

St Francis C of E Primary School

Horspath Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2QT

Inspection dates	8–9 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The vision and determination of senior leaders have united staff and governors in bringing about improvements since the previous inspection.
- Pupils make good progress across the school, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils reach levels which are now in line with national averages in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers make activities fun and relevant, which captures pupils' interests and ensures their good learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability receive effective support, as do those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, they make good progress.
- Governors hold school leaders to account more effectively for the standards reached across the school. They know the school well.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly. This ensures that their care, behaviour and welfare develop to good levels.
- Pupils feel safe because adults provide effective guidance for them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different religions, cultures and British values.
- Staff say they are proud to be part of the school community and they work together well.
- Children are well provided for and achieve well in the early years.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in reading is not as rapid as it is in writing and mathematics.
- Not all subject leaders are confident in knowing how to improve the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Some teachers are not fully confident in using new systems to identify how pupils can make quicker progress in reading.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that subject leaders are more confident to improve teaching and learning in the areas for which they are responsible.
- Improve teaching to outstanding in order to ensure that more pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in reading, by:
 - giving pupils, especially those in the older years, more opportunities to practise and develop their reading skills in order to accelerate their learning
 - ensuring that teachers become adept at using the newly introduced reading system to improve their awareness of what pupils still need to improve their progress further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, middle leaders and staff have brought about good improvements since the previous inspection. A culture of positive action has raised pupils' achievement and helped unite the staff in driving improvement.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching. The school's self-evaluation shows that leaders have accurately identified the areas requiring development. Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the drive for improvement.
- There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate and value differences and respect others. One pupil said, 'We are one big family. If we were all the same it would be boring, difference is good.' The school widens pupils' understanding of different cultures and helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- The school is strongly committed to providing equality of opportunity, fostering good relationships and discouraging discrimination.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding (additional government funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) to provide additional support where needed, both in the classrooms and in developing pupils' emotional and social skills. Consequently, these pupils grow in confidence and make good progress.
- The school promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values effectively. Leaders foster the principles of democracy, for example through elections to select members of the school council. The school's key values such as respect and diversity encourage pupils to understand and display these qualities in and around the school. Leaders make sure all pupils are valued and mutual respect and tolerance are strong features of the school.
- Leaders work hard to involve parents, for example by inviting them in to attend World Book Day. Parents value the accessibility of leaders and teachers to discuss any concerns they might have. One parent said, 'The teachers, governors and leadership team work very hard to be creative in the way they engage with the community, and regularly invite parents in to support family events.'
- The school uses its primary sports funding effectively. It successfully raises the awareness of, and opportunities for, pupils to take part in a wide range of clubs, for example, cricket, multi-skills and netball. Pupil participation is high and this helps promote their healthy lifestyles.
- The school's breakfast club is well led and managed. It provides a safe and healthy start to the school day and it has helped improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and supports good learning well. It ensures that basic skills are taught well, while also ensuring good levels of pupils' personal development. Leaders embed good teamwork and resilience and these help pupils apply their skills within different subjects. The curriculum is further enhanced by music, French and outdoor learning and visits. Pupils regularly practise their writing, reading and mathematics skills. These opportunities have improved pupils' progress generally, although progress in reading has not been as strong because some teachers are not as confident using the assessment system as others.
- There have been a number of changes in leadership roles. Some leaders are well established in the school. They have considerable enthusiasm for the areas for which they are responsible. Not all, however, are wholly effective in identifying ways that teaching can be improved to the very best levels.
- The school has a good relationship with the local authority and has benefited from well-targeted challenge and support. This has been particularly useful in helping to improve the quality of teaching and checking the accuracy of leaders' judgements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors share the passion of senior leaders to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. The governing body provides effective support to the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors know how well the school is doing and how it compares with other schools through detailed reports from the headteacher and their own first-hand visits. They regularly visit classrooms and speak to subject leaders to gather evidence about the quality of teaching and learning. They ensure a clear link between pay and teachers' performance. Governors do not tolerate weak teaching.
 - Governors have a good understanding of how the pupil premium and the school sport premium funding are being spent and the positive impact of both funding streams on pupils. They are fully

committed to equality of opportunity and hold leaders to account to ensure that they meet their statutory requirements.

