they make rapid and sustained progress, for example, in Year 6 writing about eradicating war, famine and discord in the world. This level of motivation is most consistent in the Reception classes but varies across the rest of the school.
- On occasions, teachers do not enable pupils to make the most rapid progress because they do not give sufficient time for the pupils to practice the skills just learned, or to build sufficiently upon their previous learning. Teachers do not always help pupils to understand how to improve when they mark pupils' books.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The flying start children make in the Reception classes is consolidated as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing. They read widely and can effectively gather information from books and websites. Pupils write extensively and for various purposes. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 made good progress in drafting a piece of writing to persuade prospective purchasers to buy a holiday home.
- The pupils' progress in mathematics is improving strongly because the school is focusing on raising standards in all classes. In 2014, by the end of Year 6, test results show that the amount of progress pupils made was above average.
- Teachers expect the most able pupils to achieve highly. As a result, the proportions of the most able pupils who achieve the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above average; in writing and mathematics, they are significantly above average. The most able pupils attain high Level 6 in all subjects by the end of the year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Some make outstanding progress towards their personal goals because they receive the right level of help. Leaders involve parents in understanding their children's targets and ensure good arrangements for pupils moving to the secondary school.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those from White backgrounds other than British, make good progress. Those who speak English as an additional language do well. Any gaps in performance close as they move through the school so that, by the end of Year 6, they attain levels that are very close to their peers. This is because they receive the extra help they need to become fluent English speakers.
- In 2014, the Year 6 test results show that attainment of disadvantaged pupils was below that of their classmates. In reading, they were just over a term behind their peers; in writing, they were more than two terms behind; in mathematics, they were nearly two terms behind. In all three subjects combined, they were about a term behind other pupils nationally. The school's records show that this is not a typical picture as other factors contributed to this group of pupils doing less well. The school's information and work in books shows that disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress to catch up with their peers

The early years provision is outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Highly thoughtful planning and organisation ensures extremely effective use of the indoor and outdoor spaces to maximise learning for children of all abilities. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. There are very good arrangements for children starting school and daily communication with parents.
- Children are very enthusiastic and engage busily in the exciting tasks. They relate well to each other and to staff. They are very keen to take part. Even the most reticent child develops the confidence to 'have a go' because staff nurture a strong sense of security and well-being, based upon care and respect. For example, during the inspection, children helped each other to dress in Christmas costumes, worked with older pupils to post their letters to Santa, devised an elves' carwash and, with adult support, navigated their way around the school with Santa's sleigh.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff create a highly stimulating environment which promotes children's imagination and curiosity extremely well. There is an excellent balance between activities that are led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Staff expect children to be responsible for the tasks they choose throughout the day and create highly effective systems to make sure children receive wide-ranging and purposeful experiences.
- From the time children start school, their progress is closely checked and teaching matched to children's needs. For example, on entry, children's skills in communication, language, reading and writing are below those typical for their age. The rich learning environment provides a wide range of ways to develop these skills and across all areas of learning. Children of all abilities make rapid progress and proportions reaching a good level of development are above average. As a result, children are extremely well prepared socially and academically for their learning in Year 1.

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	138197
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	447805

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	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Hollis
Headteacher	Kim Payne
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01603 441484
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