

# Inspection of a good school: St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery

Teazel Avenue, Bournville, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 1LZ

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Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

## Outcome

St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. It has a positive ethos and is a happy place to be. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They take advantage of the opportunities on offer. Through the broad curriculum and the range of visits and activities such as after-school clubs, pupils develop skills for life. Leaders want every child to be confident and successful. However, expectations for how well pupils achieve and behave in their lessons are not consistently high enough.

Pupils say that learning is interesting. They enjoy art and music as well as mathematics and reading. There are some pupils whose attitudes to learning disturb others. Parents also raise concerns about this sort of behaviour. They know that it stops pupils from learning. The new behaviour policy is helping teachers to deal with this more successfully.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They look after one another just as the adults look after them. Older pupils enjoy taking care of younger children. The 'High Five' values are clear to see in all the school does.

Pupils are safe in school. Parents who spoke to the inspector agree. They are pleased their children attend this school. Pupils are not anxious about bullying in the school. They have many friends and trust adults to help them.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The nursery provides a very good start to school. Children quickly follow the routines because adults show them what to do. Children settle to their learning and become deeply absorbed in what they are doing. Adults help children to develop knowledge such

as understanding numbers to five. These high expectations are not evident right across the school, however. This has led to a decline in some standards in the school.

Leaders have concerns about the quality of teaching in mathematics and rightly so. Pupils are not doing as well as they have before. This is because the mathematics curriculum is not sequenced carefully enough. It is not always clear what needs to be taught and when. Teachers do not always explain things well and some pupils are left confused. The quality of subject knowledge among staff is not consistently strong.

Pupils enjoy reading and staff support them to develop a love of books. Reading areas, including the one in the playground, are used well by pupils of all ages. The majority of pupils achieve the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1. This is despite the phonics curriculum not being well structured and delivered. Teachers use different resources and approaches to teach phonics. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise new sounds. Reading books are not always well matched to the sounds that pupils know and can use. This slows the progress that pupils make in learning to read fluently.

A broad curriculum is in place. Pupils are immersed in subjects such as art, geography and history. However, the sequence of learning does not always take account of what pupils know already. Work set does not routinely challenge and stretch pupils. Some staff have low expectations of what pupils can do. Limited time hampers pupils from acquiring the deep knowledge and skills they need for the future.

Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), work with staff to adapt the curriculum for pupils with different needs. Pupils with different needs work and play well together. The school has an inclusive culture. In the early years in particular, pupils are well supported and integrated.

Low-level disruption to learning was not uncommon during the inspection. Pupils say that this happens quite often. They describe behaviour as 'okay but not good'. Some parents voiced concerns about behaviour too. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy. They are working to ensure a consistent approach and higher expectations from staff.

Leaders ensure that all pupils have a wealth of learning opportunities and cultural experiences. This is a strength of the school. Pupils understand the school's values and put them into practice. They talk about charitable work such as their fundraising for Acorns Hospice. They can explain why this is important. Members of the school care deeply about the well-being of each individual. This is why so many parents support the school and appreciate their child being there.

The trust is expanding. It is going through a period of transition. Trustees and members of the local governing body understand their roles and responsibilities. They make good use of their individual skills and knowledge to challenge and support leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Leaders make sure that all staff are well trained. Weekly briefing meetings keep staff up to date with the latest guidance. Staff really care about the pupils' welfare. They are vigilant. They talk with the designated safeguarding leader about any concerns they have. Strong systems are in place, including those for checking staff new to the school. Leaders keep appropriate records. The school provides useful safeguarding newsletters for parents. The new school rules – Ready, Respectful and Safe – help to emphasise that keeping safe is a high priority in the school.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Low-level disruption is not uncommon across the school. This is often the result of low expectations from adults, combined with some pupils who are yet to develop positive attitudes to learning. Leaders should ensure that the misbehaviour of some pupils does not disrupt the learning of others. They should work with staff and pupils so that pupils develop better attitudes to learning and adults manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.
- Leaders rightly identified mathematics as an area of relative weakness in the school. They have started to address the issues. A clear systematic progression through the mathematics curriculum should be established which builds on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders should support all staff to develop their mathematical subject knowledge further.
- Although pupils do well in the phonics screening check in Year 1, their phonic knowledge is not secure. The teaching of phonics is not consistently good. Leaders should ensure that staff are trained in the teaching of phonics and early reading so that pupils become confident fluent readers.
- Leaders have developed a broad, engaging curriculum for pupils from the early years to Year 6. They should continue to develop a coherent progression through the curriculum to ensure appropriate coverage of each subject area. They should consider how to ensure that enough time is provided so that pupils secure skills and deepen their knowledge in different subjects.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery, to be good on 12–13 June 2013.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143434
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111723
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Giles Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Pickup
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://stfrancisprimaryandnursery.co.uk">http://stfrancisprimaryandnursery.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Fioretti Trust.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were all new to post in September 2019. They have worked at the school previously.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons in all year groups with the headteacher.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning and experiences in school. She looked at their work in a range of different subjects to see how well the curriculum was applied. The inspector focused on reading, mathematics and art.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. She also held discussions with two members of the trust including the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer and the chair of governors. Telephone conversations were held with the diocesan director of education and the school improvement partner.
- The inspector met with groups of teachers, including those who are new to the school, to discuss how they are supported to develop their skills, knowledge and

understanding.

- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents, safeguarding information, including the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment, minutes of governors' meetings and published information about pupils' performance. The school website was also scrutinised.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of day two of the inspection and considered the 69 responses to Parent View and the 56 free-text responses. She also considered an email received from a parent.
- The inspector considered the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 12 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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