- Governors are ambitious for the school's future success. They make sure that they remain effective by attending training and sharing their learning with each other.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All members of staff have up-to-date training and are checked for their suitability for working in school. Very thorough systems are in place to check that pupils are kept safe and secure. For example, the safeguarding governor monitors school records every month. Parents and staff are positive about how well the pupils are cared for and nurtured. There are very effective relationships with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and their welfare needs met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection. School monitoring records and inspection evidence show that closer and more rigorous monitoring has resulted in improved teaching and pupils making better progress over time.
- Evidence in books and other inspection activities shows that the teaching of writing is good. Pupils are taught different styles and to write for different purposes. For example, there are good opportunities for them to produce short pieces and for sustained writing in lessons, and special writing days to boost their enthusiasm.
- Pupils learn well in mathematics because the teaching is good and activities are planned well. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class were calculating the area of regular and irregular shapes effectively; after sharing their ideas, they applied their mathematical knowledge independently to deepen their understanding.
- The effective teaching of disadvantaged pupils has accelerated their progress and closed the gaps in progress with that of other pupils in the school and nationally. For example, the school employs a 'learning mentor' to provide individual support for disadvantaged pupils to help develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills, and this helps accelerate their progress.
- Teachers assess and mark pupils' work regularly and help pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils' learning, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those at the early stages of learning English. For example, individuals and groups receive support at the start of the day that helps them to access the key learning being covered. In addition, those at the early stages of learning English are provided with opportunities to learn key vocabulary that helps them access the subjects being taught. This helps them to make good progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and, as a result, pupils work hard, are willing to take risks and want to do well. There is a strong and positive ethos in the school. Pupils are confident to ask if they do not understand, as they know staff will help them.
- Many teachers ask questions that encourage pupils to think and deepen their understanding. Pupils respond eagerly to these questions and are keen to contribute to class discussions. They work well individually, in pairs or groups.
- Leaders have introduced a new system to evaluate pupils' progress in reading to help identify how pupils can make quicker progress. However, the system is relatively new and not all staff are fully confident in using it effectively to ensure that the most able make rapid progress.
- Teaching is preparing pupils well for their next school and life beyond. They develop into interested and enquiring learners.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All pupils feel valued, and equality of opportunity is clearly within the culture of the school. Pupils are very confident when they mix with other pupils and adults. Pupils play sensibly and enthusiastically. They help and support one another, aiding their good progress.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They know that name-calling, inappropriate language and any form of discrimination is not acceptable. They told inspectors that on the few occasions when bullying occurs, staff deal with it quickly. One pupil said, 'They are caring. If something is wrong, they solve it instantly.' Inspectors viewed a wide range of evidence which shows that bullying and racist incidents are rare. Pupils who spoke with inspectors agreed this was the case.
- Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe, including about road safety, fire safety and safety when using the internet.
- Discussions with staff who support pupils with additional needs show that the school has effective links with external agencies and is very active in supporting children and families who need extra help.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are positive about their learning and are proud of their school.
- Pupils show respect and work collaboratively with each other in lessons. They accept and embrace all of the different cultures within the school.
- The school manages behaviour well. Pupils understand the consequences of poor behaviour and why it is important to behave. Pupils who spoke with inspectors have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They also said that behaviour is typically good in the school.
- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. For example, the 'foundation buddies' help support the younger children with their play and respect everyone within their community.
- Pupils, parents, teachers and governors are of the view that behaviour is good. The school's behaviour logs show that behaviour is typically good over time.
- Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Occasionally, when pupils are not given sufficient challenge, they are less attentive and do not listen as well as they could.
- Attendance has improved over time and is currently average. Leaders work closely with parents to improve attendance and the school is rigorous in its approach to pupils being taken out of school in term time.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved to good levels since the last inspection.
- A high level of challenge and good teaching ensure that pupils achieve well throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is similar to national averages and shows that they have made good progress over time.
- Most pupils make good progress in key stage 1, and in 2015 attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2015 was below average. Leaders correctly identified this as a priority. Current school assessment information demonstrates that a higher proportion are likely to attain the expected scores in 2016.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive good support, which is suited to their specific needs, from teachers and teaching assistants. This is also the case for those who speak English as an additional language. They currently make at least good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils from ethnic minority groups achieve well.
- The performance of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2015 Year 6 national tests indicated that they were just over one term behind other pupils nationally. The results also showed that they were half a term behind other pupils in the school. The deputy headteacher and a knowledgeable and astute governor keep a close watch on the progress of this group and current checks on disadvantaged pupils' progress show that in 2016 these gaps are closing rapidly. This shows the school's success in narrowing significantly the previous gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the school and nationally.
- The school provides a good level of challenge for the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics was above average. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 in writing was below national figures, but the school has taken effective action and current pupils' work indicates that the most able pupils now make better progress.
- At the end of Year 6, in 2015, the proportions of pupils who achieved the expected level in writing,

reading and mathematics was in line with national figures. In 2015, the proportions of pupils who achieved the higher Level 5 in mathematics and writing were also similar to national figures. The most able pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable, especially in reading at the end of Year 6. Not enough of the most able pupils make more progress than expected in reading.

- The progress pupils make means that they are increasingly better prepared for their next stage of education. Year 6 pupils are regularly reminded that the work they are doing will help them when they move on to secondary school.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join Reception with skills below what is typical for their age. A good level of teaching ensures that they make good progress in the early years; by the end of the Reception Year, the percentage of children who achieve a good level of development is similar to the national average. As a result, they acquire the skills needed to access the curriculum when they start in Year 1.
- The provision is well led and managed. The setting provides a stimulating environment where children learn and thrive. Teachers plan a wide range of exciting indoor and outdoor learning activities.
- Teachers plan learning that interests children and promotes their basic skills well. The staff closely check children's skills and understanding when they start. Children were observed asking good questions in the 'forest area' and the well-resourced outdoor area. They develop their mathematics and writing skills well. For example, a group of children were writing sentences about the different types of minibeasts they had discovered. Activities such as this mean that children are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- Children's behaviour is good. They settle quickly into their daily routines and form excellent relationships with adults and each other. They are polite to adults and work well together. Staff have created a positive and caring environment where children feel secure and able to learn well.
- Disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs or disability achieve in line with their peers. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for children who speak English as an additional language, many of whom arrived speaking little or no English.
- Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes. From their starting points, they make good progress and achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. While the vast majority of children make good progress, outcomes are not outstanding because rates of progress in some areas of learning are stronger than others. Children's attainment and progress in literacy is slower than in other areas, particularly for those who are capable of harder work.
- Safeguarding arrangements for the early years provision are effective. Risks are managed well and all staff are vigilant. Statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	123172
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10012228

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sam Derby
Headteacher	Gillian Standing
Telephone number	01865 486190
Website	www.st-francis.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.3253@st-francis.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Just under two thirds of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, with pupils of Pakistani and African backgrounds being the two largest groups. Nearly 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average. However, the proportion with education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- There have been extensive staff changes since the last inspection. The leadership has changed with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, a new inclusion coordinator and a new chair of governors.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons; 15 of these were joint observations with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and literacy leader.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance and pupils' work in books.
- Meetings were held with school staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers.
- Discussions took place with several groups of pupils, as well as informal conversations with other pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- Inspectors took into consideration 26 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Harris, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Peck	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Beswick	Ofsted Inspector

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